



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS

Victorian Youth Theatre

Odeon Theatre

Until 16 Mar 2013

Review by Tony Busch

Based on a 4500 line poem by 12th century Sufi poet Farad Ud-Din Attar, The Conference of the Birds tells the story of a group of birds who undergo an epic journey to find the Simorgh, the legendary phoenix.

Each different species of bird in the company reflects a particular human fault that prevents man from attaining enlightenment. The journey they undergo is full of hardships and dangers which cause many of them to give up but eventually 30 birds cross the final seven valleys to find that what they have been seeking is their collective oneness with God.

Director Robert Coates has created a seamless narrative that blends movement, storytelling and music in a performance that belies the average age of his cast.

The piece was created in a mere two weeks and it is to the credit of his young cast and their commitment to the piece that they have come so far in such a short time. It is heartening to see the discipline these young performers display.

Performances are excellent across the entire cast with Liliana Dalton shouldering the major burden as the Hoopoe, the leader of the birds. She is ably matched by Bryce Nichols as the Heron, Aidan Burrage as the Falcon, Andjela Matijas as the Sparrow, Charlotte Moodie as the Dove, Bridie O'Dare as the Duck, the Walking Bird and the Bat, Morgan Wherrett as the Partridge and the Owl, Aurelea Kunkel as the Parrot, Joseph Lai and Sophie Anderson as the Exotic Birds and Nicola De Rosbo-Davies as the Nightingale. Each presented a finely crafted character which never flagged.

Chelsea Butler, Declan Kelly, Harrison Lane, Sam Morrison, Sam Rowe, Bella Rushkin and Samantha Stacey play an assortment of characters the birds meet along the way, all playing four or five different roles with ease and having distinctly different characters for each.

Excellent costumes by Jennifer McKenzie and wonderful lighting by Linda Hum makes this production a joy to see.

Congratulations to all concerned in bringing such a fine piece of entertainment to the Fringe.

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)