

Bride of Beowulf

Performed by: Andrew Brum and Mary Clark

Directed by: Stanley Allan Sherman

Created by Andrew Brum, Mary Clark and Stanley Allan Sherman

The New York Times

Friday February 23, 1996

For Children

By: Laurel Graeber

Bride of Beowulf'

Here

145 Avenue of the Americas, near Spring Street, SoHo

Age 7 and up

Tomorrow

Most of us didn't encounter "Beowulf" before high school or college. But in the spirit that it's never too early to introduce epic poetry, Andrew Brum and Mary Clark, the founders of Theater du Jour have brought the Nordic saga to children, with a few modifications of course.

"We added some juggling and magic and a lot of movement, as well as some European-style clowning." Mr. Braum said. And although he and Ms. Clark have retained much of the original verse (in modern English), they have also included a number of puns, "to keep parents and teachers awake."

The partners' one-hour adaptation focuses on the first third of the poem, in which the hero Beowulf does battle with the evil monster Grendel. Mr Braum and Ms. Clark play all the parts (except for Grendel, who is represented by a gigantic puppet arm). Their liberties with the text include changing King Hrothgar into Queen Hrothgar and having a bit of fun with the minor roles. "The watchman who's at Danish customs in the year 600 is a Bronx clerk," Mr. Braum said.

And he's not the only New Yorker involved. When Beowulf needs to cross the North Sea, Mr. Braum goes into the audience to choose "six brave sailors to help me row my ship."

He also asks for a couple of fearless souls to die with him when he plays a timid Danish guard who is being dispatched by Grendel. Children are usually more than happy to oblige, Mr. Brum said, because "isn't that what every actor waits for, the great death scene?"

The play, intends to be silly rather than scary, is to be performed a 3 P.M. Tickets: adult, \$8, children under 12 and under, \$5.