



WINTER WONDERLAND: A scene from *Wintuk*, through January 2, 2011 at Theater at Madison Square Garden. Photo: Richard Termine

Theater Review

Cirque du Soleil's *Wintuk* is delightful holiday family fun

Wintuk

Cirque du Soleil

Based on an original script by Richard Blackburn

Directed by Fernand Rainville

Wednesday through Sunday (with exception of December 21, 27, 28)

Through January 2, 2011

Theater at Madison Square Garden

7th Avenue at 32nd Street

(866-858-0058), www.cirquedusoleil.wintuk

By David NouNou

Another treat for the senses, courtesy of Cirque du Soleil, *Wintuk* is geared for the entire family rather than some of its adult-themed, sexy and sensual predecessors such as *Allegria*, *Corteo* or *Mystere*. If one is familiar with the Cirque product, *Wintuk* will not disappoint. The storyline is thin and inconsequential; however, the audio and visual effects are a thrill as usual.

The music, be it pop-themed, classical, Celtic, violins, or the heart-pounding beat of the drums, it is always thrilling to sit through. The music is fresh and original and a constant delight for the ears. Visually, a lot of the sequences are endearing and enjoyable. The acts are more difficult to describe since one isn't given a program to list them all; they have a familiar look to them as if we saw them all before on "The Ed Sullivan Show," but they are done in one sitting instead of a weekly installment. One can live without the skateboarding act in the beginning that's been done to death, and the annoying "funnyman/clown," with the squeaky, high-pitched babbling voice, which is more of a nuisance and cloying than funny.

The rest of the acts, although familiar, are jaw-droppingly good. Be it the young lady with the multiple ball act, the high-wire walker, the Hula Hoop novelty dance, the soaring ballerina or the finale consisting of acrobats hurled with poles, they are all wonderful and spectacular in their own way. All the acts involve different props, and it is amazing how they are incorporated. Visually, it is thrilling to see how some of the bodies defy gravity and seem to be suspended in mid air.

To fully appreciate *Wintuk*, now playing its final season in New York, one has to remember that this is designed for the holiday season as a show to which one can take the whole family. Don't expect sensuality, hot and sultry because, after all, it is set in a winter wonderland. This is "G" entertainment at

its best. At the Saturday matinee performance that I attended, more than half the audience was made up of children, ages 4 to 14 and beyond, and they were all riveted to the stage. Not a single child misbehaved, cried, or was a nuisance; they were all under the magical spell of *Wintuk*, and, after all, isn't that the ultimate goal for any show?

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