

TWIN CITIES STAGES

Twisted Apples Stories From Winesburg, Ohio

March 28, 2017



On Sunday afternoon I made the short trip to Lowertown, Saint Paul, to Nautilus Music-Theater's studio space in order to see *Twisted Apples: Stories From Winesburg, Ohio*. This show, like all of Nautilus's work (although this was the first time that I had seen them) mixes music with storytelling in a unique way. In the case of *Twisted Apples*, Librettist Jim Payne and Composer Robert Elhai have adapted short stories from Sherwood Anderson's book *Winesburg, Ohio*, about a small Ohio town at the turn of the century, into a three act musical. In a place like Minnesota, these kind of midwestern stories are cozy and familiar, but this new work by Nautilus dives into the characters of the piece in a musically unique way, making it feel both familiar and brand new. Each of the three acts get its own story, all taking place within the same town. The separate acts have previously been preformed and developed in past years of the Minnesota Fringe Festival, but this is the first time they have all been shown together. There are pros and cons of stringing them together in this way. The con being that three hours of theater is a lot to sit through, and by the end I found it hard to keep my thoughts from wandering away from the story. The pros being that you are able to see how all the different stories weave together, and see the transformative process of theater. Each act had different characters, but played by the same performers. Seeing their transformation between acts, particularly Eric Morris from the *Old Writer*, to Hal Winters a young farmhand, was a thrill in and of itself. The performers were also all great musicians, with strong voices that brought the original music to life. The music, like the work itself felt both familiar and new, musically it felt like a cross between folk music and showtunes while lyrically being more Operatic. Scenic and Costume Designer Victoria Petrovich and Lighting Designer Mike Wangen have transformed Nautilus's space into Winesburg, Ohio with beautiful simplicity. This is vital as the fictional town of Winesburg is just as much of a character in these stories as any human on stage.

Featured Review

So What Are The Ivey Awards?

September 22, 2016

Last Monday the Twin Cities theater community gathered at the State Theater to celebrate the previous season at the Ivey Awards. This year was my first...

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In all Nautilus has put together a beautiful story that is familiar and new all in one. If you are a fan of music, theater, and stories of the Midwest, prepare yourself for three hours of entertainment and then head down to Lowertown to see Twisted Apples before it closes on April 2nd.



*Images courtesy of Nautilus Music-Theater



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