

A Snow White Christmas ? the faery tale sequel

By Constance Scrafield

The story of Snow White is partly, at least, about her having made off with the Magic Mirror from the wicked witch who was her step mother and, later, changed into the old hag that gave her the famous poisoned apple.

Theatre Orangeville's production of A Snow White Christmas ? the faery tale sequel to the old Grimms brothers' story, adapted by Disney, takes place a couple of decades after her rescue from the apple by (in the Disney version) a kiss from Prince Charming. However, he subsequently left her for Cinderella.

It opens to Snow White's owning a candy shop, called the Sweet Shoppe, pronounced 'sweet' because the 'a' is silent. Her shop is run and the products made by her troupe of urchins whom she has saved, at various times, from living in the streets. Chief among these is Max, the 'Artful Dodger' character, delightfully delivered by Katie Pound.

The 'mini' of the gang is young Prudence portrayed by the diminutive and equally charming Peyton Lawrence-Page. Without saying a thing until the very end, when she pronounces the 'mots-justes' for the evening, little Peyton steals the scene on a pretty regular basis, much to the audience's amusement.

In truth, this is a musical with some dialogue, for there are lots of songs, each with a whole tale to tell. The show begins in singing, with most the characters, bar Snow White herself, introducing themselves and setting up the ensuing plot.

They are Freddie and Derek, the not-so-villainous villains. Timm Hughes, as Freddie, and Bobby Prochaska, as Derek, are so much fun with their spoofy Cockney accents and Derek's lapses into dumb honesty. They are wonderful.

Stephen Sparks gives us Vince Charming, a role that has him whirling and twirling through the whole evening, spouting a run of dialogue like a fountain of jokey 15th century English. Sparks does the whole thing with fluidity and fun, clearly indulging his own propensity for humorous hyperbole.

As the exterior of the Sweet Shoppe turns to display the interior, we meet the beautiful, if cranky, Snow White, hardened by her early experiences and ready to use her urchins as needs be. Amy Sellors is Snow White and she brings considerable talent and pizzazz to the part.

Very soon after our meeting Snow White, in comes her Fairly Good Mother, played by Rebecca Poff. Poor Fairly Good Mother must deal with a dysfunctional magic wand and a broken heart of years ago. One of David Nairn's greatest strengths is his casting, for Poff is terrific in what is actually quite a demanding role with songs that ask a lot of her ? and she nails them, no problem.

Naturally, our villains must hatch a devilish plan of crime to improve their impoverished lot. After all, there exists a Magic Mirror. What will foil them ? another villain, worse than they? Or Derek's absent minded honesty? Perhaps, Love can win the day!

Kudos to Nairn for bringing the whole business together in such a fine and polished way. Even with all the elements of farce woven into this production, there is clarity and symmetry to the production.

The choreography complements to the production beautifully, designed by Stephanie Graham, who has an impressive CV. It is the first time we have seen Bobby Prochaska actually dance and he is great, as are they all.

Once more, Beckie Morris, 'the most glamorous carpenter in the business,' has designed and overseen the production of a set that is simply fabulous. Everything is good to look at, every minute.

Outside are stone walls and wood trim ? a typical northern village house, seemingly so ponderous. Inside is the candy shop that goes on forever, with little brightly coloured parcels and ribbons throughout.

The set swings between inside and out; both sides are great and there is no intermittent shuffling of anything. Just gorgeous.

A Snow White Christmas runs until Dec. 22. Tickets are available at the Box Office on Broadway; by telephone at 519-942-3423 or online at www.theatreorangeville.ca