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The Silent Language at TUTA Theatre Chicago | Theater review

A servant takes a hero's journey in this thoroughly charming, family-friendly adaptation of a Serbian folk tale.



By Aeneas Sagar Hemphill
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Photograph: Anthony Robert La Penna



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Max Lotspeich in *The Silent Language* at TUTA Theatre Chicago

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Carolyn Molloy in *The Silent Language* at TUTA Theatre Chicago

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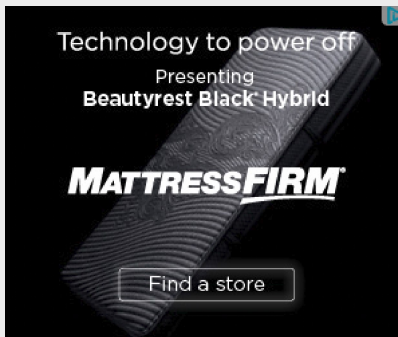
While lounging in the forest, an endearing but dopey village servant named Poor Gasho (Max Lotspeich) discovers the power to understand the language of the natural world—the “silent language” only plants and animals can hear. As he practices his newfound listening skills with the forest’s inhabitants, he learns that a princess (Carolyn Molloy) has been kidnapped by a powerful elf (Aaron Lawson). Gasho sets out on a quest to rescue her, elated to find an opportunity to finally win the admiration of his village. His journey introduces us to the forest and its many fascinating characters, from a prim goose and gander (Angela Bullard and Sean Ewert), to a sorceress who casts spells with three-letter words (Laurie Lawson), to the vicious Ironjaw Hag (Jaimelyn Gray).

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Miodrag Stanisavljevic's *The Silent Language*, adapted from a Serbian folktale (and translated into English by Zoran Paunovic), brings to life the details around us we often take for granted. Every element of TUTA's production serves to define and solidify the magic of the play's world. The remarkable set is draped in earthy tones and adorned with hanging lightbulbs and tree limbs. The rich lighting design and bright, organic music make the environment feel expansive and vivid, while the strong physicality and commitment of the performers to each role makes every encounter a delight. At times gleeful, at others mesmerizing, *The Silent Language* will remind you of when you were young enough for fairytales, when wonder and danger could be found in a backyard, and maybe you could even hear the blades of grass.



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