



BOBBY BERMEA IN OCT'S BLUE DOOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF OCT

BEAMING LIGHT INTO FORGOTTEN TERRITORY

Oregon Contemporary Theatre's *Blue Door* is an all-around incandescent piece of stagecraft

Through family — through the shared, interconnected knots between the generations — a loose tapestry is woven that cinches down to become the present moment.

And so we find ourselves laughing, reflecting and understanding as we view a humane, accessible and embryonically powerful new work — *Blue Door* by Tanya Barfield, playing now at Oregon Contemporary Theatre.

Writing a book report or synopsis — or worse — revealing plot twists is the reviewer's crutch. It's one I hate to see, and one that would particularly extinguish the incandescence of this remarkable effort. So I'm not going to do that.

Revealing too much would do future audiences a disservice, robbing them of full immersion into Barfield's words in this extraordinary vessel.

I can say that the play centers on two performances: Lewis, played with exquisite, relatable strength by Bobby Bermea — who also serves as the play's director, with support from Jamie M. Rea — and Simon/Rex/Jesse, three wildly different characters, each im-

bued by Seth Rue with a simultaneous blend of cosmic multidimensionality and earthbound gravitas.

Bermea and Rue offer some of the best acting I've seen on a stage in Eugene, ever.

Scenic design by Megan Wilkerson allows the players to float in the universal: Is it a womb? Is it a planet? With the ropes, reaching vertically and tied to the theater's rigging, are we inside a ribcage? Are we trapped within the spine of a hand-sewn history book? Is this the belly of a slave ship?

Wilkerson's set is its own character, serving almost as a Greek chorus.

And how satisfying to see Michael A. Peterson's revelatory lighting, composer Rodolpho Ortega's evocative sound design and songs, and Sarah Gahagan's spot-on costumes — all moving toward the same outcome, the same goal.

The artists' collaboration, under Bermea's unifying vision, carries this story to an otherworldly plane.

But don't get the wrong idea. This show is also funny. Barfield's writing is prismatic, crisp and focused. She bobs and weaves with a flawless cadence and delivers, in a mere 90 minutes, a baptismal experience.

How can something be written so masterfully that it roots itself in embodiment and reaches the firmament of the heavens at the same time?

How can something make you laugh out loud and also crack your heart open, so much so that, when it's over, you forget where you parked your car?

This play makes discoveries from the get-go, and from there branches out like a fractal. ■

Blue Door continues through April 30 at Oregon Contemporary Theatre; \$20-\$30, visit octheatre.org or call 541-465-1506.

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