

Willy Gilder:

Title: THE CHANGELING GIRL

Company: Bristol DramSoc

Venue: theSpace on North Bridge – Perth Theatre

Year: 2022

Ten minutes into this show and I had to consult my notes to remember why I was there. It's about neurodivergence, apparently –the story of how, in a Medieval village, autistic Agnes is found to be a changeling child, stolen away by the fairies and replaced by an odd replica.

I must have seen a different show. In the one I saw there were three actors, and the best and most natural was playing Agnes, much given to introspection about her life and discussion about things with the local wise woman. Artistic, yes: autistic, never.

As it happens, I spent time this weekend with my 'on the spectrum' niece, who has little insight into her difficulties, cannot understand metaphors and who runs a mile from talking about herself. I can only imagine that the writer of this piece has read about autism, but perhaps doesn't have a wide experience of people with the condition. It's a shame... exploring how neurodivergence must have been explained in the past is an interesting idea. But you have to understand it in the present first.