

BWW Review: THE WEE FREE MEN Is A Story Of Magic Bought To Life

April 19

5:41 AM 2016

[Print Article](#) [Email Link](#)

by [Barry Lenny](#)



Reviewed by Christine Pyman, Saturday 16th April 2016

Every Sir [Terry Pratchett](#) story is magic, and Unseen Theatre Company's 2016 world premier of [The Wee Free Men](#), at Adelaide's Bakehouse Theatre, is no exception. In fact, it's totally enthralling and sheer magic to experience this production.

The story follows the witchy awakening of Tiffany Aching, the youngest girl child of a family of sheep farmers and, more importantly, the favoured grandchild of Granny Aching, who was the wise woman protector of the area.

This tale starts with a collision between our world and faeryland, which is nowhere near as pleasant as you might expect; after all, it's the place where dreams are real. Do you remember some of your dreams?

The energy of the worlds opening up to each other attracts the attention of Miss Perspicacia Tick, a witch with a stealth hat, who is disguised as a travelling teacher, with her companion/familiar, a toad who used to be a lawyer. Alycia Rabig plays Miss Tick, with a suitably strait laced respect-commanding manner, reminiscent of every clever teacher you've ever known.

Hugh O'Connor is Toad, effortlessly being more amphibian than anyone could possibly expect from an actor that Unseen audiences know better as the anthropomorphic entity DEATH. As Toad, he spends his time giving laconic advice, until he truly comes into his own when memories surface and he steps in to save the day, or at least one battle of it.

The set was cleverly designed with three separate areas, allowing audience attention to be directed by use of lighting. The Wee Free Men of the title, known for their thieving ways, were used for set changes, which added to their shenanigans.

Tiffany is brought to life by Josephine Giorgio, an outstanding young actor in her

first role with Unseen. She breathes strength, determination and sheer witchiness as she battles not only the Faerie Queen, but the big questions in her life, such as why she wants her annoying little brother back, and exactly where is the witch school? During her adventure, which is an adventure of self-realisation, she is accompanied by the Wee Free Men, led by the Big Man of the Nac Mac Feegle clan, Rob Anybody, portrayed by Harold Roberts, resplendent in filthy Feegle gear, tattoos, tangled beard, and convincing accent.

The other actors enjoying being Feegles are Dalestair Kidd as Daft Wullie, Natalie Haigh as No'-as-Big-as-Medium-Sized-Jock-But-Bigger-Than-Wee-Jock-Jock, and David Dyte as William the Gonnagle (bard). Molly Dyte makes her presence felt as Fion, the strong willed female Feegle, and Elaine Fardell showed her great strength as the dying Kelda of the clan. Fardell also is the main protagonist of the play, the Faerie Queen, which she plays with a style which perfectly reflects Pratchett's character.

Tiffany's little brother, Wentworth, played by Aimee Ford, managed to convince us that she was not only three years old, but permanently sticky too.

As part of Tiffany's journey, she meets up with Roland, the son of the local Baron, performed by Natalie Haigh. Haigh's Roland is poncing, bouncing, and thoroughly spoilt, with a light touch of pathos, which is exactly as written.

We get a bonus in the stellar performances of Pamela Munt and Michelle Whichello, as Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg, respectively, both expanding their energies to take the stage, as we would expect senior witches to do.

An important part of all Pratchett writings is the use of the footnote, personified here by Olivia Cameron. Cameron brought a subtle life to these humorous explanations, deadpanned, but with a twinkle to the eye.

As the adapter and director, Munt has again achieved a great deal, managing to keep the important storyline and dialogue, presenting it in a way that would not disappoint the staunch fans, but would still make sense to new viewers.

Michelle Whichello's costumes are amazing, such fun and accuracy, which add so much to this wonderful production.

Unseen Theatre Company just keeps getting better and better, and this production will enchant and take you on a very special trip. Enjoy.

[AUSTRALIA - ADELAIDE THEATER STORIES](#) | [SHOWS](#)