

# HARRY: POTTED

All seven Harry Potter books in a 70-minute show? **Jo Caird** wields the stopwatch

IN 2005, KIDS' COMEDY DUO DANIEL CLARKSON AND JEFFERSON TURNER, then best known as a regular act on *Blue Peter* and *Richard & Judy*, performed a five-minute Harry Potter sketch in a bookshop for the launch of the sixth book in the series. The following summer they took an hour-long show, *Potted Potter: The Unauthorised Harry Experience*, to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It sold out before they had even arrived. This month the boys conclude their UK Potter-mania tour with a month at Trafalgar Studios in London's West End.

Initially unsure how *Potted Potter* would be received, Dan and Jeff quickly realised that they were on to something. 'We'd love to think it was Dan and Jeff that draw in the crowds, but I think that Harry Potter has a tiny bit to do with it', Dan ruefully admits. This is undoubtedly true, but the pair have given the concept an imaginative spin. They don't believe in playing down to kids and put a high value on entertaining the adults as well as the children. Dan explains: 'If we were to play to a group of just six-year-olds it wouldn't be a good show because they'd only get it on one level. The parents laugh at bits, the kids laugh at other bits, some things go over each of their heads and they enjoy each other enjoying it.'

In the end though, the reason *Potted Potter* is so loved by audiences is the enthusiasm and fun that Dan and Jeff pour into their performances. Both huge fans of the books, they get genuinely excited when asked about their favourite part of the show: for Jeff it's the 'magic-off' between Harry and Voldemort, while Dan loves the live Quidditch match played by the audience. Their continued energy on the subject belies the fact that they've been doing the show for three years.

Trafalgar Studios may be the end of road for *Potted Potter*, but any regret Dan and Jeff feel about the farewell is assuaged by the fact that in the spring they'll be back treading the boards, touring their other family comedy, *Potted Pirates*. It debuted at this year's Edinburgh Fringe and has been touring along with Potter. Dozens of characters, brightly coloured wigs and Dan and Jeff 'running around and being silly'; what more could you ask for from live family entertainment?

*Potted Potter* is at Trafalgar Studios, London SW1, 2 Dec 2008 - 3 Jan 2009. [www.pottedpotter.com](http://www.pottedpotter.com). Take the Northern Line from Euston to Charing Cross

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