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## **EMILY LOVES TO BOUNCE**

### **Patch Theatre Company**

Odeon Theatre, Norwood

Until March 19

Review by Andy Ahrens

For the age 4-8 age group Patch has created a beautiful blend of sound, mime and illusion. Some boundaries are broken as we venture into a mix of visual images and content. It works.

'Emily Loves to Bounce' is delicious. From the moment we see a peeping figure emerge from a cardboard box, the audience of both adults and children are drawn into a captivating experience of creative theatre.

The show blends three stories by Stephen Michael King – 'Patricia', 'Henry and Amy' and 'Emily Loves to Bounce'. It is intriguing, mystical, funny and irresistible.

Technical aspects are a surprisingly dominant feature for a show designed for children. However, director Dave Brown has cleverly integrated them to successfully enhance the action. Superb lighting design by Geoff Cobham literally carries the show from start to finish. We see lit up boxes on stage literally become characters themselves.

Children have no problems coping with this illusionistic approach. After all, when it comes to imagination, children have the greatest grasp of it.

Like a narration to the story, musicians Belinda Gehlert and Zoe Barry provide a musical backdrop to the creative play happening about them. Performers Jon Bode and Astrid Pill and the two musicians give the impression of children playing in a playground – having fun, having adventure and enjoying being children.

'Emily Loves to Bounce' is a masterstroke of ingenuity. It encompasses mime, dance, humour, illusion, music, storytelling and audience participation all in the space of 50 minutes. Thoroughly absorbing.