

BEST LOCAL THEATER COMPANY

1. **Oregon Contemporary Theatre** 194 W. Broadway. 541-465-1506. Octheatre.org.
2. **Actors Cabaret of Eugene** 996 Willamette St. 541-683-4368. Actorscabaret.org.
3. **Very Little Theater** 2350 Hilyard St. 541-344-7751. Thevlt.com.

Led by artistic director Craig Willis, **Oregon Contemporary Theatre** has distinguished itself as Eugene's foremost purveyor of new and challenging theatrical works — plays that often exhibit a kind of urbane, postmodern sensibility with a slightly dark or absurdist edge. And the productions, regularly directed by Willis himself or OCT associate producer Tara Wibrew, are always top notch — well designed, superbly acted — and they reveal an implicit trust in the intelligence and sophistication of the audience (rather than continually dusting off safe old standards everyone's seen a zillion times). Of course, OCT isn't above celebrating the classics of theater, as when a few seasons back they mounted a stunning rendition of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The company continually raises the bar for theater in Eugene, which keeps everyone on their toes and makes the community of the stage that much stronger all around. — *Rick Levin*

BEST BAND

1. **Fortune's Folly** fortunesfollyband.com.
2. **High Step Society** highstepsociety.com.
3. **Sol Seed** solseedmusic.com.

Popular Eugene guitar-pop band **Fortune's Folly** is building a reputation around the region for high-energy performances, sparked by charismatic front-person Calysta Cheyenne, who's a little bit Gwen Stefani with some grunge-rock attitude.

Listening to Fortune's Folly, it's hard not to crack a grin, so when Cheyenne heard the news her band won *EW's* Best of Eugene Best Band category, she said just what you might expect: "Yay! We owe it to our amazing fans." And when it recently came time to make a music video, Cheyenne says, Fortune's Folly wanted to get those fans involved.

"It's for a song off our *Red EP* called 'Wouldn't Make You Mine,'" she explains. "Our film crew got a bunch of people together, fans and community members. They all got dressed up like Pacific Northwest animals: crows and stags and rabbits, mice and all kinds of stuff. That's going to come out before the end of the year."

And in 2018, Fortune's Folly hopes to build on their local success up in Portland and beyond. But Cheyenne says Fortune's Folly owes it to Eugene audiences most of all. "We're really happy with how well we're being received," she says, "and how much the fanbase is growing." — *Will Kennedy*

BEST OF EUGENE

BEST ACTOR/ACTRESS

1. **Rebecca Nachison**
2. (Tie) **Inga Wilson**
2. (Tie) **Storm Kennedy**
3. (Tie) **Dan Pagoda**
3. (Tie) **Sam Elliott**

"I am one of those actors that really disappears in the characters," says **Rebecca Nachison**, voted this year's Best Actor by Eugene theatergoers. "Seeing me walking down the street, you may not know that I was the hard, fierce nun in *Doubt*, or the German grandma in *Lost in Yonkers*. Nachison, who plays Molly in Radio Redux's live production of *Fibber McGee and Molly* this weekend (Nov. 3-5 at the Hult), says she's been drawn to the theater since childhood, noting that she loves digging into a good role — and the messier and darker the character, the better, such as her turn as the drug-addicted Violet in Oregon Contemporary Theatre's 2013 production of Tracy Lett's *August: Osage County*. *EW* critic William Kennedy noted Nachison's fierceness as an actor in his 2015 review of *Lost in Yonkers* at Very Little Theatre. "As the fearsome matriarch Grandma," Kennedy writes, "Rebecca Nachison steals every scene with quiet menace, the tap-tap-tap of her cane signaling dread." Bravo, we say! — *Rick Levin*



PHOTO: TODD COOPER



PHOTO: ATHENA DELENE