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REVIEW: *The Grinch* And The Who Steal The Show (Children's Theatre Company)

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The cast of the Children's Theatre Company 2017 production of Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Photo by Kaitlin Randolph.

There are two stand-out reasons to see *Dr. Seuss's The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis. One is Reed Sigmund, whose portrayal of the titular Grinch is one of his best comedic performances of recent years. The other is child actor Mabel Weismann, whose touching and nuanced performance as Cindy-Lou Who steals the show again and again.

This is not to say that the rest of the show or cast is shabby – far from it. The scenic design by Tom Butsch and costumes by David Kay Mickelsen capture the look and feel of the original illustrations, and the numerous effects frequently bedazzle and charm. Many in the talented cast have memorable moments, but ultimately the spotlight is completely captured by Sigmund and Weismann. Sigmund's Grinch positively (or is that negatively?) revels in the Grinch's malevolence, making his first encounter with Weismann's Cindy-Lou all the more amusing and effective. Weismann's polish and stage charisma bely her age, especially when singing and dancing.

The Grinch (Reed Sigmund) is put upon by Cindy-Lou Who (Mabel Weismann)'s nightmares of Grinches.
Photo by Kaitlin Randolph.

On the edge of the spotlight, Natalie Tran shines as Young Max, with dog whimpers and howls that will grab you by your feels, as the kids say. Some memorable comedic moments include Grandma Who (Sara Ochs) struggling with pies, lots of Grandpa Who (understudy Austin Fisher at the reviewed performance)'s utterances, and a memorable excursion into the audience by the Grinch.

While *Dr. Seuss's The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* is aimed at children and plays multiple matinees, the show runs almost two hours. Plan your meals accordingly or expect to rush the concession stand with the same energy as Reed Sigmund's Grinch tossing pies and cakes.

Young Max (Natalie Tran) looks on as the Grinch (Reed Sigmund) hatches his devious master plan. Photo by Kaitlin Randolph.

The narrator Old Max (Dean Holt) reminisces about old times. Photo by Kaitlin Randolph.

Dr. Seuss's *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* *plays at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, MN through January 7, 2018.*



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Basil Considine

Basil Considine is the Performing Arts Editor and Senior Classical Music and Drama Critic at the *Twin Cities Arts Reader*. He was previously the Resident Classical Music and Drama Critic at the *Twin Cities Daily Planet* and remains an occasional contributing writer for *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* and *The Chattanooga*. He holds a PhD in Music and Drama from Boston University, an MTS in Sacred Music from the BU School of Theology, and a BA in Music and Theatre from the University of San Diego. Basil was named one of *Musical America's 30 Professionals of the Year* in 2017.

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