



26 FREEBIES AND WHAT'S ON

hello **27** REVIEWS

This week we chat to the man behind the magical Children's Cheering Carpet.

spotlight

Imagine a carpet that explodes with colours and shapes, sprouting fabulous gardens: a funny-looking lawn, musical steps, giant lotus leaves and all kinds of flowers and fish wanting to play hide-and-seek.

The Children's Cheering Carpet, here for the Perth International Arts Festival, uses multimedia, theatre and a touch-sensor-riddled carpet that responds to the pressure of feet and bodies, letting you interact with the images and sounds of each garden.

There are three different experiences – Kurdish, Japanese and Italian gardens.

ChillOut! spoke to the director Davide Venturini about his interactive show.

CO: What is the show all about?

DV: We invite the audience to explore a Japanese garden. It is more an experience of beauty for kids. To begin, there's a short story they tell about the origin of the early Japanese garden. Then performers do a short dance and explain how the sensitive carpet works. The other half of the show is by the audience themselves.

CO: Where did the idea come from?

DV: In Lisbon we were invited to explore the interaction between the kids that have problems in learning. We found out with this carpet ... it's a very strong way to communicate. Also we found out it's important for kids to

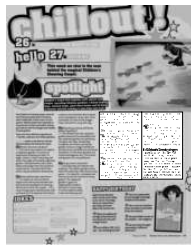
create an environment that inspires a Zen atmosphere, to be calm, to be controlled, to react to the images they've found in a very soft way.

CO: Why did you end up with three different gardens?

DV: We started from the Japanese garden because the atmosphere for the Japanese garden was perfectly fitting for this idea. We decided to explore the Islamic and Italian garden to have a range of different architectures and different emotional situations. So the three gardens are connected together but, the stories and dynamic are very different.

CO: Do you have a favourite?

DV: Actually they are linked to the audience. The Islamic garden works well with small kids, from three or four years – it's colourful, animated and the kids are more involved in funny games. The Japanese garden is good for slightly older children because in some ways it's more sophisticated, it has more beauty and



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atmosphere and the actors on stage are very calm and quiet. The Italian garden is for everyone, for adults and young people. This is a very important experience for the family.

CO: Did you pick gardens because of your memories of playing in a garden?

DV: I can say yes with the Italian garden. The light, the shadows and the colours are very connected to our experience. With the Islamic garden we worked with Rebwar Saeed, an Iraqi painter, who put inside images and a short story about his childhood.

CO: Does the fact it's about gardens make it easier to relax in there?

DV: We try to create an atmosphere which is very delicate, so the kids start to relate with the grass and flowers of the garden, as if it was a real garden with real delicate plants. The performers help the kids feel

comfortable. During the show, when they realise there's nothing to be scared about, they feel more free.

CO: What can kids get out of it?

DV: They can feel free to explore and try to use effort to find out what is not clear at the beginning. There are always things hiding around, so we would like to have curious kids. It's very important that adults go with their kids – it's an experience for all.

Children's Cheering Carpet

Japanese Garden: Tues, 4pm; Wed, 6pm; Fri, 4pm; Sat, 6pm. Season continues Feb 20-23. Italian garden: Today, noon; Tues, 6pm; Thur, 4pm; Fri, 6pm; next Sun, noon. Season continues Feb 21-24. Kurdish garden: Today, 2pm; Wed, 4pm; Thur, 6pm; Sat, noon; next Sun, 2pm. Season continues Feb 20-24. Bradley Studio, UWA, Nedlands. Tickets \$20 from BOCS.



Interacting with the Kurdish garden.