



ABOUT



RELEVANCE

"It's funny how the colours of the real world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen." - Alex DeLarge, Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*

"Pain is temporary, but film is forever." - Rocco Capozzi

"Pay no attention to that man behind the the curtain." - the Gospel according to Victor Fleming

"All art is autobiographical. The pearl is the oyster's autobiography." - Padre Fellini

SHEDDING SEQUINS



PICTURE



7/22/2011

Fringe 2011: Fenton and White's The Giant's Garden



While I feel slightly that offering another glowing review of Peter Fenton and Scott White's *The Giant's Garden* would be a superfluity (you can check out the bevvy of positive reviews listed under "What the press said" on [the website](#)), I was very eager to view this production and highlight it because it seems to be the standout musical of the Fringe this year. I feel that its content and execution were so successful that it is certainly destined for greater things.

Generally marketed as a children's show, this story is based on [the short by Oscar Wilde](#), entitled *The Selfish Giant*. While that original has a lot more dark undertones and a fairly sad ending, this version takes the concept of a garden owned by an antisocial Giant (the brilliant and super-tall Michael MacLennan) and applies it to themes of family politics, life, and death, and all in a cheerful and accessible child-friendly manner.

While it is directed at youngins, I found it perfectly adorable and touching from an adult perspective. The show is peppered with endearing tunes and charismatic performers, all of whom shine in their ensemble roles. I loved Jeff Schissler (BIRD) and Dale Miller (FLOWER) as the garden's happy inhabitants who are left homeless (and near death, in Flower's case) when Winter (a flawless Paula Wolfson) overtakes the garden.

The production design and the elaborate though minimalist set is brilliantly executed and co-ordinated with the necessities of the narrative. For a Fringe show, there was a lot of stuff on the stage, and I mean a complete, functioning gate and stone wall surrounding the entire upstage area. I love when a show uses set and prop design only to enhance what is required by the script, and this show did just that.

Winter's arrival is accompanied by zany-spooky "Icicle" performers, with their faces veiled and heads capped with spiky blue mullets who remove any trace of flowers and unfurl a huge white blanket that covers most of

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Is it true you thought Sommersby was merely a vehicle for Jodie Foster and Richard Gere to conceal their homosexuality? @glennsumi about an hour ago  
 Someone who knew @glennsumi as an employee at the Varsity says he is the last person they would have ever expected to become a film critic. about an hour ago  
 @sarahleonard22 Sorry I didn't know what you were referring to when you said "oh no" and yes, I know about this ridiculous myth! about an hour ago  
 Roger Ebert follows me and @glennsumi does not. Just sayin'. about 2 hours ago  
 @sarahleonard22 don't know what birds have to do with munchkins. You are confusing me! about 3 hours ago  
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the stage. I have to admit I did get a little chilly just watching.

This show was originally produced for Theatre Orangeville and was apparently truncated to accommodate a 90 minute time-slot with no intermission as per Fringe requirements. I don't know if this is why it felt like a bit of a sudden stop at the end. For me the resolution they settled on, very different from the tragic ending of Wilde's story, did not feel complete. I would have liked to see further resolution between the sister characters of Summer and Winter.

Otherwise this was an excellent production with excellent songs performed by excellent actors. I hope it is further developed and staged again soon! In the meantime, do follow their [twitter](#) account and visit [their site](#) for updates.

*Photo of Jeff Schissler and Dale Miller by Lindsay Anne Black.*

on 7/22/2011   
 Labels: [Fringe 2011](#)

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**ABOUT ME**



Jenna

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