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## A World Elsewhere! Arias in the Key of Clown

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reviewed by [Will Fulton](#)  
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In the world of downtown theatre, it is rare to see something so earnest as *A World Elsewhere! Arias in the Key of Clown*, presented by Wide Eyed Productions. This clown piece, created and directed by Ben Newman, chronicles the journey of two simple farmer clowns ("The Lost"), when one is drawn away in the night by the temptations of the big city (presented in the form of a New York City snow globe by "The Wanderers," a roving band of fun-seeking urban clowns), and the other goes to find her.

Newman and his ensemble show a clear understanding of Clown and commedia dell'arte performance conventions throughout the piece. Apart from song lyrics, most of the words spoken on stage come in the form of an English-esque babble dotted with amusingly distorted but recognizable words (a technique used by traveling European commedia troupes to help bridge language gaps.) The Lost clowns' farming being disrupted by introduction of the snow globe provides a clear structure of status quo and intrusion that effectively brings the audience in early on. Unfortunately this clarity of structure diminishes as the show goes on. After The Lost set out on their journey, little happens beyond a series of increasingly contrived obstacles and encounters that lack the narrative drive and necessity which mark the first scenes of the show.

Lucy McRae and Justin Ness as The Lost have sharp comic timing and an infectious emotional warmth that anchors the show. McRae's genuine glee in ritualistically shaking the snow globe evokes an innocent pleasure rarely seen in adult performers. The Wanderers are energetic, clearly having fun on stage. A sequence in which The Wanderers perform a parodic montage of New York's recognizable characters, perhaps as new commedia archetypes, is particularly well done, and should evoke a few chuckles from any locals in the audience.

The "Arias" portion of the show is troublesome, however. Periodically various combinations of the performers break into