

# The New York Times

LEISURE/WEEKEND DESK

Family Fare

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## Pirates Who Borrow Rather Than Steal

The Striking Viking Story Pirates traffic in children's ideas. But they do not plunder; young authors happily give them their fiction, which these literary buccaneers turn into musical-comedy sketches. And whether you're a pirate, a parent or an elementary-school student, the results are theatrical treasure.

The pirates' latest hourlong revue is an ever-changing mix, with at least one new story every week by a New Yorker under 12. (Kids, call your agents or visit [storypirates.com](http://storypirates.com).) The pirates, who faithfully print each contributor's manuscript in the program, add dialogue and songs (composed by Eli Bolin). But the actors, directed by Lee Overtree, are completely faithful to the children's concepts, which is why last Saturday's show offered mutant space insects ("Giant Bugs 2," by the third-grader Michael Breen) and superhero quesadillas ("The Big Quesadillas," by Morgan, 5).

Other evidence of children's rich imaginations included a Kafkaesque sketch by Caroline, 5, about a little girl who morphs into "the scariest wolfman," and Andrew Gonzalez's "Steve Francis, 6-Month-Old Crime-Fighting Freak," about a Ninja baby.

But the pirates have wonderful imaginations, too. "Teddy Bear Cottage," a tale of preschool entanglements by Eli Land, was done "Masterpiece Theater"-style. And their adaptation of "The Day I Got My Head Stuck in a Barstool," by Russel Kay, turned a cute anecdote about an 8-year-old's imitating his dog into a hysterically funny tale of mystical animal powers. Snickers, the pet, impelled the young hero to eat dog food and drink a favorite canine beverage: toilet bowl water. Russel's father's admonition -- "Why Would You Do What a Dog Does?" -- was rendered as a rousing song. Another good excuse to see the pirates: they serve ice cream and cookies after every soldout show. Not a practical marketing ploy on Broadway, perhaps, but a real winner here.

The Striking Viking Story Pirates, Saturdays at 2 p.m. through June 11 at the Arthur Seelen Theater, the Drama Book Shop, 250 West 40th Street, Manhattan. Tickets: \$14 from [storypirates.com](http://storypirates.com); \$20 at the door.