



CHILDREN OF MINE

Dark tragedy retold at screaming pitch ●●●●●

Aberfan, South Wales, 1966: 116 children die when a heap of colliery debris slides downhill and buries Pantglas Junior School. Mark Jermin's angry theatre piece charts the traumatic 24 hours when tragedy struck, with exceptionally polished performances from nine young Welsh actors, who combine narration, characterisation, singing and movement in an evocative hymn to those lost. They're extremely well drilled and bristling with energy, and it's hard not to be bowled over by the sheer power of their delivery.

It's a shame, then, that their passion wasn't harnessed in a more imaginative, thoughtful way. We're told rather than shown most of the day's events, too often by the whole group in a relentlessly aggressive unison.

The ever-increasing grief is mostly articulated at a screamingly high level of intensity. And although there are brief moments of poetry and reflection – the physical interludes, though a bit opaque, come as welcome breaks from the surrounding anguish – they're too few to give the show the light and shade it needs. It's a sadly missed opportunity, given the commitment and striking abilities of the performers. (David Kettle)

■ Venue 13, 07074 201313, until 24 Aug, £8 (£6).