

Wildly goofy Cinderella entertaining family holiday fare

LIZ BRAUN - SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2014



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Cleopatra Williams, Ross Petty and Bryn McAuley in Cinderella

TORONTO - It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and you can probably thank Ross Petty for that.

The writer/actor/producer's annual family musical signifies the start of the festive season and Petty's back this year with a raucous production of Cinderella.

It's his 19th year for the holiday pantomime.

Boisterous and silly, this updated version of Cinderella puts the plucky heroine (Danielle Wade, *The Wizard of Oz*) in the modern world, where she's attempting to run a farmer's market and supply wholesome food.

The fly in the ointment is her terrible stepmother, Revolta Bulldoza (Petty, a vision in drag), who intends to sell off the market and develop the property.

Cinderella's wicked stepsisters (Cleopatra Williams and Bryn McAuley) are a pair of Kardashian wannabes — vacuous, greedy, and loud — and they too are cruel to Cinderella.

It would be nice if Cinderella could meet Max Charming (Jeff Lillico), a pop star whose charitable causes involve the very sort of wholesome food Cinderella is selling at her farmer's market. She'd like to meet him at the Eligi-ball, a reality TV gala to be held at Casa Loma, but Cinderella doesn't have a ticket.

That's where her fairy godmother, Plumbum (Dan Chameroy) comes in. Wacky and disorganized, Plumbum nonetheless knows how to wield her magic wand and ensure everyone lives happily ever after.

A fairy tale made wildly goofy, Cinderella is energetic and entertaining and filled with amusements for children — visually dazzling costumes, familiar pop music (sung with gusto), villains they're encouraged to boo and a fairy godmother whose pratfalls are hilarious.

Petty, chewing the scenery as the villainous stepmother, is a huge favourite (as always) with the kiddies, but he has serious competition from Chameroy's campy Plumbum; one of the best things about the Panto every year is hearing children in the audience hoot with laughter at these over-the-top adults.

If you're looking for something a little different as a holiday treat for the whole family, Ross Petty's Cinderella is just the ticket.

The show runs through Jan. 4.