"Revolting Rhymes"

Any poetry that includes the lines "In the kitchen, peeling spuds, Cinderella heard the thuds/Of bouncing heads upon the floor" might justifiably be called revolting. But severed heads aside, this and other children's verses by Roald Dahl are revolting in another way. They strike a rebellious blow against the prettified world of simpering princesses, predictable princes and monsters that somehow turn out to be cuddly. Dahl's Little Red Riding Hood packs a pistol; his Goldilocks belongs in juvenile court (how many nice little girls do you know who break into houses?); and his Croc-O-Wock the Crocodile, cute name notwithstanding, "likes to crunch/six juicy children for his lunch."

So don't take timid preschoolers to "Revolting Rhymes," the new Dahl adaptation from Atlantic for Kids and Tisch Drama Stage Works. But get everyone else in the family to go. Using poems from three Dahl books — "Revolting Rhymes," "Dirty Beasts" and "Rhyme Stew" — the ever-ingenious Elizabeth Swados has created a delightfully irreverent show that may make your children want to incinerate their Disney DVDs. (Goldilocks, notorious property destroyer, certainly would.)

Ms. Swados, who also directs the young cast, has set Dahl's subversive story-poems to a percussive score that includes jazz and hip-hop. Beat boxing seems to be the right accompaniment for this Little Red (Stephanie Hsu), a girl from the 'hood. She blows away the Wolf (with a spray can rather than the gun in the poem, in an apparent concession to contemporary sensibilities), then turns him into a fur coat. She also appears in "The Three Little Pigs," called on for her expertise with wolves.

Although "Revolting Rhymes" uses a borrowed set (Eugene Lee's design for the MCC show "The Other Place"), it has so much of its own visual artistry that it hardly matters. Molly Deale created the costumes and props, and she and Federico Restrepo conceived the puppets, which are to ordinary designs what Dahl's poems are to conventional fairy tales. They include a gargantuan wolf of odds and ends and a ravenous Croc-O-Wock, above, whose body consists of plastic soda bottles. Ms. Deale and Mr. Restrepo have aptly applied the Dahl philosophy: No matter how old and familiar the elements, they can always be reconstituted as something brilliantly new.

(Saturdays and Sundays at 10:30 a.m., through April 30, at the Lucille Lortel Theater, 121 Christopher Street, West Village, 212-279-4200, atlantictheater.org; $20; $10 for 12 and under.)