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Imago Theatre's production of 'Frogz' brings fun and laughter to Lehigh community 0

BY KELLY MCCOY ON FEBRUARY 24, 2015

NEWS

Baker Hall resonated with the laughter of small children and adults on Saturday due to the antics of the unusual characters presented in Imago Theatre's production of "Frogz."

The show was a blend of acrobatics, mime and modern dance that featured several vignettes of varying creatures and characters.

Based in Portland, Oregon, Imago Theatre has been running performances of "Frogz" since its creation in 1979. The show has played on Broadway twice and has toured through Jordan and Egypt. The company is preparing for an eight-show tour in France in March. The show drew a large crowd of diverse ages.

Estefania Perdomo, '15, was one of the members of the large audience.

"Sometimes simplicity and innocence is the best entertainment for all ages," she said.

The simplicity of the show is inherent in the lack of props on stage—except for a few chairs for very large penguins to play a game of musical chairs—and the absence of dialogue throughout the show. Five skilled dancers comprise the cast and use mime and a small amount of gibberish to communicate with the audience.

The show commenced with three dancers in full frog costume leaping about and chasing "flies" around the stage. What followed was a dizzying display of seemingly floating glow-in-the-dark sea creatures; luminous lizards, larger-than-life accordions; a giant baby, accompanied by mischievous orbs; mimes with a penchant for stacking boxes, a graceful, oversized paper bag; and many more acts.

Cathy Sacher a resident of Allentown came to the show with friend Bill Martin and her young granddaughter Georgia Fay.

Sacher said she particularly enjoyed how the dancers' body language expressed so much. Fay, dressed in a tutu and sparkly Ugg boots said her favorite part of the performance was the frogs.

"It was fun figuring out what they were trying to convey," Sacher said.

Sacher has been taking her kids to see shows at Zoellner for years, and carries on the tradition with Georgia.

"We're so fortunate to have culture like this in the area brought in by the university," she said.

The display of culture ended in a grand reveal of the five dancers. Dancer Mark Mullaney of Portland, Oregon is the newest member of this troupe, having just joined this year. Mullaney auditioned for the show while in Portland.

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"There were a lot of other dancers there that were more talented than I am," Mullaney said, laughing. "Somehow I got lucky."

The show also features interaction between the dancers and the audience. At one point, a mischievous orb stole a shoe from a young audience member in the first row, using it to play a lively game of catch with its fellow mischievous orb.

"We normally try to take sneakers," Mullaney said.

He also said that the audience members are normally very receptive to these actions. However, the glow-in-the-dark lizards have the potential for fright.

"We had a whole front row of panicking children one show," he said. "It was a good audience today, though."

While Mullaney has just started with Imago Theatre, Kayla Scrivner, the production stage manager, is well into her fifth season with the company.

Scrivner said she does a little bit of everything, including schedules, itineraries, advance work, hotels, flights, and equipment care, to name a few.

Scrivner started out as a dancer at Portland State University and eventually transitioned to backstage work during her time there. Scrivner continues to work at Portland State today in addition to Imago Theatre.

Sacher had nothing but positive comments about the show.

"It was fabulous and so imaginative," she said. "The costumes were fantastic."

"I would recommend this to those who are open-minded and willing to accept the beauty of theatre." Perdomo said.

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