



Monica Schneider, Matt Merchant and Matt Walker.  
Photo: Chelsea Sutton

## Troubies take on 'Winter's Tale' offers rollicking summer fare

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By **Candyce Columbus**, LA Theater Examiner

**Incorporating the beautiful language of Shakespeare and the Troubadour Theater Company's wit and wackiness, *A Wither's Tale* offers rollicking summer fare at the Falcon Theatre. The show opened on Friday, August 20 to a standing ovation by an appreciative audience.**

**Directed by Matt Walker** who plays Leontes, jealous king of Toluca, the play is faithful to the Bard's lesser-known but most interesting romance, *The Winter's Tale*. Leontes suspects a liaison with his childhood friend Polixenes (**Matt Merchant**) King of Noho and his with-child wife Hermione (**Monica Schneider**). Thus begins a tale of what destruction is wrought when the Green-eyed Monster (**Joseph Keane**) is given sway.

During the brisk 90-minutes the actors are given the opportunity through Shakespeare's verse to display their dramatic talents. But fear not, contemporary references (think Mel Gibson and Lindsay Lohan) pop up unexpectedly to great and humorous effect.

**Bill Wither's soulful, heart-felt songs** (hence the play's title) such as *Ain't No Sunshine* and *Lean on Me* perfectly enhance the play's plot and character. Supported by the **considerable expertise of the band (Eric Heinley, Kevin McCourt, Tory Ruffin, Kevin Stuart and John Krovoza)** the cast sings and dances up a storm. Both the solos and harmonies are exquisite.

As always Walker iss fascinating as Leontes and hilarious as the Clown. Equally powerful as Paulina,

Troubie veteran **Beth Kennedy** also provides many belly laughs as the Shepherd with her flock of one lamb. **Lisa Valenzuela** (another long-time Troubie) reveals her versatility in two distinctly different roles, Leontes' young son, Mamilmus and the all-knowing Oracle.

All the dancers bring **Ameenah Kaplan's choreography** to life and Keane makes it shimmer.

**Sharon McGunigle** outdid herself with some of the most fun **costumes** ever in a Troubadour show. Clever **set design by Mike Jespersen worked extremely well, as did the sound design by Robert Arturo Ramirez and Jeremy Pivnik's lighting** (especially the moving gobo pattern on the stage floor).

In other words, this is one terrific show. Another triumph for the Troubies not to be missed! It's likely to sell-out so don't delay in making reservations.

**A Wither's Tale performs Wednesday through Sunday through September 26. Tickets are Weekdays (Wed/Thurs) \$34.50 – \$37, Weekends (Fri/Sat/Sun) \$39.50 – \$42 and Students with valid ID \$27. Group rates are available on selected week nights. Call 818-955-8101 or visit [www.FalconTheatre.com](http://www.FalconTheatre.com).**

**The Falcon Theatre is located at 4252 Riverside Drive in Burbank, California.**

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