



Cautionary Tales For Children

Beat Magazine

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***Cautionary Tales for Children* is a steampunk cabaret, taking children's musical theatre to a whole new level. The folks at *Arena Theatre Company* have put together an ensemble to get toes tapping, adults chuckling and kids screaming at the top of their lungs.**

Cautionary Tales for Children is one of three performances presented by The Arts Centre as a part of their *Carnegie 18 New Music Theatre Series*. In its second year running, the *Carnegie 18* showcases some of the most promising musical theatre performances still in development stage, giving audiences the opportunity to see what really happens behind the red curtain.

Directed by Chris Kohn, *Cautionary Tales for Children* is inspired by the writings of Hilaire Belloc of the same name. A satire of the popular cautionary tales of the 19th century, Belloc's stories warned of the grisly and gruesome consequences for children's naughty behavior; such as "Matilda: Who told Lies and was Burned to Death."

Claudia O'Doherty's adaptation follows a team of time-travelling do-gooders, dedicated to setting nasty children straight, with their toe-curling, moral tales. O'Doherty has written an easy to follow, lyrical script, considering the complexity of Belloc's original writings.

Composer, Mark Jones (Who bears an uncanny resemblance to comedian and *Black Books* star, Bill Bailey) tinkles the ivories with his upbeat and often haunting melodies, setting the cabaret tone throughout.

Bert Labonte, Rosemarie Harris and Christen O'Leary give engaging performances, improvising seamlessly with the audience, especially the underage participants.

Once all the final details have been tweaked and the show's kinks have been smoothed out, *Cautionary Tales for Children* will be one stellar show for kids and adults alike.