

Don Quixote Takes New York

Loco 7 Dance Puppet Theatre Company

La MaMa Kids Series

April 21 to May 6, 2018

Review by Peter Lewis, *PuppetMaster*

Forty-five minutes of antic, inspired fun, plus a talented cast and crew, are a lighthearted way to introduce children and adults to *The Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha*, the classic 17th Century novel by Manuel de Cervantes.

Eleven short scenes, paralleling episodes from the original text, are given energetic life by a winning combination of interpretive dance, puppets, costumes and props, with an appealing, *handmade-on-a-budget* look.

Don Alonso Quijano of Staten Island, his mind unhinged from reading too many novels of knights-errant and damsels in distress, sets out to do good in the name of Lady Liberty, the iconic statue in the harbor. Anointing himself “Don *Quixote*,” he travels the five boroughs of NYC, during which he enlists the help of trusty sidekick, Sancho Panza, (Luis Grande), who wears a team jacket with “Queens” emblazoned on the back.

Their quest for “love, honor, liberty, and justice for all,” includes several run-ins with a demonic figure, The Orange Knight, and riotously causes the trashing of “Ms. Paula’s Puppet Show,” (“Master Peter’s Puppet Show,” in the original). In this version, the scene enacted by hand puppets worked on a clever, flat stage, is disrupted, incurring the wrath of Ms. Paula, (Fleur Voorn), the beleaguered puppeteer.

An encounter with Coney Island’s Wonder Wheel (stand-in for the famous “battle with a windmill” of the original), lands the injured Don in Coney Island Hospital, where two nurses, (Zulivet Díaz and Fleur Voorn), seem more interested in discussing their respective lunch hours than tending to the injured knight.

Battered and bruised from his misadventures in the five boroughs, the Don retires to his bucolic Staten Island home. After a bit of R&R, he and Sancho are off, once again -- this time, enlarging their search -- to right the wrongs of the world

Adapted from the novel by Ivan Cardozo and Beatriz Caballero. Reimagined and Directed by Denise Greber and Federico Restrepo, who also Choreographed and Designed the production. Cast included: Chris Ignacio. (Entire cast doubling as actors/puppeteers.) Crew included Hao Bai, Sound; Becky Hubbert, Costumes; Laura Restrepo, Video Design/Animation; Leah Ogawa and Linda Van Egmond, Building Assistants.