
BOO!

Windmill Performing Arts & Mainstreet Theatre

Carrick Hill

Until January 21

Review by Stephanie Johnson

"Boo" is a disparate play - a spooky slapstick comedy for all the family.

It is fun and energetic, a moveable feast in the setting of the rambling Carrick Hill gardens.

The action starts as a father Gerard Rumble (Rory Walker) and his daughter Grace (Sarah John) join the picnicking throngs of the "Boo" family audience. An argument is sparked by the daughter's reluctance to attend a cultural event. This quickly escalates as Grace spots someone she knows from school, Laura Jacobson (Amber McMahon). Grace ducks for cover embarrassed at being seen outside of school at a kid's play. The fun begins.

Next enters a zany storyteller Frederick Von Castle (Hew Parham). Von Castle leads the audience, Pied Piper style, through the gardens stopping to tell his ghostly stories.

What ensues is a crazy concoction of different characters and scenarios and much uneven mayhem.

Catherine Fitzgerald's "Boo" isn't really scary, although it is rather ghoulish occasionally bordering on cartoon-like carnage and what some might consider rough language for youngsters.

It is a strange brew of slapstick comedy and ghostly stories that manages to mesmerize its young audience and elicit laughs from older ones.

All of the actors do well to capture a young audience's attention in an outdoor setting - right after a picnic dinner!

Amber McMahon stands-out as the nasty bully Laura while Sarah John hits just the right note as timid and belligerent Grace.

Rory Walker successfully juggles his alternating roles as father and various poltergeists. Hew Parham is delightfully ghoulish as Frederik von Castle.

The venue of the leafy lawns of Carrick Hill offering a picnic and play make this an ideal outing for a family. The child audience on opening night ranged from tiny tots to 12 year olds. All seemed to enjoy the action. "Spook-tastic" was the comment heard from one 10-year-old.

It is just a pity that the stately Carrick Hill home could not also be utilized as part of the eerie setting.