



Rebecca Morus and Kory Weimer at last year's NXNW10! festival

## North By Northwest Ten! at Lord Leebrick

Imaginary space-alien sex was first up on the boards opening night at the third annual 10-Minute Play Festival, followed in swift succession by seven other reflections on the human condition. Nineteen actors, seven directors and two swinging saxophones create a rambunctious evening of theater.

This, then, is *North By Northwest Ten!* With submissions coming from all over the state, the eclectic line-up showcases the best short scripts Oregon has to offer. Most of this year's plays are pretty quirky, and all of them are creative in their themes, asking the audience to reflect on something new.

*And I Feel Fine* by Ari Chadwick-Saund is a great sketch about a few college kids preparing to watch the sun swell up and swallow the earth by laying out beach towels and making their way through a cooler of beer. Sarah Ruggles, Lacy Allen and Caleb Palmer were hysterical, and their belching exceeded all expectations.

Many Eugeneans will get a kick out of Cathy Noah's *Glutton for Punishment* in which Wendy (Alisa McLaughlin) an earthy, new age do-gooder – finds herself in hell as the devil (Bruce Lundy) ploughs through paper work. He's doing his best to awaken her to the fact that all her meditative mumbo jumbo means nothing; the Catholics had it right all along.

The standout script of the evening was far and away *Thirty-Seven Cents* by Ciji Guerin. A humble look into the lives of three men living on the streets, the piece was powerfully played by Richard Leebrick, Paul Rhoden and Ralph Steadman.

Other plot lines include a revamped *Mother Courage*, cigarette lighter negotiations in a gas mart, the soft line between student and school counselor, a reflection on what might happen if Brad and Angelina woke up to find they were not longer "Brad and Angelina," and the possibility that settling down might be the most unlikely and exciting sex scenario of them all.

*North By Northwest Ten!* is pieced together by a number of different hands. There are seven directors tackling the eight different scripts. I came prepared to enjoy flipping from one theme to the next with a surfeit of varying literary styles. I found the variations in direction more difficult to roll with than I had anticipated. It lent the evening the air of an amateur theatricals club, where everything is really fun and fast paced, just so long as you don't get too picky about the details.

The charm of *North By Northwest Ten!* is that if you enter with an open mind, that mind will be filled up and refreshed by the varying viewpoints and ideas of numerous writers. The variety and pace left me a bit discombobulated, but by the end of the evening I felt as though I understood the world a little better. **EW**

*North By Northwest Ten!* runs April 1-10 at the Lord Leebrick Theatre.

## Wicked Work

Good Witch, Bad Witch, awesome music, strong, positive female relationships and a Tony or two? Yes, *Wicked* is a show with a lot of expectations.

To figure out how those expectations are met, I dialed up cast member David Nathan Perlow (playing Fiyero in the production of *Wicked* that's rolling into Eugene next week) to dish the dirt on performing with a touring company.

"Wicked treats their cast so well," were nearly the first words out of his mouth. With at least three weeks in each city and only eight shows a week, Perlow says, "Touring with *Wicked* is as easy as touring can be."

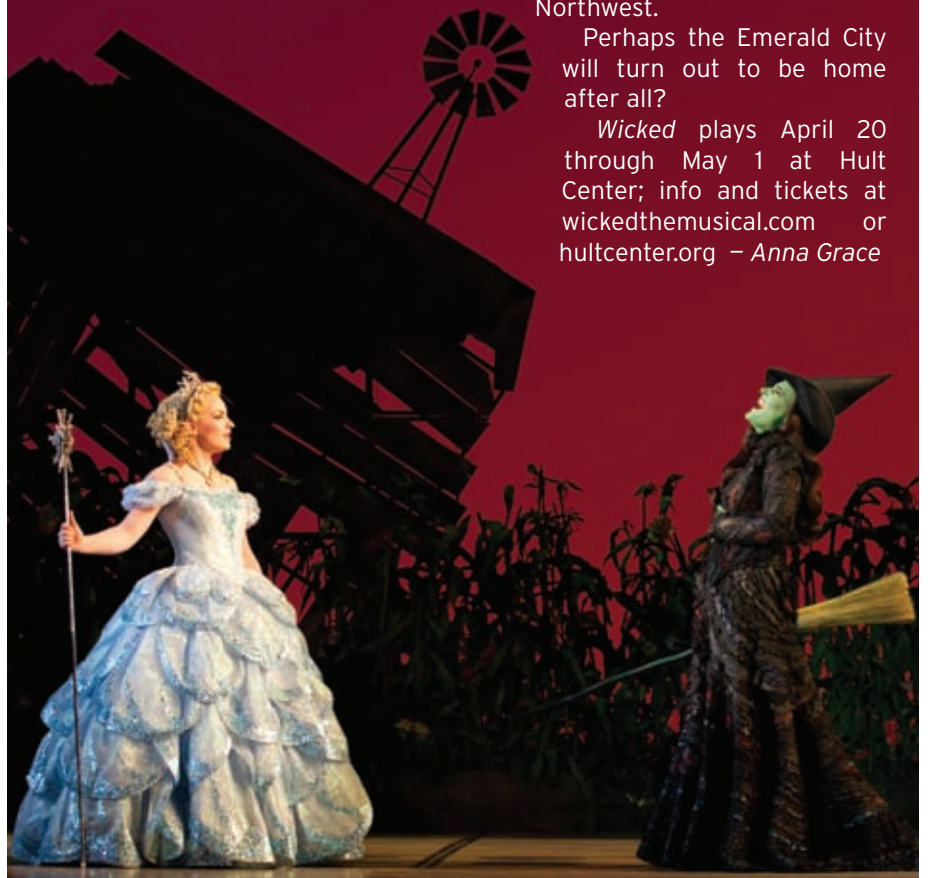
While I was glad to know the actors weren't suffering, my main concern was: Is the show going to be good? Touring companies often have the reputation of B-grade actors mucking it out in the sticks, biding their time before getting back to Broadway.

"There is a creative team that is responsible for upholding the original choreography and direction. The Wicked Corporation," Perlow adds, without a hint of irony in his voice, "is constantly making sure every show meets the highest standards. There is no disparity in skill between the actors you see here, and those on stage in New York."

When I asked if the show ever gets stale out on tour, Perlow compared his work to that of a professional athlete. "The show is physically demanding, but our stamina is up." And, he noted, after their time in California the cast and crew are excited to be in the Northwest.

Perhaps the Emerald City will turn out to be home after all?

*Wicked* plays April 20 through May 1 at Hult Center; info and tickets at [wickedthemusical.com](http://wickedthemusical.com) or [hultcenter.org](http://hultcenter.org) – Anna Grace



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