

Theatre: The House of Dreaming

Oct. 16, 2012, 3:34 p.m.



THE HOUSE OF DREAMING

Where: MTC Theatre, Lawler Studio

When: October 23-27

Call: 131 600

Visit: melbournefestivak.com.au

Preview: Stephen A Russell

Have you ever wandered through an old house and sensed it was alive, that its memories were soaked into the very fabric of the walls?

Captivating children for years, that's exactly what Arena Theatre Company conjures this Melbourne Festival, when *The House of Dreaming* awakens in the MTC's Lawler Studio.

Pushing the boundaries of imagination, groups of three will explore a mind-bending old house with nine rooms full of crazy creations, from a spooky attic to a subterranean cave-like haunt.

Arena's artistic director, Chris Kohn, has pulled together the finest interactive artists to create an immersive adventure for all the senses.

"There's an antediluvian feel about this old house that was lived in many years ago, by a husband and wife we never actually meet, but we hear their stories and their voices," he says. "We wanted to create a very dreamlike experience for kids and their families to almost float through."

Pulling together the rich talents of designer Danielle Brustman, composer Jethro Woodward, video designer Martyn Coutts and Richard Vabre on lighting, Kohn also enlists a magical new technology in Matt Gardiner's "oribotics".

"His twin specialties are origami and robotics," explains Kohn. "They are these quite complex, folding flower-like mechanisms in a nylon material that's pleated. They light up and respond to the movement of the audience."

Explorers will discover that by moving in close, these oribotic flowers will flourish, opening in a rainbow of light. "They also 'talk' to each other, so if one opens it creates a beautiful cascade amongst the others in the room."

Visitors will also encounter actors along the way, and it's not just for the kids. "I think adults will get to be a bit more childlike while they are in there," says Kohn.