

Saturday, May 14th • 7:30 pm
American String Quartet with OMP
 Soreng Theater, Hult Center
 The American String Quartet in Recital
 Sunday, May 15 • 2:30 p.m. • Soreng

Tickets Available!

Saturday, March 5th • 7:30 pm
Springtime Serenade
 Soreng Theater, Hult Center

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American Voices

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SOLD OUT

All Amadeus

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- Elizabeth Racheva**, soprano
- Margaret Lattimore**, mezzo-soprano
- Jonathan Blalock**, tenor
- Neil Wilson**, bass-baritone

Saturday, February 26, 2011 at 8:00 p.m.
 Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center



Diane Retallack
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WINTER BRAVO! 2011

VLT'S AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE



Witchy Appeal and Local Substance

Theater of the winter and spring BY SUZI STEFFEN

Something *Wicked* (and replete with merchandising opportunities) this way comes in April, but what about local entertainment?

As I said in the big BRAVO story, I don't have any desire to tell you about the shiniest things on the horizon — and *Wicked*, which runs at the Hult for 16 performances between April 20 & May 1, casts such bright green rays that one could be blinded to anything else. Luckily, Eugeneans like to buy local.

First up should be the Lord Leebrick's gentle, poignant, funny *Circle Mirror Transformation* (review this issue). In his curtain speech for opening night, Leebrick artistic director Craig Willis urged the audience to attend the Very Little Theatre's *An Enemy of the People*, opening Jan. 14, the second updated Ibsen play (this one set in the '70s, as the male actors' sideburns reveal) to hit Eugene stages within a few months. Just a week after that, the UO opens Tom Stoppard's historically and linguistically rich *Rock 'n' Roll*, an ambitious undertaking directed by Joseph Gilg. Ben Brantley called the play "triumphantly sentimental" in *The New York Times* a few years ago, and its mix of 20th century history, personal relationships and the erotic force of expressive art should be just about perfect for a university performance.

Not to go all UO here, but its next play, *bobrauschenbergamerica*, should also prove richly textured, full of play and seriousness and modern/post-modern flirtations with images, words and more. I'm trying to tamp down my expectations, but the combo of artist Robert Rauschenberg (and love, and the entire U.S.A.) as the subject with playwright Charles Mee, directed by über-creative force of nature John Schmor, sounds like a possibility for explosively good theater.

On a much more serious note, the Leebrick's staging *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* starting Feb. 18. The play, pieced together from Evergreen College student Corrie's journals after she was killed while trying to stop Israeli bulldozers from destroying Palestinian houses, usually runs to protest and much anguished discussion in the community. Though it's been almost eight years since Corrie died, it's not as if the issues are gone — nor has anything been changed about the ways young passionate activists come of age as they learn more and more about the causes they embrace.

Corrie's passion branded her as crazy according to some equally passionate defenders of the Israeli government. In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey memorably asked about the structures of power that designated certain people as insane — and LCC's tackling the famous play in mid-January.

Though I haven't been to many, and certainly none since newspapers everywhere began cutting back arts (and news) coverage during the Great Recession, plays in Corvallis at OSU or Corvallis Community Theatre always seemed enjoyably worth the trip. *Glengarry Glen Ross*' script exerts such a magnetic pull that I might head to OSU for one of the short-run performances in early February. Cottage Grove's not nearly so far, and April's production of *Sweeney Todd* should bring Sondheim fans from far and near to the well-appointed Cottage Theatre.

So, yes, go crazy for Elphaba and the tale of emotional intensity, magic, competition, betrayal and love at the Hult in April (and go crazy for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's opening weekend in February), but don't let the shiniest thing to hit Eugene in years distract you from the many solid, decent, occasionally magical local productions on tap. **EW**