



Twisted tales

THEATRE

- **Review: Wolf Under The Bed**
- **Playhouse, Sydney Opera House**
- **Today 12.30pm**
- **\$22-\$26, 9250 7777, sydneyoperahouse.com**

This children's play is a curious and at times intimidating beast. The Swiss company Theater Sgaramusch has created a work that explores primal fears. It certainly doesn't shirk away from big adult topics, including death and violence.

It's the sort of rich and meaningful territory so effectively mined by the Brothers Grimm and all those venerable fairytales, folk fables, legends and myths.

The action takes place in a forlorn hut deep within a bleak forest in Finland, where a trio who have seen tracks in the snow outside are entertaining/scaring themselves silly with wolfish tales.

The 12 stories, written by a wildly imaginative group of children, range from humorous to the oddly unsettling to the downright bizarre (one, for instance, features a liver with a mind of its own and then there's the saga of a suspiciously hairy footie player).

The cast of Stefan Colombo, Nora Vonder Muhll and David Pagan put in vigorous performances and they are certainly very competent at howling.

The action moves quickly as the actors take on multiple energetic roles.

Colombo, in particular, has a commanding, if rather stern, presence and Pagan is an effective guitarist.

The set, with its minimal props and seemingly sparse lighting, simply but effectively evokes a chilly and forbidding sense of isolation. It all makes for a stimulating but possibly perplexing experience for young theatregoers brought up on the far less challenging exploits of Dora The Explorer or Bob The Builder.

Unlike much children's theatre, there is no audience participation or cheery sing-alongs. Some of the tales, which are loosely interlinked, are frankly bewildering.

Watching this is a bit like stumbling on to one of those obscure SBS films which you know are really good... if only you could understand them. It all feels so murky and European that stepping out of the darkened Playhouse into a sunny and bright Sydney afternoon can feel slightly disorientating.

For parents seeking more thought-provoking entertainment for their children, however, this is hard to beat.

GLEN COLEMAN

film

SHOOT OUT 24-HOUR FILMMAKING

The Factory Theatre, 105 Victoria Rd, Enmore; tonight 7pm, \$10, 9550 3666, factorytheatre.com.au

Filmmakers were given 24 hours to make a short movie. See the top 10, including winner, *Pope Fiction*, by Jim Redman. Marcia Hines (pictured) was among the judges.



music

INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

York Theatre, Seymour Centre, cnr City Rd and Cleveland St, Chippendale; today 9.30am and 2pm, \$15-\$27, 9351 7940, seymour.usyd.edu.au

Thirty six of the world's best pianists vie for the top prize, which includes a celebratory playing tour of Australia.



concert

LEROY LEE

The Vanguard, 42 King St, Newtown; tonight 7pm, \$15, 9557 7992, moshtix.com.au

Singer/songwriter Leroy Lee (pictured) is supported by One Johnathon and former *Australian Idol* performer Marty Simpson, with his original blues and roots tunes.

visual arts

MIRROR STATES

Campbelltown Arts Centre, cnr Camden and Appin Rds, Campbelltown; today 10am-4pm, 4645 4100, campbelltown.nsw.gov.au

A major exhibition of interactive works produced by leading Australian and international digital media artists.

If you have an event during the week, phone 9288 2616 or email yoursydney@dailytelegraph.com.au

Wolf Under The Bed

Sydney Opera House

Until July 27

Tickets \$22-\$26

Bookings (02) 9250 7777

Critic's rating 7/10

THREE gloomy Finns sit in an isolated hut surrounded by primeval forest. They have seen wolf tracks in the snow. They start telling each other stories. Things turn very strange.

A plot synopsis for a suicidally downbeat Scandinavian drama? No, actually, a show for kids. Theater Sgaramusch encouraged the schoolchildren of their northern Swiss home town of Schaffhausen to write scary

stories. From the 120 they received, founder-performers Nora Vonder Muhll and Stefan Colombo distilled a set of 12 into *Wolf Under the Bed*.

Accompanied by guitarist David Pagan, many of the stories involve—as you might expect—people being eaten or variously menaced. Others have a fairytale bent. One involves a diseased liver that escapes its master and runs off into the woods. Kids say the darndest things but the stuff they imagine is quite surreal.

It's a visually spare production but the physical performances are inventive and energetic. Absurd and rather dark, *Wolf Under The Bed* isn't typical theatre. What it offers instead is an involving introduction to the power of theatrical storytelling and a tribute to the inventiveness of a child's mind.

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