

SPARE**Times**

For Children

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Urban Stages

'THE MAGICAL FOREST OF BABA YAGA'

Wandering alone in mysterious woods can be dangerous, whether you're in a fairy tale landscape or a city park. The characters in Urban Stages' new family show are trapped in both: they've ventured into the enchanted wilderness of Russian folklore, right in the urban jungle of Brooklyn. Stanton Wood's "Magical Forest of Baba Yaga," a free-wheeling translation of the Eugene Schwartz Russian play "Two Maples," unfolds in Prospect Park, where a fast-talking real estate agent (Ned Massey) has been transformed into a bear by the witch Baba Yaga (Nikki E. Walker), here a blue-haired pop diva. Lisa (Maria Silverman), a Russian immigrant, is trying to find her sons, Fred (Rainey Lacey) and Egon (Catherine Kjome), whom Baba Yaga has changed into maple trees. The show features a score by

Greg E. Adair and Colm Clark; it is played onstage with instruments including a glockenspiel and a saw, which creates a delightfully eerie tone. Ryan Kravetz, the set designer, has created a shimmering forest and an ingenious version of Baba Yaga's mobile home, a hut on chicken legs. They make a mesmerizing backdrop for the contest of wills between the witch and Lisa, who is helped by her youngest son, Ivan (Aidan Koehler), and the witch's persecuted bear, dog and cat. Directed by Aleksey Burago, "Baba Yaga" proves what many children probably suspect: when it comes to power, a witch's wiles are no match for Mom's. (Today and tomorrow at 2 and 7 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday at 2 p.m. Through Jan. 7. Urban Stages, 259 West 30th Street, Manhattan, 212-868-4444, urbanstages.org; \$20.)

LAUREL GRAEBER