

Ice palace thrill for 500 children

Five hundred children gasped with surprise when the curtain rose on the last scene of "The Snow Queen," presented by the Leeds Arts Centre Children's Theatre at the Civic Theatre, Leeds, on Saturday.

For the scenery designers, Mr. Peter Joy and Mr Arthur Brown, and the anonymous electricians had transformed the stage into a fairy ice palace of simplicity and beauty. In the centre of a back-cloth lit with pale blue, a fan of prismatic colours flamed, casting a chill glow of Arctic twilight over the slender, leafless branches of two tall saplings. On the branches countless sequins glittered.

Between the trees stood Hans Andersen's Snow Queen (Beryl Castelew) robed in white and wearing a crown of diamond brilliance. Flanking her were eight small dancing girls—icicle and snow spirits—in frothy ballet skirts.

Produced by Mrs. Lucy Bradley, a Leeds school teacher, the play is colourfully dressed and staged, and tells the charming fairy tale with simplicity and directness. The large cast, which includes 14 children from local schools, spoke their lines for the most part confidently and clearly, although there were occasional lapses into incoherence. The young hero and heroine are very well played by Leonard Warne (12), and June Peers (13), both pupils of Brudenell Secondary Modern School.