

## Play reviews: Leaving Iowa, by Tim Clue and Spike Manton

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Clinging to the childhood memories of family vacations the two-act comedy "Leaving Iowa, is a superb play that will leave audiences appreciative of the ordinary experiences of life

The comedy by Tim Clue and Spike Manton revolves around four main characters with two supporting actors that play multiple parts.

The main character Don, who narrates this humorous and nostalgic tale, returns home for a family baptism and ends up taking a journey to find the final resting place for his father's ashes.

The play presents 1960's Americana in such a poignant yet humorous light that audience can't help but allow their own imaginations to drift to their own families and road trips.

In the process of taking the journey to find the best final resting place for dad's ashes, Don follows his Dad's travel guide. The play is constructed both in present day and as a flashback to Don's childhood years.

Other key characters in the play are his mother, who has over the years been the unflappable mediator in the family as well as his spoiled sister who always got her way as a child. Dad pops up in the reflection scenes and the audience is allowed to see the make up of this man who is being eulogized in the play.

The audience develops an empathy toward the narrator as his seems to never get his way, whether it is traveling to the Wisconsin Dells or making his parents believe that his sister stole his arrow head. Dad is seen as a bit of an antagonist to Don throughout most of the play, but by the end of the comedy the audience and Don have come to understand and appreciate Dad for all of his foibles and qualities.

The two actors who play the other two parts in the play can absolutely steal the show. Although these two parts can be expanded to be played by up to nearly 20 different cast members, the humor is at its best as the same two people come out as revolving characters. These characters vary from a cook and waitress to a farmer and his wife.

The play is so successful because it artfully weaves the story of a family. A son who longed to get away from Winterset, Iowa (the home of the Duke) only to come back and appreciate the wonderful and sometimes tortuous family vacations. Watching this play is like looking in a mirror. The audience sees their own parents or children in the characters. Most people can relate to fighting with a sibling in the car or driving parents crazy with that exact same squabbling. This is the beauty of "Leaving Iowa" it is a tale of the everyman, but it is a tale that is entertaining and thoughtful at the same time.