



THE SCOTSMAN

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DANCE
**MORE GRIM[M]
DESIRES** ★★ ★★
TRAVERSE THEATRE,
EDINBURGH

SANITISED and sugar-coated: that's how most of us like our fairytales. Frogs turn out to be princes, ugly sisters turn over new leaves and princesses turn into married queens. Happy endings may be *de rigueur* today, but when the Brothers Grimm were churning out tales in the 1800s, they weren't afraid to visit the dark side of life. Neither is Maresa von Stockert. The German-born choreographer has taken four Grimm tales - *The Frog Prince*, *Rapunzel*, *Snow White* and *Cinderella* - mixed in a little Charles Perrault (*Bluebeard*), and created a dance-theatre show which is both funny and disturbing.

Opening with *The Frog Prince*, the dancers cling to one another with amphibian-like stickiness. Until, just as the Grimms intended, the frog is flung unceremoniously against the wall. Except in von Stockert's version, the deluded little fellow dies a horrible death, rather than transforming into a handsome prince. We know this, not because it is acted out in front

of us, but through the deadpan voice of narrator Russell Raisey. Unlike many voiceovers, which quickly prove annoying and incongruous, Raisey's dialogue is witty and perfectly timed.

Cleverly segueing between stories (Rapunzel is the wicked stepmother of Snow White, who in turn marries Bluebeard, and so on) von Stockert's use of props and set is also ingenuous. Von Stockert has a deliciously skewed way of looking at the world, changing bedtime stories into vignettes of wit and brutality.

KELLY APTER