

NW10 'SQUARED'

Festival of new plays at OCT celebrates its 10-year anniversary

Northwest Ten galloped onto the stage of Oregon Contemporary Theatre last weekend, featuring new works from Oregon, Washington and British Columbia playwrights.

Dale Light's *These, Our Mindless Hearts*, directed in delightful soap-opera style by Geno Franco, crackles with fun *Dallas/Dynasty*-era tropes and features Kim Fairbairn and Patrick Purdue, who seem to relish the opportunity to chew the scenery.

The Quail, by Matthew Weaver and directed by Christopher McVay, investigates a 40-year marriage from different moments in time. Melanie Moser as Younger Jillian stands out for the complexity and emotional charge she develops, tempered by William Campbell as Nolan, who finds himself externally at-peace but internally reckoning.

Connie Bennett's *Rouge/Noir* dips a quill into history, bouncing along a timeline from the invention of fairy tales to the 1970s to right now. Mark Larson as writer Charles Perrault swirls at the center. Directed by Inga Wilson, this ambitious piece asks more questions than it answers — about #MeToo, about consent, about our culture — which is likely the point.

Kate Danley's *Kings of the World*, directed by Ty Potter, trains a light on two barflies who've had another of those kinda days in a string of those kinda days. Kali Kardas and Brittany Dorris exchange hilarious banter, and Dorris, in particular, excels at physical comedy.

Grand Canyon, by Scott Stolnack, digs into an everyday experience, scattering ashes, or trying to. Directed by Erica Towe, this piece features sympathetic and multi-dimensional performances from Hilary Ferguson as a Park Ranger and Paul Rhoden as the grief-stricken Sam.

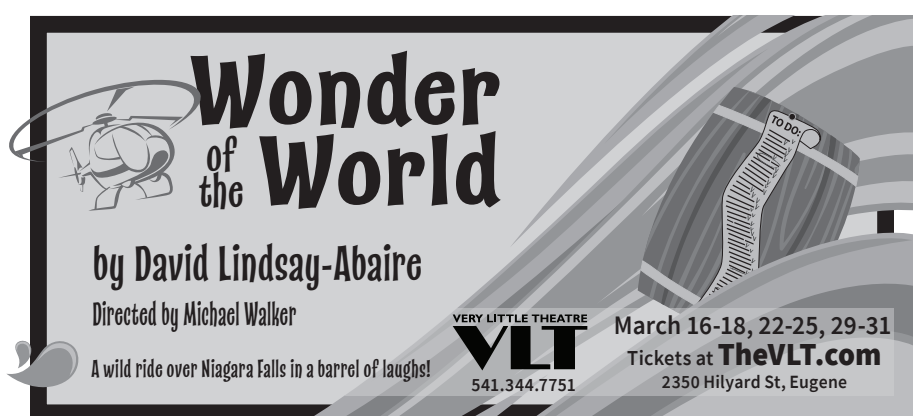
Talk Time, by Clare McDonald, directed by Scott Frazier-Maskiell, connects to bigger, unknowable questions, through the heart and mind of a child. As young Isabel, Story Frazier-Maskiell offers the timing, delivery, cadence and confidence onstage of a seasoned veteran actor. Emma Resk does a great job matching Ms. Frazier-Maskiell's skills.

Directed by Maggie Hadley, *Here to Serve You*, by Barbara Lindsay — and featuring Russell Dyball as a put-upon Ted and Blake Beardsley as too-chipper Tim — pits us all in a bad situation: middle-of-the-night layover at LAX. As Tina, Basia Brady offers little comfort in this screwball farce.

Throughout the performance, Eric Richardson on stand-up bass adds just the right vibe.

And if they gave out awards for "Best Play" at NW10, the award should go to Eric Braman's *Dirty Dishes*, directed by Cullen Vance, featuring beautiful performances by Alex Dang and Benjamin Sanders. Lyrically written, with great characters, big action and brave direction, this play shines like the sun.

NW10 continues at 7:30 pm March 22-24, and 2 pm March 25. A talk-back with playwrights follows the Sunday matinee. Tickets are \$15-18, available at octheatre.org or 541-465-1506.



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