

YOU KNOW IT, LISTEN...

"Reprise of the Red Riding Hood"

On Sunday, 8th of January, a performance took place at the Polish Consulate General in NYC, a rather unusual performance, considering the venue.

In the salon covered with carpets and decorated with mirrors in gilded frames, there grew a forest inhabited by characters from a well known, but newly retold fairy tale about the Red Riding Hood. The Polish Theatre Institute since 1984 under Nina Polan's direction, presented a new premiere, this time, a musical by Andrzej Stalony-Dobrzanski and Ewa Kornecka, "Reprise of the Red Riding Hood".

The story of the little girl wandering through the forest with a basket full of goodies for her sick grandmother has been told many times. The best known version was written by the brothers Grimm, but the version presented by Nina Polan's ensemble brought into the story many new and unknown elements. There appeared new characters which by their presence changed many of the previous interpretations of the story. At last we may state clearly that the Wolf is not as terrible as they depict him."

Obviously, I am joking, but quite seriously I must confess that it has been long since I had such a great time at a show, as I did at this performance. What is more I am convinced that everyone enjoyed this Red Riding Hood enormously, children as well as adults. Andrzej Stalony-Dobrzanski wrote the Reprise over 20 years ago in the dark and bad year of 1982. This newly told story though still maintaining the original outlines of the fairy tale, subtly includes in the text

references and allusions to the political situation at that time. . Discovering these references gave additional pleasure in watching this excellently prepared performance from the musical and performance point of view. For the youngsters the show presented an interesting variation: The Big Wolf, or the Hunter, fiercely shaking his double-barreled gun were certainly something quite different from the flat two dimensional characters in computerized games.

As we know the Polish Theatre Institute does not have its own theatre and has to take advantage of the hospitality of different institutions. The set of Elizabeth Wittlin-Lipton, made us forget that the show was presented in non theatrical surroundings. The humorously depicted outlines of the scenery made us believe in the fairy tale's reality of the dark forest and the costumes, also created by her, correctly underscored the characters of the story.

All of the actors, without exception presented a very high caliber of performance art. Among them, Miss Staniszewska, a graduate of the Musical Academy in Gdansk, was outstanding in her debut, as the Little Wolf.

If it is true that the show was put together in barely ten days, the whole ensemble is to be congratulated for their professionalism and creative passion.