

British Theatre Guide

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Snow Child

Emma Reeves, based on Arthur Ransome's adaptation of *The Little Daughter of the Snow*,
music by Oliver Birch

tutti frutti and York Theatre Royal

Arts Centre Washington

1–3 December 2015

The Snow Child lives in the forest during the winter and moves into the high mountains in spring and summer. She enjoys playing in the snow and having fun and her best friend is a fox.

One day, a couple who have been longing for a child of their own manage to bring her to life in their world so she can be their daughter. She's wild and free but for some reason she is really attracted to becoming part of their family. However it is a difficult road and both sides have a lot to learn about each other and about how to live together. In this version (although not in every variation of the story) they do so.

It's told from the Snow Child's point of view. She is the narrator and is constantly talking directly to the young (it's aimed at age 3 upwards) audience, carrying them along with her enthusiasms, happiness and even occasional fears and sadness.

The songs, composed by Oliver Birch, are tuneful and catchy and repeated often enough that they become familiar to the audience, as are the movements associated with them. Young audiences always feel comfortable with the familiar.

The cast of Mei Mac (Snow Child), Paula James (Mother and Fox) and Mark Pearce (Father) establish a good relationship with the audience right from the start, coming out to talk to them as they sit waiting for the show to begin (and saying goodbye to them as they leave) which drew them into the story very quickly and helped hold their attention for the full hour of the show.

And their attention was held: that reliable indicator of young kids' interest, the number of visits to the toilet during the show, said so—a mere five! The audience were mainly Year 1 infants classes but there was one 3-year-old sitting near me with her grandparents and she was fascinated throughout.

In other words, *The Snow Child* really works very well for its intended audience. So involved were they that they were joining in at every possible opportunity—there were shouts of “He’s behind you!” at one point!—and there was a real sense of excitement throughout. tutti frutti has a long track record of producing involving and exciting shows for young children and it shows!

And yes, like all good children's theatre, there's something for the adults to think about too.

Reviewer: [Peter Lathan](#)