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Love of the natural world

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While Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau spoke of their **love of the natural world**, a flock of geese passed overhead, providing an unexpected but perfect sound effect, heightening the men's dialogue. And while the town folk danced, sang, and worked in the fields, song birds in nearby trees trilled and chirped along. The effect on the audience was magical, providing a sense of being immersed in Emerson's and Thoreau's world and words.

Last Wednesday night, a small Minneapolis-based theater company called TigerLion Arts presented "Nature," a walking play, in the Johanna Frerichs Garden for Wildlife at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. It was the world premiere of the play that depicts the mutual love that writers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau had for nature and the environment.

The audience members watch and walk through the grounds with the actors as the play unfolds, to simple sets with the landscape as a backdrop.

It's the second "walking" play that TigerLion Arts has presented at the Arboretum. Last summer, they premiered the original work, "The Buddha Prince." Since then, that play has been performed around the country including Central Park in New York City.

"Nature" was written by several members of the company, including Tyson Forbes, who is a sixth generation direct descendent of Emerson. The performance was presented in collaboration with the Life Science Foundation of Victoria, the Center for Spirituality & Healing at the University of Minnesota, and the Center for Therapeutic Horticulture at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

The performance was for participants in a four-day healing arts symposium at the Arboretum last week.

TigerLion Arts will perform the play again at the Arboretum Aug. 21-22.

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