

REVIEWS



Blending puppets with live actors a scene from "Nicky, Somewhere Else," directed by Onny Huisink at the New Victory Theater.

Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

THEATER REVIEW

Learning About a Dead Twin and Affirming Life

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

Death may seem an unlikely subject for children's theater, especially when the subject is the death of a sibling, and more particularly, a twin. But a willingness to confront that profound loss is what makes "Nicky, Somewhere Else" something special. And the ability to go about that daunting task with humor, creativity, immense charm and touching sensitivity is what makes so worthwhile a visit to the New Victory Theater for Speeltheater Holland's affirmation of life in the face of death.

Speeltheater Holland, founded in 1976

by Saskia Janse and Onny Huisink and based in Edam, the Netherlands, employs puppets and live actors as it tells the story of Nicky (a puppet), who discovers one day from a photograph that he has a brother, Noel.

But Noel is somewhere else.

And Nicky, accompanied by his lanky pet toy, Rabbit, decides to pay him a visit.

The action of the inventive "Nicky, Somewhere Else" unfolds mainly in the heavens, actually a low raked platform where four lively and capricious angels control the puppets, argue among themselves, play music, sing, create mischief and pop in and out of trap doors opened with the aid of feather-winged

NICKY, SOMEWHERE ELSE

By Saskia Janse; concept by Marijke Meijer; directed by Onny Huisink; sets by Vincent Sturkenboom. A Speeltheater Holland production presented by the New 42d Street Inc. At the New Victory Theater, 209 West 42d Street, Manhattan.

WITH: Marc-Marie Huybregts (Lucy, Mother, Duck, Santa Claus, Grandmother and Noel), Saskia Janse (Micha and Nicky), Michel Marang (Muriel, Clarinet, Grandfather) and Jitka Lejdarová (Gabber and Rabbit).

plumbers' plungers, which are always good for a laugh.

Nicky 's journey takes him and Rabbit across rivers, up high mountains where

he meets his dead grandfather and finally to a meeting with Noel that sets them and the angels bounding joyously in a blanket of clouds before Nicky confronts a question that pits life against death.

The talented humane onstage as the angels and in other roles that include not only Nicky and Noel but also Rabbit, Santa Claus and various adults, are Marc-Marie Huybregts as Lucy, Ms. Janse as Micha, Michel Marang as the clarinet-playing Muriel and Jitka Lejdarová as Gabber.

"Nicky, Somewhere Else," which lasts an hour and is intended for audiences 6 and older, plays for only five more performances, tomorrow through Sunday.