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## A Wither's Tale Turns Away Melancholy

By [Mary Mallory](#) on August 25th, 2010 [Printer-Friendly](#)



'Green Eyed Monster'  
(Joseph Keane) and  
'Leontes' (Matt Walker) in  
the Troubadour Theater  
Company's A Wither's Tale  
at the Falcon Theatre.

Successfully blending high drama with high camp, "A Wither's Tale" joins the long line of entertaining Troubadour Theater Company shows. The production smartly weaves tunes by soul singer Bill Withers into William Shakespeare's somber tale to emphasize major plot points.

Jealous King Leontes (Matt Walker) suspects his wife Hermoine (Monica Schneider) and his friend King Polixenes (Matt Merchant) of carrying on an affair, though she professes her loyalty with "Just the Two of Us." He plots revenge on them both, leading to banishment and death, as he realizes "Aint' No Sunshine When She's Gone."

With a little help from his friends, all's well that ends well when they learn to "Lean on Me" and have a "Lovely Day."

Director/star Walker creates an impressive staging, combining rich emotion with energetic comedy and song. He leavens emotionally heavy moments with bawdy humor and improvisation, aided by Ameelah Kaplan's superb choreography.

Walker draws first-rate acting from the entire ensemble and soaring songs from his soloists, especially the talented Lisa Valenzuela.

As fine as they are, Walker steals the show with his passionate vulnerability as Leontes, while interjecting whimsy with his impish sense of humor in a supporting role as a clown. Excellent design work enhances the production, with the Elizabethan style staging creating stirring vignettes. Elegant costumes and dramatic lighting add richness to the proceedings.

Engrossing as well as entertaining, the Troubies' "A Wither's Tale" will "turn that frown upside down."

*The Troubadour Theater Company's production of "A Wither's Tale" plays Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 PM and Sundays at 4 PM through September 26 at the Falcon Theatre, 4252 Riverside Dr. in Burbank. Tickets cost \$34.50-\$37 Wednesdays-Thursdays, and \$39.50-\$42 on weekends. Student tickets cost \$27.*

