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CoisCéim Dance's excellent wolf in sheep's clothing

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Mateusz Szczerek and Ivonne Kalter in CoisCéim Dance Theatre's *The Wolf and Peter* by David Bolger
Ros Kavanagh

The Wolf and Peter by David Bolger produced by CoisCéim Dance

Rating: ★★★★★

Peter's curiosity often takes him places he really shouldn't go. Climbing from the audience onto the stage, Peter opens the piano without permission and begins playing with the keys. He knows he shouldn't open the gate and go into the green meadow too, but gates and cages are not to Peter's liking. He hates the monotony of the hours ticking by and yearns to be wild and free, making friends with the animals. But there's a killer on the loose in the woods tonight and Peter just might find his true friends in an unexpected place. Beautifully performed in an exquisite production, David Bolger's "The Wolf and Peter" is a delightful re-imagining of Prokofiev's classic "Peter and the Wolf" by CoisCéim Dance Theatre.

Featuring an international cast of five dancers, “The Wolf and Peter” follows its lonely and longing hero as he escapes into the forest where he meets Bird, Duck and Cat, as well as something possibly more sinister silhouetted in the shadows. Then there are the hunters who like to trap wild beasts in cages. In the end Peter will have a choice to make in a world where not everything is as simple as it seems, where what might at first seem right could well be wrong and only by being true to yourself will you hopefully find where you truly belong.

CoisCéim Dance Theatre’s delightful new production manages to combine the best of classical and modern in both music and dance. Featuring extracts from Prokofiev’s much loved original, along with new music composed by Conor Linehan, “The Wolf and Peter’s” evocative score provides an excellent platform for David’s Bolger’s rich and often playful choreography. Ballet meets contemporary meets hip hop meets breakdance, with even a little moment of “Rock The Boat” thrown in for good measure. Looking at times like a slapstick silent comedy routine, at others crafting moments of unease, darkness and heart aching beauty, always the dancer’s technical excellence is second to none, marrying dance and movement to perfectly describe their characters, with Monica’s Frawley’s excellent costume design helping complete the portrayal. Accompanied on stage by “mad professor” pianist Conor Linehan, dancer’s Ivonne Kalter as the curious Peter and Mateusz Szczerek as the irrepressible Wolf, along with Emma O’Kane as a tetchy Cat, Jonathan Mitchell as the strutting Cockerel and Wojciech Grudziński as the distracted Duck are utterly engaging. Monica Frawley’s simple yet clever set design was wonderfully filled with a multitude of moods, perfectly realised by Sinéad McKenna's sublime lighting design.

Marking CoisCéim Dance Theatre’s 20th anniversary, “The Wolf and Peter” is their first production aimed primarily at young audiences. Yet the key word here is ‘primarily.’ There’s a growing recognition that shows aimed at children are perhaps the dance and theatre world’s best kept secrets. Both the Dublin Dance Festival and Dublin Theatre Festival this year included remarkable productions aimed at young audiences that were outstanding in all departments. It would be a mistake to dismiss “The Wolf and Peter” as something all white and fluffy. This show growls and has some serious bite. “The Wolf and Peter” is a high end production by a top class company operating at the top of their game. Playful, funny, moving, “The Wolf and Peter” stirs the spirit and ignites the imagination, no matter what age you might happen to be.

“The Wolf and Peter” by David Bolger, produced by CoisCéim Dance Theatre runs at the Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire on November 5th.

For further information visit [The Pavilion Theatre](#)

For further information on CoisCéim Dance Theatre visit [CoisCéim](#)

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