

THE CAT IN THE HAT by The Little Company

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“Drab in the Hat”

Reviewer: Isaac Tan

Performance: 11 August 2018

When watching a children’s show, one would expect the audience to be raucous, as parents try to balance between letting kids be kids, and maintaining public order.

But for The Little Company’s Mandarin staging of *The Cat in the Hat*, the audience remains relatively quiet, save for the occasional chuckle.

No, the parents did not spike their children’s orange juice with sedatives. Rather, it is because the show feels like a five-minute comic act on a talent show that goes on for 40-over minutes.

The plot revolves around two children who are sad that they could not go out and play due to the rain. Suddenly, the cat enters; does a balancing act; unleashes two devilish creatures who proceed to make a dog’s breakfast of the house (much to the dismay of a very sensible pet fish); the cat offers to clean up; mother returns home.

Commiserations go to the cast – Hang Qian Chou as The Cat in the Hat, Sugie Phua as Boy, Ann Lek as Sally, Trey Ho as Fish, Ong Yi Xuan as Thing 1, and Claris Tan as Thing 2 – who have to bust their guts every show trying to make an essentially pointless show entertaining.

That said, all of them display a good grasp of physical dexterity in executing the various movement sequence, as well as timing their actions to the sound cues.

Equally pointless is the incessant voice-over narration that defeats the purpose of live theatre. To make things worse, the timbre of the voice-over is muffled.

In sum, apart from the high production values, there is very little of Dr. Seuss in the show.

With nothing more to say about the show, I will devote the rest of my word count to one boy, who should aspire to be a critic.

As the show reached its 30-minute mark, a boy sitting behind me remarked, “This is getting boring.”

The mother and her two children sitting beside me immediately turned around, possibly shocked by his audacity or annoyed at being interrupted, much to the embarrassment of the boy’s parents.

“What? It is getting boring,” said the boy, clearly not backing down from his opinion.

I had half a mind to turn around and offer to buy him some ice cream. Alas, professional obligations only permit me to crack a smile in the darkened stalls.

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The Cat in the Hat by The Little Company

1 Aug – 7 Sep 2018

KC Arts Centre – Home of SRT

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Isaac graduated from the National University of Singapore with a BA (Hons) in Philosophy, and he took Theatre Studies as a second major. He started reviewing plays for the student publication, Kent Ridge Common, and later developed a serious interest in theatre criticism after taking a module at university. He is also an aspiring poet and his poems have appeared in Symbal, Eunoia Review, Eastlit, and Malaise Journal.