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- Ben Stone as Gregory in *Uncle Oscar's Experiment*

In the course of a year, there are well over 100 plays to be seen in and around Halifax. They run the gamut from works taking their first baby steps into the world to big-budget extravaganzas. What I find interesting when I compile this annual list of favourites is that the plays I remember are not always the most slickly produced. It's the ones that make me gasp, laugh, shed a tear and set my mind a-thinkin' that make the grade for me.

12. *A Man for all Seasons* (**Theatre Arts Guild**): There were some outstanding shows from the community theatre crowd this year (**Bedford Players'** *Calendar Girls* and **Dartmouth Players'** *Count Dracula* were definitely memorable), but TAG's minimalistic take on Robert Bolt's classic was an elegant winner.

11. *Roaring Girl* (**Vile Passéist**): An original take on a 17th century comedy with original music and a feminist bent? Yes please!

10. *The God That Comes* (**2b theatre**): Delightfully debauched and musically mesmerizing, this re-imagined Greek myth perfectly showcased Hawksley Workman's prodigious talent.

9. *A Little Night Music* (

Halifax Summer Opera Workshop and Festival): A bawdy tale of sexual frustration and confusing relationships filled with brilliant performances and striking costumes.

8. *Refuge* (**Eastern Front Theatre**): This play shone a light on some unpalatable truths about Canada's immigration system with a powerful mix of verbatim theatre and engaging drama. A moving, memorable story, well told.

7. *The Iliad* (**Two Planks and a Passion**): The fire crackled and so did Homer's tale of Troy when brought to life by a wonderful adaptation in a gorgeous outdoor setting.

6. *RED* and *Legally Blonde* (**Neptune Theatre**): Definitely an incongruous tie: one a dialogue-heavy exploration of the soul of an artist, the other a full-tilt musical with a perfectly perky protagonist. *RED* told its story in subtle shades and *Legally Blonde* painted it in neon pink.

5. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (**SBTS and Misery Loves (Theatre) Company**): A effective mix of wit and horror that chilled and thrilled.



4. *Ghosts* (**LunaSea**): Staging this play The Local Council House for Women was a stroke of genius. The claustrophobic world of Ibsen's tortured heroine came to life and drew the audience in.

3. *Under Milkwood* (**Off The Leash**): This beautifully acted, directed and designed show artfully brought Dylan Thomas' words to life.

2. *Diligent River Daughter* (**Ship's Company Theatre**): A tale rooted in rural Nova Scotia, this play nestles a beautiful story of a plucky young woman within huge historical events like World War I and the Halifax explosion. Epic and intimate.

1. *Uncle Oscar's Experiment* (**Zuppa Theatre Co.**): Quirky, brilliant and gorgeous, this 10th anniversary remount showcased exactly why Zuppa has made an enduring name for itself on the Halifax theatre scene.