

Snigel and Friends



VENUE: **Dance Base**
 TIME: **times vary, various dates
 between 4 Aug and 27 Aug**
 TICKETS: **£9**

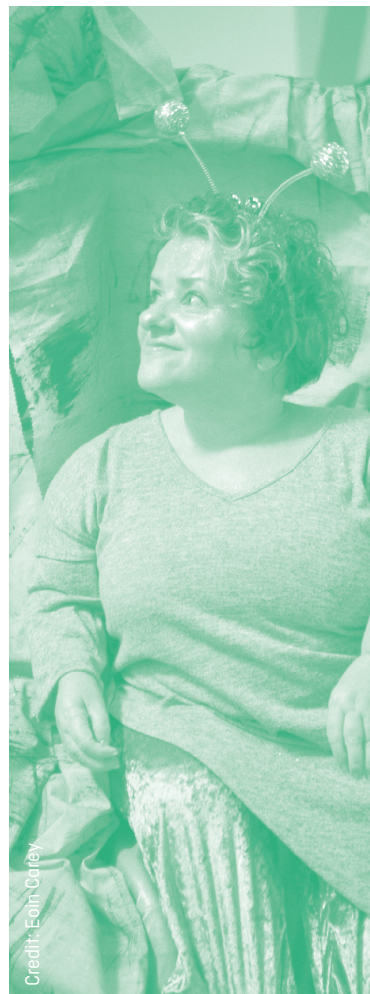
Atmosphere is everything when it comes to theatre for babies, and Caroline Bowditch and Company hit all the right notes with *Snigel and Friends*. Upon arrival, the babies are immediately calmed by Zac Scott's gentle nature-themed sound design, while co-creator and designer Laura Hook's beautiful setting, all soft light and brightly coloured fabrics, provides stimulation for wide eyes and curious fingers.

Snigel the snail (Bowditch), is already in the space as we enter, quietly munching lettuce leaves off a washing line. It's one of a host of sweet and subtle moments we're treated to over the course

of this 40-minute show, in which Snigel is joined by pals Cecil the cicada (Scott) and Alex McCabe's Hachi the bee, all three of them resplendent in Jenny Lööf's inventive costumes.

All this invention and subtlety is wonderful, but much of it is wasted on this audience of under-ones, alas. Set in the round, most of the action of the first half takes place at too great a distance for it to have much of an impact. When a couple of them go crawling in for a closer look, the ushers ask parents to keep the babies out of the space – frustrating for all concerned, particularly given that they're then actively invited to play there for the final 10 minutes of the show. This is their first work for children, and their inexperience shows.

It's a minor criticism though, and one that's forgotten as the show goes on, with Snigel and co. moving closer to engage directly with babies, delighting with bubbles, floating material, jingling bells and more. When it's time to go, no one wants to leave. [➡ Jo Caird](#)



Credit: Eoin Carey

Roses in the Salad



VENUE: **C venues – C royale**
 TIME: **4:50pm – 5:40pm, 2–12 Aug**
 TICKETS: **£8.50 – £9.50**

"Hey kids, let's go see a show about vegetables based on a book by influential 20th Century Italian artist and designer Bruno Munari," said no one, ever. Until now. Yes, Italian company SchediaTeatro has used shadow theatre, live action, and projections to make that dizzying combination of ideas incarnate in their intermittently fun new show.

Based on Munari's book of the same name, *Roses in the Salad's* basic premise is that, if you know where to look, beauty is everywhere. Even in your composting bin.

Excitable junior chef Romilda—played with bright-eyed gusto by Irina Lorandi—lives a frustrated, Cinderella life in the kitchen. Her duties are limited to washing the dishes or throwing out food.

But within these restrictions, she discovers that dipping food scraps in paint and printing them on a page unveils a whole new world. Cauliflowers create trees and heads of lettuce birth roses. Magically, they appear on a large screen behind her, creating a universe that she

can jump into and explore.

It's a lovely idea, and one executed with technical panache. However, it takes a while for the show to get to this point of wonderment. The first half of the show is just Romilda and the irascible head chef indulging in some mildly distracting slapstick banter. It's like having to work through a perfectly serviceable starter and main course to get to a stellar dessert.

But when the shadow play and projections arrive, any fidgety kids are soon won over. The inventiveness with vegetables is a lot of fun, but the rest of the show, however, could do with more meat.

[➡ Edd McCracken](#)