

Melbourne Festival: House of Dreaming

26th October 2012 | *The House of Dreaming*

Reviewed by: Anne-Marie Peard

I didn't want to leave *The House of Dreaming*. Neither did my artistic advisor, five-year-old Scout.



There's picture books (good ones) and origami in the waiting room and you get a costume and a magic talisman: I was loving it from the first moment.

Arena Theatre have created a living story book. The experience is how I remember first reading picture books. They were so real that I felt I was in the pages and living it.

Entering the life-size house in a group of three as a rabbit, wizard and king/queen, welcome to a world of magic mirrors and telephones, stories on a bed, a magician, secret doors, more secret doors, rooms full of things to touch, singing masks, flowers and a beautiful story about how wonderful it is to have a child. Each room is a new page with new story, more clues and more to explore.

Like the best picture books, it's not vital to follow the story because there is so much to see and it's so exciting to move/crawl/dance into each room. The story and marvelling at the technology are for the grown ups, but it was so much more fun to just play.

I asked Scout what her favourite bit was; she said "Everything". I couldn't agree more. Every room is so full of wow! that it's impossible to choose a favourite part.

She was a bit nervous at first, and rightly so; there are strangers and who wants to go in to a big dark room when you're not sure what's in there. This lasted until the first room.

Every child deserves stories, to always know the love of telling and sharing stories, and to experience the wonder of *The House of Dreaming*.

If you have children in your life who are around 5 to 10, this is something they won't forget. Neither will you.