

Show and Tell: 'Beauty and the Beast' Panto at Hale's Palladium - ParentMap

Monday, January 5 2015, 9:34 AM

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Show and Tell: 'Beauty and the Beast' Panto at Hale's Palladium

Rowdy, raucous fun for all ages, with Hale's beer as refreshment

By Gemma Alexander

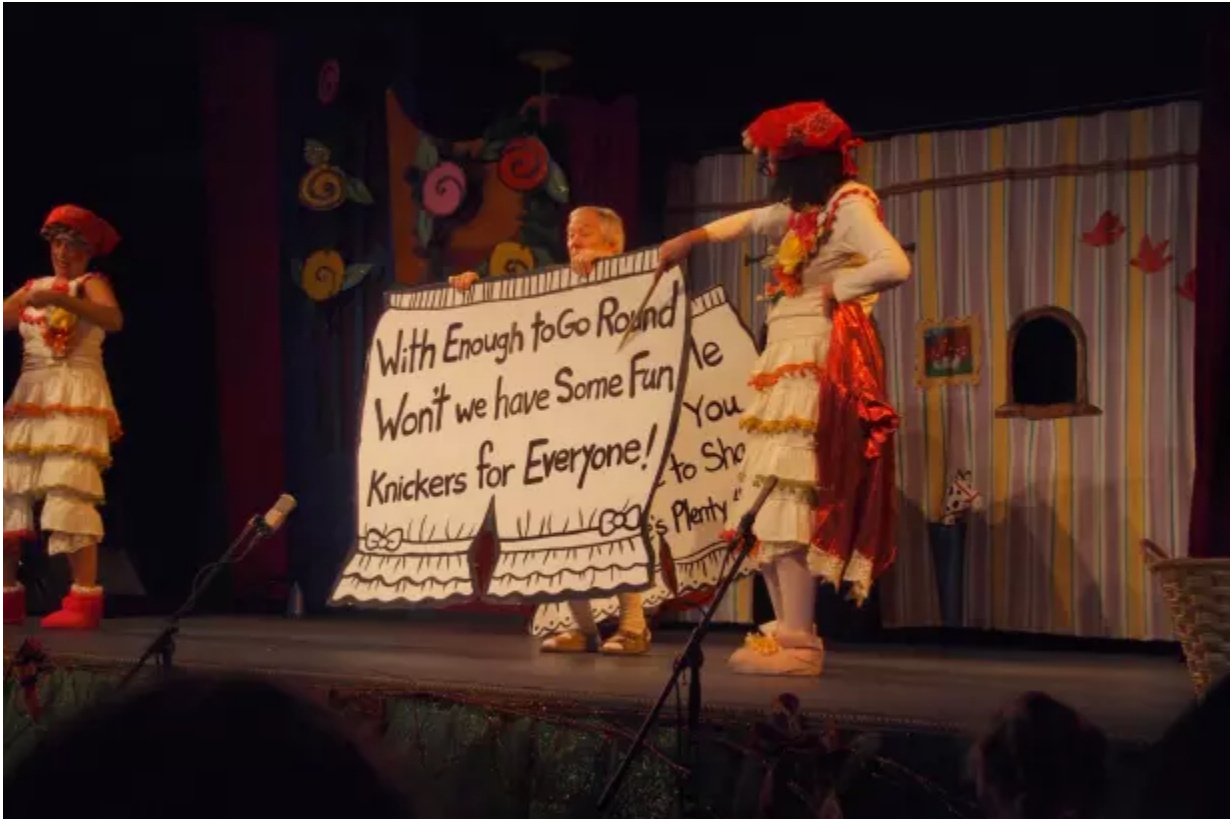


The earthy English tradition of holiday panto offers Americans an antidote to the Pinterestization of Christmas. If you are unfamiliar with the tradition, panto is short for “pantomime,” but there is no miming in a panto. In panto, half of the rough-hewn fun is that nothing looks quite right – actors are cross-dressed, fairies and ghosts appear in stories where they don't belong, and the jokes are funny to parents and children for completely different reasons.

In a holiday season full of fancy-dress parties and social obligations, panto is an opportunity for the whole family to relax and get rowdy. Panto shares elements with old American melodramas, particularly in its use of character stereotypes and audience participation. Audience members are encouraged to scream and shout. They boo the villain, cheer the hero, and even argue with the actors: "Oh no, it isn't!" The play is funniest when the audience is most involved.

Panto has been an integral part of English holiday celebrations for centuries, but Simon Neale founded the Fremont Players to bring the ritual to Seattle about ten years ago. Every year since, the Fremont Players have brought a holiday panto to Hale's Palladium, the venue associated with another English tradition, the brewpub (Hale's Ales Brewpub in this case).

This year, the Fremont Players present a panto interpretation of the classic fairy tale ***Beauty and the Beast***. With a sing-along theme song of "Knickers for Everyone," it's not quite the Brothers Grimm, and the only resemblance to Disney is that the leading lady is named Belle. In this rendition, Belle confides in her bearded Aunt Matilda, fairies manipulate fate to the tune of '50s pop hits and a horse named Mr. Fantastique performs amazing feats of statistical calculation.



"Knickers for Everyone"

And of course, everyone on stage knows there is no such thing as ghosts. ("Oh yes, there is!") The entire production is accompanied by live music and corny sound effects courtesy of the Fremont Philharmonic Orchestra. After the performance, the costumed actors join the audience, where they happily answer questions and pose for pictures.

Tips

There is plenty of slapstick aimed at kids and innuendo lobbed right over kids' heads. Because no one is expected to

sit quietly, the panto is appropriate even for the youngest audiences.

Parents can enjoy one of Hale's ales during the performance, and if popcorn and sausages are not sufficient fare, shows are timed around the dinner hour. The brewpub has a seating section for families, but reservations are recommended on performance nights.

It can be chilly inside The Palladium's converted warehouse, so parents sitting theater style on folding chairs might need sweaters. Children will remain quite warm where they congregate on the floor in front of the elevated stage and rarely remain seated.

If you go ...

Where: [Hale's Palladium](#), 4301 Leary Way N.W., Seattle

When: Now through Jan. 11: Saturdays 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sundays 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Tickets: \$7 children 12 and under and seniors 65 and older; adults \$13. Advance tickets are highly recommended, as shows often sell out. Tickets are available through [Brown Paper Tickets](#).

December 26, 2014