

REVIEW – Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland: Edinburgh Lyceum

☒ Costumes, props and sets (pew!) Designer, Francis O’Connor, might be suspected of researching the Caterpillar’s hookah and mushrooms with more than due diligence. It readily explains Edinburgh born Director, Anthony Neilson being in league with wild abandon and glorious excess in all areas. The whole production is a boggling, giddy juggling act of spinning visual tropes and delerious trompe l’oeil – if you are a little bit mad already. The seamless trickery-boo device that saw Alice near instantaneously magic small to fit through the impossibly small door is a jaw-dropper. Promisingly Steampunk Panto. Several adults were ☒ perplexicatingly anxious to explain to their charges that the Caterpillar’s hookah was his ‘vape’ way of ridding himself of the innocuous grip of nicotine. The rest were having none of it, biting their knuckles in hilarity to contain the outrageous references to back-track taped 60s psychedelic music and kitsch (and of course totally un PC) Fu Man Chu opium dens. Likewise with Video Designer, Jamie MacDonald’s, crucially hip retro-referencing the mid 60s cult hit TV series Time Tunnel as Alice spins down the rabbit hole – a totally groovy delight for the grandparents.

☒ Young and old alike seem to be glued, gloriously glued to their seats during this near two hours rib-tickling, ticking time bomb fantasia full of rabbit hole, looking glass enchantment. Unleashing a magical matrix of surreal silliness, ludicrous logical incongruities and more bursting colour than an exploding rainbow, Anthony Neilson, might just blow wind in the face of caution and allow the cast some extra Panto banter licence with the kids – on the press night, there were aching gaps begging and gagging for that Forth Bridge sized

'fourth wall' to be broken through and exploited.

The Byzantine bee-winged 'Dutchess' saw her opportunity and ran with it. At £3.50 the souvenir programme is a magical delight in itself. There are puzzles and word-searches accessible to adults.



Photos Drew Farrell