

## **MIDNITE**

### **Windmill, OzOpera & State Theatre Company**

The Dunstan Playhouse

Until July 16

Review by Andy Ahrens

It is a bold move to create an opera designed especially for children in an age where opera struggles to connect with young people. For this, the creators of “Midnite” need to be congratulated for their venture.

“Midnite” tells the story of wild colonial boy, “Captain Midnite”, in his bushranging adventures based on the novel by Randolph Stow.

Composer, Rafaele Marcellino and librettist, Doug Macleod, have done well to embrace the characters and spirit of the novel and condense them into a 65-minute production.

The spectacle of opera remains intact. “Midnite” bubbles with bright colourful costumes, props, puppetry and romance. There is even a sense of pantomime amidst it all.

For the most part, the small cast of seven players live up to the spectacle. They have to work very hard to reach the children in the audience with a singing style that may be largely foreign to them. But the simplicity of the story and a few well-chosen patches of dialogue keep the plot progressing at a reasonable pace.

Khat (Anna Margolis), dressed in a very versatile cat outfit, is delightful as Midnite’s intelligent and witty pet. Trooper O’Grady (Gary Rowley) is equally as entertaining and amusing as he provides some of the wit of the show.

In a more serious role, Laura Wellbowne (Annabella Redman), as Midnite’s love interest gives a polished performance. She has just the right dose of sweetness to make her obvious match up with Captain Midnite adorably wrong.

“Midnite” works because of the spectacle, nonsense and the fun of it all. If you want to introduce children to opera at a young age, then this is the perfect introduction.