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FRONT ROW



BEST OF THE FEST

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Ten deliciously dark short stories themed on the more macabre aspects of home and family (violent gingerbread men on a massacre mission, kids playing death games with grandmamma, parents deep-frying their sleeping children) *Devil* is the work of a master storyteller. Writer/director Suzanne Andrade's dialogue is spruiked with metaphor, irony and wordplay; each vignette a literary joke that draws on the audience's presumed contextual knowledge of the conventions of silent film, as well as understandings of the European class system. There's no holds barred, such as in the story of little Julie, whose favourite pastime is to "play homeless", dressing up like a "crackwhore" and begging her rich neighbours for spare change, whilst her parents play charity tennis matches for Third World children. In matching black and white pinafores, and faces painted white, Andrade and Esme Appleton narrate the tales in devilish unison, their antiquated characters revealed in child-like, toffee-nosed delivery. The actors' interactions with Paul Barritt's animations, which allow them to chalk themselves into houses, run on animated legs, have their intestines drawn on their exteriors, or leap into the pages of storybooks, are all executed as mature and inventive visual gags. *Devil* has found an innovative, playful way of entertaining theatre audiences.

DANIELLE MARSLAND