

FESTIVAL ANTIGONISH

'...an intensely memorable musical experience.'



Wiz: features a 'tornado of talent'

By JJ Steeves • The Casket • August 10, 2005

A **huge round of applause** for Festival Antigonish's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. With more than enough **talent gushing out** from all areas of production, *The Wizard of Oz* is most **definitely a must-see** this theatre season.

Many a nostalgic fan may wonder how Festival Antigonish could possibly conjure the magic and wonder of the original movie starring Judy Garland. Well fear not. All sides of the stage – both literally and figuratively – have been "Oz'ed". *Thistle Theatre Design* has tackled seemingly impossible scenes with **fresh, creative insights**, bringing a childhood favourite to light onstage.

Angèle Desjardins' costume design is by far one of the highlights of the show. Dorothy, the Lion, and ScareCrow are all **massive accomplishments**. Dorothy's ruby slippers bring back many a girls' childhood desire to have a pair of her own, and ScareCrow's costume works miraculously well with his onstage antics. The Tour de Force costume-wise however is the Tin Man, courtesy of Sylvia Bell's **artistic – and most probably carpentry – genius**.

Touted as a family affair, *The Wizard of Oz* has enough comedy to **feed the appetites of both children and adults alike**. Robyn Osborne (Dorothy), Tricia Brosha (Cowardly Lion), Michael MacEachern (Tin Man), Chris Lafleur (ScareCrow), and Jonathan MacDonald (Emerald City Guard, Wizard of Oz, and others) deliver their lines with such a **refreshing talent and confidence**, it leaves one curious: was there any question as to who should play what when casting? Dorothy's four companions - including Latham Meagher, who plays a most convincing Toto away from Kansas – are wonderfully suited to their skins – or hay, fur, and tin. **Robin Osborne's voice is another wonder**, with her big sound coming out of her small body.

Sally Clark's choreography (with additional choreography by Michelle Langille [Glinda Good Witch of the North] and Laura MacDonald) was **fresh and energetic**, with the kids seemingly **loving every step**.

Though the show was a little long, it is by far worth it, for the professional effort and talent involved in the production has resulted in **an intensely memorable musical experience**.

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