

Review

Frankenstein

Bristol Old Vic

The Stage

18.10.2001

Jeremy Brien

Pioneering multi-media performance company Forkbeard Fantasy has just finished a two-year retrospective exhibition of its work at London's Theatre Museum – the ideal setting for dreaming up their latest hilariously anarchic variation on Mary Shelley's horror story at the Old Vic.

The company has been mixing film, shadow play, visual trickery, wild mechanical sets and over the top acting for 28 years and this joint production with the Bristol Old Vic and the Lyric, Hammersmith is as technically awesome as ever.

It's huge melting pot of ideas – including marvellous send-up of David Attenborough-style documentaries and Delia Smith cooking programmes – is in the hit and miss category. But the hits are mainly in the ascendancy, especially in the spectacular conclusions to both halves.

Tim Britton both provides the Goon-like script and plays the maniacal Frankenstein expert David G Scrivener in his search for the bolted together Monster, played by Chris Britton, and his sidekick Igor (Jonathan Priest), spurred on by Count Obladee, Chris Britton again.

At times the lunacy is slow to come to the boil but by the second half tour of the laboratories it is fantasy at its most engaging, with even a touch or two of warm sentiment.

The specially commissioned music by Homelife is a definite bonus, the inventive sets and props are by Penny Saunders and the director is Andy Hay.