

VERY LITTLE THEATRE

VLT

AUDITIONS

Into the Woods

The Magical Musical
by Stephen Sondheim
Directed by Michael P. Watkins

Saturday, Dec. 4 • Noon
2350 Hilyard St.

Roles available for 7 men and
12 women. Prepare a short song,
preferably by Sondheim.
Accompanist provided.

For more information, call
686-1177

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492 E 13th Ave, Suite 200, Eugene
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THEATER BY MELISSA BEARNS



A Storm of the Soul

Lord Leebrick's *Tempest* embodies the true
essence of transformation.

In a production that embraces
Shakespeare's darkest themes and shines
a spotlight on *Tempest*'s most fundamen-
tal questions, Director John Schmor has
worked magic by bending Shakespeare's last
work around the stages of alchemical trans-
mutation as he leads the audience in a search
for our own "ultimate wisdom."

Prospero (Leon Johnson) was the Duke of
Milan until his conniving brother Antonio
(Steven Wehmeier) took over the throne while
Prospero neglected his rule
and immersed himself in
study. Through the mercy of
one of the duke's counselors,
Gonzalo, they find them-
selves stranded on an island
instead of dead at sea. There
Prospero possesses magic
powerful enough to control the wind, weather
and tides through the enslavement of a spirit
named Ariel who he freed from the island's
previous, evil ruler, a sorceress named
Sycorax.

The play opens as the King of Naples,
Alonso (Richard Leinaweaver), and his court
are "shipwrecked" on the shores of that very
same island in a magical storm that Prospero
has commanded Ariel to create. Through the
course of the play, Prospero's desire for
vengeance and revenge are transformed to
forgiveness and mercy.

By choosing alchemy as the theme around
which to wrap the performance, Schmor has
made a foray into presenting perhaps the most
complex struggle that the characters undergo,
a personal transformation of one kind or an-
other. Everything in the play serves to rein-
force and underline the way in which the char-
acters change throughout the 90-minute per-

formance.

Even the set itself has multiple planes in
both the vertical and horizontal. Lighting,
sound and costumes all help create a certain
disorientation allowing the viewer to suspend
disbelief and wonder as the characters move
in and around a world full of shimmering
magic, mysterious sounds and invisible be-
ings.

Schmor's decision to have two of the ac-
tors, Kimberly Bates and Christopher Hirsh,
play dual roles —
Miranda/Ariel and
Ferdinand/Caliban respec-
tively — is an ingenious twist
that adds a malevolent cruelty
to Prospero's role and high-
lights, literally, the dualities
within the play itself.

As Miranda and Ariel, Bates is incredible
— morphing from young girl to spirit with
ease and playing each role wonderfully and
distinctly. Hirsh is also excellent, easily trans-
forming from Alonso's son, the beautiful
prince Ferdinand, to the disfigured half-man,
half-beast, Caliban. It's a treat to see Eugene's
local troubador, David Stuart Bull, breezily
perform the role of the good Gonzalo as if it
were written for him and Johnson captures the
subtleties of Prospero's conflicted character
well. Leinaweaver portrays Alonso as a king
with compassion and plays his final act of
contrition well, while Wehmeier manages to
embody one of *Tempest*'s unresolved issues
— Antonio's lack of remorse even in the face
of his brother's forgiveness.

Possibly one of this year's best plays for its
incredible use of allegory and parable com-
bined with excellent acting, set, lighting,
music and costumes. **EW**

Tempest
Lord Leebrick Theatre
Nov. 19 - Dec. 11
Thur. - Sat., 8 pm
Sun. matinees, 2 pm
Box Office: 465-1506

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