

## The Tempest Review

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### Jane Zussman

**The Tempest** at MSU's Pasant Theatre is pretty amazing. Director Deric McNish's production counteracts almost all my admitted prejudices against Shakespeare. I still have a little trouble with the language — but the excellent acting helped convey meaning in spite of the a language — the costumes (Karen Kangas-Preston), pacing, choreography (Rosely Conz), were all great — and it was short: 95 minutes with no intermission.

But what puts it over the top are the fabulous projected effects that transform this stark “iceberg” backdrop of an island set (Kirk Domer) into a surging, twinkling, erupting place sprinkled with fairy dust. (Media Design, Allison Dobbins; lighting design, Heather Brown)

Riding on that electronic fairy dust was the graceful, antic Ryan Duda as Ariel doing what might be called ballet-acrobatics, bouncing and flipping and disappearing and appearing. He was a magical presence, serving Prospera, played by the powerful Christina Traister (changed from the usual Prospero... and since this is the first time I've seen *The Tempest*, I can't imagine it being better with a male in that role.) Also outstanding was Matt Greenbaum as the monstrous Caliban, angry yet somehow endearing, whose costume was a mythical work of art.

I looked up the plot ahead of time, and still couldn't recite it coherently — but the banished magical Prospera casts a spell that spawns a beautiful storm that delivers her enemies to her island of banishment. She and her sweet daughter (Jen English) have various altercations with groups of adversaries, romance ensues between children of enemies... It all comes together in an uplifting gesture of forgiveness triumphing over vengeance — and a celebration of Ariel's freedom.

Be sure to read the Director's Note for some interesting explanations and implications reflecting on the cost of destructive magic and how it reflects on the earth's challenges today. Dramaturg Emily Yates offers additional interesting facts and observations in her program note.

Due to its “wow” effects, fast pace, and short running time, this could be a good “first Shakespeare” for some younger audience members.

Continues through next weekend:  
Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 7:30pm

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at 7:30pm

\*\*Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 7:30pm

Friday, November 18, 2016 at 8:00pm

Saturday, November 19, 2016 at TBD (Pending Football Game)

Sunday, November 20, 2016 at 2:00pm

General Admission \$17. Seniors and Faculty \$15. Students \$12. (Plus a \$3 Wharton facility fee)

Tickets are available from the Wharton Center Box Office;

1.800.WHARTON; <http://www.whartoncenter.com>

The ticket office at the Pasant Theatre opens one hour prior to the show with doors opening 30 minutes prior to the show

Pasant Theatre at Wharton Center for Performing Arts

Michigan State University, 730 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing, MI 48824.

For more information and the entire 2016-2017 season, "REBELLION & REVOLUTION" visit <http://theatre.msu.edu>