

# Fevered Sleep

Brilliant

## SELECTED PRESS REVIEWS FOR BRILLIANT



☆☆☆☆ Lyn Gardner - The Guardian 17/07/08

Light years away from the dull literalness, enforced jollity and page-to-stage adaptations of so much theatre for children, *Fevered Sleep's Brilliant* more than lives up to its name. It follows a child preparing for bed and sinking into the dark, mysterious world of night and the imagination. The experience feels like astral projection - as if you were looking down on yourself, or you were an astronaut staring back from space at the world, though in this case it is the moon that engenders a sense of awe and smallness in the face of the universe.

The director, David Harradine, created the intriguing *An Infinite Line* at the Brighton festival earlier this year, and this piece, intended for three and four-year-olds but a delight for all ages, explores similar themes of light - only better, because more discipline and a contained running time allow the show to blossom. Like *An Infinite Line*, this has live musical accompaniment and an installation feel. "I can see the universe and the universe can see me," says Laura Cubitt's child in a show that becomes a series of mirrored reflections bouncing back off each other.

It's truthful, too, about the little games and rituals we invoke at bedtime to ward off our fear of the dark; about that extraordinary moment when your body folds into sleep and you enter a new world. This exquisite little show is a giant step forward for the Polka.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Ronnie Haydon - Time Out 24/07/08

The simple act of switching off the light and attempting sleep fires up the imagination of the wakeful child in this luminous production for three and four year olds.

Designed and directed by Fevered Sleep's David Harradine, whose fascination with lighting informs much of his work, this is a slumber party that explores that dreamy state before drifting off, opening out into an enchanted landscape with bright new potential for play.

Laura Cubitt, dressed for bed, plays the clearly not-very-tired child bidding her goodnights to the world outside her window. Clutching her toy stag, she embraces the darkness with one tug on the light-pull. She pummels her pillow on the bare dark stage, turning this way and that to get comfortable, and her young audience keep a respectful silence.

As sleep continues to evade the restless child, she discovers a world of light behind the curtains, and the children watching begin to reach out, fascinated by the pools of light created on the floor by a score of little torches, which are gathered up into a bouquet of beams shining in the arms of the performer. This is the first of a series of illuminated episodes that pierce the darkness.

As a lone violinist plays amid swathes of dry ice, occasionally lit by pools of soft light, a dreamscape is created by shafts of colour, a mirrorball and a massive floating moon that at one point bounces around the girl like a playful puppy.

This is a multi-textured bedtime ritual, wordless and freeform, which succeeds in wrapping itself around the children and holding them fascinated in its grasp.