Reviews for Snow Baby

“This is an exceptional wee show” Glasgow Herald

“Snow Baby is a beautifully clear and simple show, but packs a big emotional punch” The Scotsman

“Gill Roberton’s magical production absolutely brims with the spirit of Christmas, a simple tale of love and friendship” The Metro

“This revival confirms Snow Baby on the short-list for future Christmas classics. It should be seen everywhere” Reviews Gate

“Utterly heart-warming, a perfect seasonal piece for young children” The Herald
Rebecca Paterson's Snow Queen is beginning to crystallise into a thrilling adventure for older children. At present, it's on slightly thin ice, where the comedy is concerned: but if some of the humour isn't quite on target yet, the villains of the piece are well in step with Paterson's astute mix of malevolent threat and beguiling glamour.

Helen Logan's commanding Snow Queen can be scarily frosty, while Stephen Docherty (Cobweb Spider) succeeds in pulling off the difficult act of being gleefully nasty and yet potentially ridiculous.

Jessica Worrall's design opts for a snowy starkness that points up the failing power of the sun – the nonetheless vibrant Bhima of Rosina Bonas – and provides room for the chases and creepings-up-on that are an essential part of this tug of loyalties and courage.

Bill Gardiner's big-headed Kay is such an awkward nerd it's quite something for Gerda (Mary Gapinski) to turn her back on Princess Lena or Redhead (both energetic cameos from Veronica Leer) and rescue him.

Simon Sharlety is beginning to creep up on Paterson himself, as a provider of intelligent, spirited versions of familiar stories. His Pinocchio is on at the Byre, but for his home base of Cumbernauld he's revived Little Snow White. A glittering back wall of assorted mirrors reinforces the theme of vanity run amok, while the cast of five totally engage the audience with a fast-moving blend of Disney, Grimm, and panto-capers with lots of audience participation.

Anita Vitesse brings a fine, venomous swagger to the queen who so hates her own daughter for being younger and more beautiful, she wants her dead. Siobhan Reilly is the chatty, lovable lady in question who wins the heart of a prince – although in his spare moments, Robert Jack joins Tony Ventre and Harry Ward in being everything from ghosts and courtiers to dwarves, the latter calling for the funnest doubling/trebling routine you'll see anywhere this season.

And I doubt if you'll find anything more darkly glamorous and knowingly wicked than Kenny Miller's Snow White at the Citz. Like Michael Cohn's film, starring Sigourney Weaver, this version – adapted from the Grimm source by Robert David MacDonald – is as much about love between fathers and daughters as it is about an ageing queen's inability to accept she's losing her sex appeal.

Miller's own designs ensure that Julie Austin's glittering vamp rules a realm of designer-badged decadence, people by sly and clubbers who pose and gyrate to a 21st-century soundtrack of girl groups – but then feisty teen Snow White (Sally Reid) is herself hailed as Destiny's Child, a spot-on reference that, like much else, is instantly recognised by delighted youngsters in the audience.

It's a more complicated storyline than the familiar Disney narrative, but the sheer chutzpah of Miller's approach and the visual impact of his witty production keeps the interest sharp and focussed – witness the back-row grilles singing along inbetween shouting out good advice to Snow White. For Olfants, Miller’s willingness to embrace pop culture and use it to update classic fairytales merits the full paws-up – and the comment that whatever mirror you choose, Kylie’s assets are still Beyonce belief.
The critics were divided the morning I saw Catherine Wheels Theatre Company's The Snow Baby.

One school-age girl declared it 'Brilliant!', punching the air while jumping up and down on the spot. Half-a-dozen younger kids were still throwing snowflakes over each other on the stage when I left, but a significant minority were tear-y-eyed.

The Snow Baby, adapted from a story by Terry Jones, tells of a lonely woman (Gill Robertson, pictured) preparing for Christmas, who wishes for a baby on a dazzlingly bright star. Late on Christmas Eve, the frozen child arrives and for 24 hours the pair go sledging, pull crackers and play together.

So far, so heartwarming, but the problem for some younger ones (the target audience is ages three and over) was possibly that the snow baby looks so much like a ghost.

The woman is initially frightened when there's a knock on her window in the middle of the night and though she quickly warms to her icy visitor, some of the children do not.

However, Rick Conte's sensitive puppetry gives the baby a charming, mischievous character and it is testament to his skill that not one of the many questions voiced throughout this performance made reference to his presence on the stage.

Like the last Catherine Wheels show, the excellent Story Of The Little Gentleman, this is a simple story about loneliness and companionship, beautifully told.

Shona Craven

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CHRISTMAS SHOW REVIEW
Snow Baby

What you get: Catherine Wheels is one of the country's top children's theatre companies, and on this evidence it's easy to see why: Gill Robertson's production absolutely brims with the spirit of Christmas. A simple tale of love and friendship magically told, it finds the excellent Claire Knight as heroine alone singleton Miss Kendall, who finds her Christmas Day wishes come true when a little baby made of snow arrives to share her special day. Beautifully lit and played (Rick Conte is a skilled and discreet presence as puppeteer). It's accessible, good-natured festive fun, with the emphasis as much on the physical as the text. Designer Karen Tennent's set, with its fold-down flaps and revolving door, has as many surprises as an advent calendar. And while it could be argued that in terms of narrative the story is somewhat lacking in depth, what it most definitely doesn't lack is warmth.

Star turn: Knight (puppeted) turns in a fine, funny, child-friendly performance and Shona Reppe's

ART REVIEW
Works On Paper

This modest but interesting gallery in Stockbridge has recently celebrated its first anniversary, and this show collects small drawn works by a variety of the artists who have exhibited in that time or are pencilled in for the next year. Perhaps the biggest compliment that can be paid to the gallery is that it has managed to balance the pretty and the conceptually solid. Graham Plack's Of Man And Angel and Patti Yuill's Scott, for example, are nicely rendered portraits. Michael Croik's lone architectural drawing (pictured) is reduced to a detached pattern in the absence of any comparative works by him. Essentially, that sums up the show - an interesting taster for many artists you would like to see more of. David Pollock

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