

Theatre Review: The Wee Free Men

BY NICOLA WOODFORD GLAM ADELAIDE

Presented by **Unseen Theatre Company** Reviewed 16 April 2016



As hordes flocked to Adelaide Oval for the Crows versus Swans match on Saturday night, another event of import was happening within city limits: the Unseen Theatre Company's premiere of **The Wee Free Men**. The audience was treated to a delightful evening exploring Sir Terry Pratchett's Discworld – in the latest adaptation by Adelaide local, Pamela Munt.

The play opens with our young heroine and witch-to-be Tiffany Aching (Josephine Giorgio) using her magical instincts to vanquish a local swamp monster with her trusty frying pan. Tiffany next seeks advice from resident teacher and witch-in-hiding Miss Tick (Alycia Rabig), and her spotty yellow familiar Toad (Hugh O'Connor). Miss Tick reveals the swamp monster was the first of many dark powers that will soon be invading the area. She leaves Toad to watch over Tiffany as she goes to enlist help from more experienced witches. However, Tiffany soon enters the battle against evil herself when the Faerie Queen (Elaine Fardell) kidnaps her sticky baby brother, Wentworth (Aimee Ford). With Toad and a lovable band of vagabond pixies at her side, known proudly as the 'Wee Free Men', Tiffany journeys to Faerie Land to rescue her brother.



The Wee Free Men delivered tongue-in-cheek humour, honoured the fantasy of the original novel, and boasted an exemplary cast of amateur players. Giorgio in particular should be praised, as she displayed great talent for a year-12 student. The 'Wee Free Men' ensemble was unerring in their portrayal of the pilfering pixies.

Munt's adaptation was peppered with clever, practical solutions – such as casting O'Connor as Toad, and her inventive use of the 'Wee Free Men'. Having a fully-grown man wearing a yellow suit, green tie and toe-socks with bright make-up at once added a note of absurdity to the play and brought the character of Toad to life. The 'Wee Free Men' proudly proclaimed they were known for three things: drinking, fighting, and stealing. Therefore whenever a set change was required, they would gleefully steal all the props and smuggle them back-stage.

The Unseen Theatre Company has again succeeded in bringing Discworld to life. Any fans of Sir Terry Pratchett's works are encouraged to attend.

Review by **Nicola Woolford**

Photo credit: Michael Errey

Venue: The Bakehouse Theatre, 255 Angas St., Adelaide

Season: 16 – 30 April 2016

Duration: 2 hours plus 15 min interval

Tickets: Adults \$22; Concession \$18; Children \$18; Groups (6+) \$16; TREv \$16; Families (2 A & 2ch.) \$60

Bookings: www.bakehousetheatre.com