



Kevin Bundy is the slick-talking salesman with evil agenda who matches wits with doubting child Paul Dunn in *Blue Planet*. Play is running until March 20 at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre.

# Bright kids lead rescue in *Blue Planet* parable

## Review

### Blue Planet

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By Andri Snær Magnason. Directed by Allen MacInnis. Until March 20 at Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, 165 Front St. E. 416-862-2222.

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Imagine a place where the sun always shines, where people are young and bronzed, and where they spend the whole day having fun, fun fun.

No, we're not talking about California. This idyllic situation is the norm at the start of *Blue Planet*, which opened yesterday at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People.

Based on a book by Icelandic author Andri Snær Magnason, *Blue Planet* conjures up a world somewhere that's populated entirely by children.

They live in bucolic happiness, admiring the flowers, butterflies and clouds, until a dastardly, adult salesman called Jolly Goodday touches down in his spacecraft.

The knowing snake in the Garden of Eden, Goodday sells the

kids the power of flight, in exchange for a drop of their youth. He fixes the sun permanently at midday with a large nail and coats the children in "Teflon Wonderstuff" so they never have to wash.

Problem is that actions have consequences. By locking up all of the planet's resources, the children on the other side of the world now have no sun, the birds have gone and their forests are dying.

It's up to two children, Brimir and Hulda, to try to outwit Goodday and persuade the other children to redress the balance.

The cast is led by Kevin Bundy's broadly comic yet cleverly detailed work as Goodday. There are some wonderful touches here.

And as Brimir and Hulda, Paul Dunn and Audrey Dwyer carry us convincingly on their journey towards awareness and concern as they gradually learn the full impact of Goodday's actions.

All is well for the first part of the play. True, the approach is didactic — we mess with the environment at our peril; the haves of this world are riding on the backs of the have-nots.

But the lecture becomes somewhat heavy-handed later on,

covering the imperfections of democracy (just because the majority vote for something doesn't make it right); foreign aid (we can keep offering Third World nations food, blankets and shoes but it doesn't touch the real problem); and military aggression (declare war and get them before they get us).

Goodday's U-turn is less than convincing; after being portrayed as ultra-wily and manipulative for much of the play, he suddenly becomes rather dumb. The method of his conversion is also somewhat suspect; appeasing tyrants by offering them what they want is hardly a recipe for world peace.

But there's still lots of magic. The creative team, including director Allen MacInnis, set and costume designer Judith Bowden and lighting designer Alan Brodie, have created a gorgeous, plant-filled playground, one that brought gasps and cheers from the young audience who were pulled into the story right from the word go.

The flying is ingenious, there's a bubbly waterfall and a colourful caveful of butterflies. Ultimately, *Blue Planet* succeeds, by stimulating the imagination while still managing to make you think.