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STAGEBUZZ.COM

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2009

Review – Jack and the Soy Beanstalk (New York International Fringe Festival, Wide Eyed Productions)

Review by Erin Winebark

Photos by Matt Bresler



Once upon a time, in a land not that far away, a young man named Jack was charged with selling “Old Smoky,” the family pickup truck, in order to get some money, because the cost of a gas was “a hundred gabillion dollars” a gallon. He tried to sell it to a big corporate farm, but it turned out that they already had a clunker truck to fit their every need. Luckily the next

FALL INTERNSHIP

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farm he went to was a small organic farm, and the kindly farmer traded Jack's truck for seventeen magical soybeans. Not realizing how truly magical the soybeans were, Jack flushed them down the toilet, and awoke to find a magical soy beanstalk growing out of the bowl. Naturally, he climbed up the beanstalk and met Mrs. Big, Mr. Big (who had a giant job), and his golden iHarp, but when Mr. Big tried to turn Jack into his favorite food, "canned servant," he quickly climbed back down the beanstalk and chopped it down with a conveniently-located axe.

Such is the stuff of *Jack and the Soy Beanstalk*, a modern-day adaptation of the classic children's tale. Jerrod Bogard (Book, Lyrics, Direction, Set, and Puppets) is just a tad too artistically brilliant for my tastes. His clear abundance of creativity, talent, and fantastic humor makes the rest of us look like we're not really trying. Throughout the whole show, I couldn't quite wrap my head around the fact that the same person wrote the book/lyrics, directed, AND came up with the terrifically simple-yet-creative set, complete with shadow puppets.

Similar sentiments come to mind in regards to Sky Seals, the Composer/Guitarist/Actor/Musical Director. The absolutely delightful music goes far beyond traditional kid's fare, incorporating many styles from melodramatic show-tunes to rap. I truly admire people who can "do it all," with regards to the theater, and the pair of Bogard/Seals certainly fit the bill. I'm not sure which one came up with the vocal sound effects to accompany the shadow puppets, but they are one of the most original ideas I've ever seen (or heard).

The cast bursts with energy and amazing voices. While no member was weak, Laura Hall's (Momma) performance stands out, as does Jake Paque (Golden i-Harp), whose white-guy rapping made me laugh uncontrollably' and his costume, designed by Sabrina Khan, made it that much better. Even the dancing was great, thanks to Nam Holtz's choreography, and one of the funniest moments was an homage to Beyonce's "Single Ladies" music video.



What makes this kid's show unique is that it was wonderfully entertaining for both the kids and the adults who came with them.

with social networking outreach, and assisting with general administrative duties.

For further information, please contact [Byrne Harrison](#).

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Having seen children’s shows as an adult in the past, I came into it expecting very little (how enjoyable can a children’s musical be, after all?), and came out wildly impressed. And even more than the entertainment factor, it’s message of environmental awareness is one that we can all appreciate. As Momma says, “Imagination is a renewable resource,” and this show’s got plenty to spare.

Jack and the Soy Beanstalk

Book and Lyrics by Jerrod Bogard

Music by Sky Seals

Directed by Jerrod Bogard

Stage Manager: Matt Bresler

Musical Direction by Sky Seals

Musical Arrangements, Additional Composition & Assistant Music

Director: Emily Fellner

Choreography by Nam Holtz

Scene Painting by Jen Mcabee

i-Harp and Goose design by Sabrina Kahn

Set and Puppets by Jerrod Bogard

Featuring: Carlos Avilas (Jack), Laura Hall (Momma), Brianne Mai (Mrs. Big), Okieriete Onaodowan (The Guard/Mr. Big), Jake Paque (Golden i-Harp), Sky Seals (the Minstrel/Farmer)

Dixon Place

161 Chrystie Street

Saturday, August 15 at 12 PM

Sunday, August 16 at 4:15 PM

Tuesday, August 18 at 5:30 PM

Wednesday, August 19 at 7:15 PM

Friday, August 21 at 7:30 PM

Visit [FringeNYC](#) for more information.

POSTED BY BYRNE HARRISON AT 12:45 PM 

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