



BY ALMA TASSI

When you hear about the frogs, penguins, and anteaters, you may make the mistake of assuming Imago Theater's "ZooZoo" simply caters to children's sensibilities. Yes, the kids laugh out loud at the penguins playing musical chairs and clap excitedly when a worm figures out how to do a handstand, but so does everyone else in the theater. Anyone can easily relate to the frog with an inferiority complex because he can't jump or would wonder what's inside the 8 foot tall paper bag bouncing around the stage.

Artistic director Jerry Mouawad describes the short vignettes that make up the show as "simple things that affect the human condition." The ideas may seem simple, but they include truly sublime effects that tickle the imagination and intrigue the intellect.

Founded in 1979 by Carol Triffle and Jerry Mouawad, Imago Theater's original productions have toured internationally for over two decades. They have been called alchemists, magicians, theatrical animators, and physical comedians. Their signature style of simple concepts with complex results can take months of creative development. Mouawad likens their process to science and a form of trial and error. Discoveries made through happy accidents during rehearsals and performances continually evolve the pieces.

# "ZooZoo"

With no dialogue, the wordless theatrics rely on visual spectacle and acrobatic, physical movement. Mouawad explains, "Without words, you get to places you can't get with words. Movement is purer than language and the most primary form of communication." Inspired by the silent film era of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, as well as the zoo and circus, this approach allows the show to transcend age, language, and culture.

Other creations in "ZooZoo" include dancing polar bears, rabbits caught in headlights, and floating bug eyes. Sometimes wearing elaborate costumes or manipulating large puppets, performers intimately engage with breathtaking visual feats or simply gaze out into the audience in silence. When the performers come off

stage, the fantastical creatures are not only content to stare at you but touch you as well. So don't be surprised if a penguin tries to steal your seat and you find yourself the last one standing in musical chairs.

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Fairy tales of princesses or their favorite Saturday morning TV characters coming to life on stage would make any child beg their parents to take them to the theater. Imago Theater's "ZooZoo" gives adults with a hankering for a little whimsy in their life a reason to go, with or without kids in tow. ■



IMAGO THEATER'S  
"ZOOZOO"

Thursday, February 10

7:30 pm

CASTLE THEATER  
Maui Arts & Cultural Center

TICKETS

\$12, \$28, \$38

242-SHOW