

REVIEWS

LORCA IN A GREEN DRESS  
Miracle Theatre

It would've been so much easier in the world if I could've loved a woman." Such is one reflection from the heart of Spain's most celebrated poet, Federico García Lorca, whose fascination with death and scuffled passions in life are poignantly examined in *Lorca in a Green Dress*, onstage at Miracle Theatre through Oct. 16.

Often writing against oppression, Lorca was targeted an intellectual threat to the rising Spanish regime. The song of this outspoken gay bard was quelled when in 1936 he was killed at age 38 by Nationalists at the start of the Spanish Civil War. In *Lorca*, Pulitzer-winning gay playwright Nilo Cruz turns that assassination into a somber and surreal "seduction of reality" that is altogether transfixing.

The play begins upon Lorca's murder, when the bloodied poet awakes to various incarnations of himself. A young Lorca with Bicycle Pants catalogs his childhood dreams. Lorca as a Woman represents his muse. Lorca in a White Suit, Lorca in a Green Dress and a flamenco dancer...each interprets portions of his life, revisiting dark superstitions. Together, the six are jailed in purgatorial quarantine ruled by two guards bent on carrying the poet through death and onward.

From sultry gypsy flamenco to lurid Dali landscapes, Cruz culls memories for the fertile vernacular of Lorca's writing, his mind, his body and what it means to be alive, artistic, gay, thoughtful.



*Lorca in a Green Dress* brings Spain's most celebrated poet back to life

And then, as director Olga Sanchez observes, to be deprived of "the freedom to live, to speak, to love and be loved," whether in life or by death.

In this rich, rewarding production, Sanchez grasps this essence. She has skillfully composed onstage the romantic cadence of Lorca's story in which dialogue is music, action is dance, rhythm is life. One man's story becomes bigger than the tiny Miracle stage, embracing both a wide landscape of ideas and minute details of presence.

In the pivotal Lorca role, Neal Starbird's trademark intensity plays well against Meg Savlov's evocative flamenco, while Darius Pierce's actor who sheds the role of Lorca in a Green Dress blends as subtle counterpoint. But what's more impressive is how this tightly woven ensemble as a whole projects harmony in dissonance by balancing grand theatricality with simple honesty.

The same tune is carried by set designer José E. González, lighting designer Peter West and composer/sound designer Rodolfo Ortega, together creating a wonderfully strange, chilling, catacomb-like netherworld.

"In Spain, a dead man is more alive as a dead man than anywhere else in the world," wrote Lorca, who today continues to live, speak, love—and be loved—in *A Green Dress*. "Ay, la vida!"

—Timothy Krause

KISS IT!  
Stark Raving Theatre

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and love yourself as you are. The golden rule of the Bible and the golden rule of the queer community lock lips in the new play *Kiss It!* by Seattle lesbian Amy Wheeler, onstage at Stark Raving Theatre through Oct. 16.

Set in Portland, this modern comedy concerns two Gen Yers: June, a freethinking sex worker who dreams of exploring her masculine side, and her cross-dressing twin, Henry, who struggles to suppress his homosexuality through Christianity. But when June crosses paths with trans woman Vivien, and Henry is flatly challenged by clownish old-fag Dominic, the siblings are spurred to re-examine the definitions they hold of themselves and others, including a pansexual, kiss-hawking street idealist named Orlando.

Omnipresent is an observant Wild Woman who, in a third-act twist, leads the queer quintet—and the play—in a very different direction for a quick existential lesson on how actions speak louder than words.

Stark Raving artistic director Matthew B.

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