



Gracie (Erica Jean) and Jerry (Don Kelly)

ACTORS CABARET OF EUGENE

## Flight of Fancy

Actors Cabaret defies gravity, convention

**R**each for your dreams, no matter how silly, at Actors Cabaret of Eugene this month.

ACE's new show, *The Flight of the Lawnchair Man*, is based on the real events of 1982 when, in a quest for flight, Larry Walters attached 42 weather balloons to his lawn chair, soaring to a height of 16,000 feet. One might ask why produce, or even write, a musical about such a bizarre yet not terribly complex theme. ACE might answer, "Why not?"

Zany is what you'll get for the price of your ticket. The audience is treated to a clever stream of jokes about Wal-Mart and the FFA, an even-artsier reinterpretation of *The Red Balloon* and mystical visitations from Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh

and Leonardo da Vinci (who, for the record, was a quitter). You will be laughing.

Aside from the levitating lawnchair, *Lawnchair Man* is somewhat stock. It has the usual Broadway rotation of jazzy numbers, moving solos and inspiring duets. Just as the Little Mermaid wants to walk on land, Jerry Gorman wants to fly in the air. While reaching for dreams is good, I had trouble feeling passionate about a man's desire to float over New Jersey in patio furniture. I did have a great time watching him try, though.

Golden-voiced Don Kelly as Jerry Gorman is suitably dumpy and downtrodden. Erica Jean is delightful as Gracie; she's funny and gorgeous with a stellar voice. She gives a real punch to the Jersey toll collector she plays. One does have to wonder, though, why

a character as passionate, sweet, beautiful, thoughtful and creative as Gracie wants to spend her life cheerleading for a 34-year-old tube-sock-wearing man who still lives with his mother and builds model airplanes. Not that nerdy men with strong sock elastic don't rate the support of beautiful women, but the relationship seemed a little improbable. But wait... we're speaking of a play about a man who launches a lawn chair with 400 helium balloons. One can only suspend disbelief.

There are certain ACE hallmarks in this show. First among them is a tight ensemble with members who look like they're having a fantastic time. Colin Gray and Rebecca Teran stand out as a cocky airplane pilot and goofy flight attendant. Their energy is boundless, and they play off each other perfectly. The music is respectable but canned. There are limitations on a small theater; a full orchestra in such a tiny space would be as inadvisable as aviation via pressed aluminum and party decorations. Don Kelly, who doubles as musical director, had no choice but to use the synthesizer, but at the end of the day, the cast members are still singing to canned music.

This show at the Cabaret seems to have punched up the set and costumes a notch. Director Joe Zingo carefully sets the audience up in a colorful world of two dimensions for the first act and then veers off into a world of imagination as Gorman takes flight in act two. Gray and Teran play in an inspired airplane. Puffy clouds top the set, and more cumuli occasionally float in and join the action on stage.


*The Flight of the Lawnchair Man* is a fun and wacky two hours. In a sweet way, Jerry Gorman's act can almost be seen as a metaphor for ACE itself. Small, quirky, fun, following dreams of questionable practicality but following through with them none the less. Don't ask why; just sit back and enjoy the ride. **EW**

*The Flight of the Lawnchair Man continues March 7-8, 14-15, 21-22 & 28-29. Tix available at [www.actorscabaret.org](http://www.actorscabaret.org) or 683-4368.*

Opening Nights

**The Busy World Is Hushed**  
Opens at the Lord Leebrick Theatre Friday, March 14.

Thing about the actual busy world is that there's rarely a hush. Sometimes – with great love, great devotion, great anguish – a kind of stillness falls over one's life, at least for a time. In *Busy World*, playwright Keith Bunin deals with nothing more nor less than yearning: Characters long for each other, long for acceptance and forgiveness, long for religion to mean something, long for unconditional love. But that's not the way of humans, and the three-character play, in which characters grapple with each other's limitations and longing, promises to be another strong play in the Leebrick's solid season. Show dates are March 14-15, 20-22 and 27-30 & April 3-6. Tix at [www.lordleebrick.com](http://www.lordleebrick.com) or 465-1506.



WINK  
+  
KINK

A New Local  
Personals Site  
Coming Soon

Be the first to find out more  
Join our email list now!  
[eugeneweekly.com](http://eugeneweekly.com) • [wink-kink.com](http://wink-kink.com)

COUPON

SY'S NEW YORK PIZZA COUPON SPECIAL

686-9598

COUPONS GOOD UNTIL MARCH 27, 2008

1211 ALDER

ON CAMPUS NEXT TO SACRED HEART HOSPITAL

SERVING DELICIOUS NEW YORK PIZZA BY THE SLICE AND BY THE WHOLE PIZZA PIE

11:00AM-MIDNIGHT SUN-THU ★ 11:00AM-1:00AM FRI-SAT

\$2.00 OFF  
ANY 18" LARGE OR  
\$1 OFF ANY  
16" MEDIUM PIZZA  
PLUS 2 FREE 20oz. SODAS



FREE MEDIUM  
SODA  
W/ PURCHASE OF  
2 SLICES

COUPON

INITIATE a new  
DOWNTOWN

An Urban Park Design workshop focusing on  
Nine blocks of downtown for redevelopment.

WE NEED YOUR DESIGNS TO HELP MAKE  
EUGENE'S DOWNTOWN AN EVEN BETTER  
PLACE TO WORK AND LIVE.

MARCH 15, 1-6 PM

In the Atrium Building on 10th and Olive

- Students
- Professionals
- Business Owners
- Community Members

WE WILL ALL WORK TOGETHER

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

<http://eugeneparks.blogspot.com>