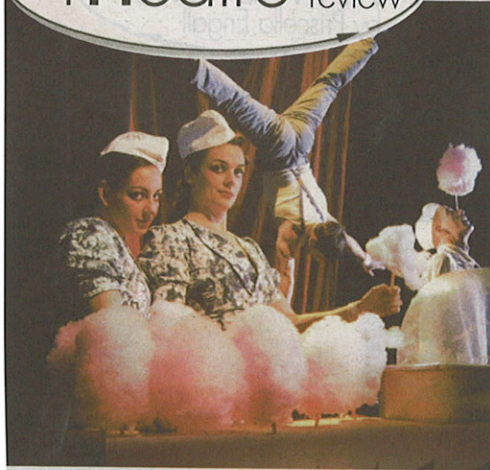


Theatre review



The Candy Butchers – A Circus Sweetmeat

Sydney Opera House Studio

Until Nov. 27

A performance by the Candy Butchers can best be described as anarchy on stage. The four piece vaudevillian troop of Azaria Universe, Jess Love, DJ Garner and Derek Ives, use dark humour and traditional circus skills to take us into their twisted world of love, loss and everything else in between.

Acrobatics and trapeze work are mixed with actors throwing each other down the stairs, hanging from metal buckets suspended high above the audience and selling fairy floss and cutlery to the punters as they enter the theatre.

The cast are dressed like characters from a 1920's silent movie and each of the characters they portray goes on a journey. Some of the journeys are more technically and visually interesting than others. A stand out is Derek Ives' clown who falls in love with a wheelbarrow, a 44 gallon drum and then a shovel. He marries the shovel, accidentally kills it and recites a love poem as he tries to hang himself.

Part of the big hook of a circus act is the risk factor, and there is plenty of physical risk in this show. The name Candy Butchers appropriately comes from a scam in the 1920's that involved selling boxes of sticky toffee to theatre patrons.

The patrons were told that jewellery was buried in some of the toffee boxes and a stooge in the audience would pretend to win, pull the item out and then secretly return it. The whole thing was a con with things appearing to be good on the surface but dark forces at work underneath.

With The Candy Butchers, what starts out as a circus act on a prettily decorated stage slowly disintegrates? The set falls down and the music gets completely out of whack with what the performers are doing.

JAMELLE WELLS

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