

# There are no words to describe the best Twin Cities play of 2017

Favorites range from brand-new work to timeless classics.

By **Chris Hewitt** Star Tribune | JANUARY 25, 2018 — 10:45PM

1. ["Speechless," the Moving Company:](http://www.startribune.com/review-in-an-uncertain-world-moving-company-s-speechless-argues-language-isn-t-the-answer/454302003/) (<http://www.startribune.com/review-in-an-uncertain-world-moving-company-s-speechless-argues-language-isn-t-the-answer/454302003/>) More than any play I saw in 2017, this graceful, surprising and wordless cry from the heart hit at a purely emotional level. I know I'll be seeing it again when it returns to the Lab next spring.

2. "The Red Shoes," Open Eye Figure Theatre: Its run was extended, but Open Eye's tiny space could accommodate only so many people for this thrilling, witty blend of comedy and noir, featuring Kimberly Richardson's tour-de-force performance in multiple roles, including a woman menaced in her dank apartment. Good news for those who missed it: "Red Shoes" will return next fall.

3. "Sunday in the Park With George," Guthrie Theater: The thrust stage required director Joseph Haj to take an unconventional approach to the Stephen Sondheim/James Lapine musical about (not) balancing art and life, and it worked beautifully. So did Erin Mackey's peerless acting in two feisty roles.

4. "The Nether," Jungle Theater: The folks who bailed on the performance I attended missed a provocative play whose ideas about abuse, privacy and revenge are still banging around inside my brain.

5. "Wit," Artistry: It was a good year for Sally Wingert fans. This powerful drama — in which she was an academic facing cancer with open eyes, assisted by Cristina Florencia Castro as a compassionate nurse — was the pinnacle.

6. "Fiddler on the Roof," Ten Thousand Things: A gifted ensemble and a pared-down aesthetic helped the musical about choosing love feel utterly timeless.

7. "Battlefield," Guthrie Theater: The touring production made inventive use of four shape-shifting actors in an epic tale of war's futility, one that begins with the line, "This victory is a defeat."

8. "West Side Story," Ordway Center: Packing the stage with dozens of energetic singer/dancer/actors to tackle Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's landmark musical? As Sondheim's lyric says, "OK by me."

9. "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," Children's Theatre Company: CTC did right by Dr. Seuss' masterpiece, led by the acting duo of Reed Sigmund as the Grinch and Mabel Weismann as Cindy-Lou Who.



([http://stmedia.startribune.com/images/ows\\_1513900067294](http://stmedia.startribune.com/images/ows_1513900067294))  
DOMINIQUE SERRAND

Nathan Keepers, Heidi Bakke, Steven Epp and Masanari Kawahara in "Speechless" by the Moving Company.

10. "Charles Francis Chan Jr.'s Exotic Oriental Journey," Theater Mu: It's a messy, jam-packed play, and I loved the way Mu's cinematic production embraced the messiness instead of trying to hide it.

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