

Royal Winnipeg Ballet Wonderland

Review Vancouver
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Dates and Venue
24 - 27 March 2011
8pm
The Centre in Vancouver for the Performing Arts

The dynamic interpretation by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* delighted the matinee audience composed of children, parents and grandparents last March 27th. The characters, including the villainous Queen of Hearts, the compassionate White Rabbit, and the insane Mad Hatter danced to the classic flow of traditional ballet despite their irreverent costumes. The expressive dances displayed wit and humour.

Expressionism and surrealism would perhaps be the labels to tag onto the approach taken by RWB, using innovative multimedia, mixed with functional sets in the form of white rectangular pieces that served as screens and monitors as dancers did their solos or pas de deux.

Comedically, signs would come up like APPLAUSE, and of course, the audience would applaud. Sometimes, flashed on the white rectangular sets are descriptions of the characters, such as "dormouse", the sleeping mouse, as he enters to do his bit.

My only peeve about the show is it was too long. When dealing with an audience of children, I would cut down on some of the scenes and perhaps come up with a 1.5 hour show including intermission, instead of the almost 2.5 hour show.

But all in all, this was quite an interesting dance interpretation of the Carroll classic, and I congratulate choreographer Shawn Hounsell for coming up with this multimedia interpretation. Kudos also to the dancers, especially Alice who was played by British Columbian Jennifer Welsman during the 2pm performance. Tara Birtwhistle as the Queen of Hearts did a fabulous job especially her rapport with the audience. Amar Dhaliwal as the Mad Hatter danced with intensity, and Harrison James as the White Rabbit moved flawlessly.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet has always toured here in Vancouver, and their shows have always been a hit to Vancouver audiences. Looking forward to your next show!

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