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# DANCE REVIEW; Watch Out for Those Newts: They're a Threat to the World

By JACK ANDERSON

A great satirical fantasy came to life on Friday night when Stephan Koplowitz and Company staged its adaptation of Karel Capek's "War With the Newts" at Dance Theater Workshop.

The Czech novel tells how some clever newts who are being used as a cheap labor force by unscrupulous businessmen learn technical skills and use them to tyrannize and almost destroy the world. The book dates from 1936, when the Nazis were a growing threat. Yet many of Capek's comments on greed, exploitation and armaments remain thought-provoking.

Much of the vigor of his prose was captured in this clever dance-theater version, which combined choreography by Mr. Koplowitz with a text by David Lindsay-Abaire. The episodic tale was swiftly told in less than two hours. The first scenes were occasionally hard to follow, especially because Andrew Warshaw's taped score tended to drown out some of the spoken words. But once the production got going, it moved forward with verve and its twists of plot were both giddy and grim.

Most members of the cast played several roles. When they were called upon to be newts, they scrambled and slithered about in coveralls designed by Christianne Myers. There were several notable individual characterizations, including those of Gordon Grey, as a boozy sea captain; Lorree True, as a slightly dithery business leader; Jay Longan, as a genial doorman, and James Sasser, as a fanatic. The story's only relatively nice newt was portrayed with charm by Katie Workum.

The production will be repeated Thursday through Sunday at Dance Theater Workshop, 219 West 19th Street, Chelsea.

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