

arts shorts

BEAR VS. SQUIRREL

Great stories are handed down, through the generations, and *Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear* is no exception. Author Ken Kesey heard the tale, or should I say tail, from his own grandmother, and the narrative carries with it the weight and imagery of a yarn spun so well – and so long – that one ceases to remember when, exactly, it began.

Now local audiences can see *Little Tricker* reinvented for the stage, when the Eugene Ballet Company presents this work for children along with “The Red Pony” and “Channel Surfing.”

Choreographer Toni Pimble’s family shows have a wry humor, never failing to keep things spirited enough for the adults in the audience. (Bless her for that.) And her dances for children carry the invention and sense of wonder that make the narrative come alive. She doesn’t pander to kids; the movement is engaging and thoughtful, sophisticated, but ever human, ever approachable.

Did I mention this show has a 16-foot bear? Designed by Tony-award winning *Lion King* puppeteer Michael Curry, Mister Big Double himself stands shoulders above his handlers, and his diaphanously furry body and warm eyes belie a grumpy goofiness. This is not the smartest bear in the woods. “I’m DOUBLE BIG and I’m Double Bad and I’m DOUBLE DOUBLE HONGRY a-ROARRR!”

The book, with words by Ken Kesey and marvelous illustrations by Barry Moser, has launched delightful interpretations in movement and costume. All our furry favorites, from *Little Tricker the Squirrel* to *Charlie Charles the Woodchuck*, *Sally Snipsister the Marten*, *Longrellers the Rabbit* and even mudpuppies and minnows, dance in this production.

Little Tricker is narrated by actor Patrick Torelle, and the production features original music by James Oliverio. Hopefully this show will inspire parents to check out this treasured book from their local children’s libraries. It’s best read aloud, with a glass of buttermilk.

The ballet plays at 8 pm Saturday, Feb. 23, & 2:30 pm Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Hult. Tix available at www.hultcenter.org or 632-5000. – *Rachael Carnes*

BROKEN WITHOUT YOU

Downtown’s little jazz spot that could needs community help. Sometime in the late evening of Feb. 9, two men got into a dispute on the sidewalk near the Jazz Station at 68 W. Broadway, and when one tried to kick the other, he kicked through the plate glass window of the Jazz Station instead. Jams and concerts have been cancelled for the past week and a half, and although the Willamette Jazz Society has raised \$400 of the \$1200 it needs to replace the window, the nonprofit could still use your help. That is, your money: Send checks to the Willamette Jazz Society, PO Box 12194, Eugene, OR 97440; if you’re already a member of the society, you can email office@thejazzstation.org to make a one-time electronic contribution. The Jazz Station’s website is www.thejazzstation.org if you want to learn more about one of downtown’s spots of creativity. – *Suzi Steffen*

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