



—Don't Do It!



[Tarragon Theatre](#) is poised for a banner year, kicking things off with a remount of their highly-acclaimed production of Wajdi Mouawad's *Scorched* (which you should probably see if you haven't already: come for the political intrigue, stay for the tawdry family soap opera!). But there's another show playing in the theatre's Extra Space right now that is also deserving of attention: [Theatre Smash](#)'s production of *Norway, Today*. The young company (which will also be remounting Layne Coleman's fantastic *Tijuana Cure* at Passe Muraille in March) has really come up with something special with this show, a translation of a play by Igor Bauersima from 2000.

Julie is a young woman who posts on an internet message board looking for someone to join her in a suicide pact. She finds August, a 19-year-old boy with a similar "Goodbye, cruel world" perspective. Together, they travel to a picturesque Norwegian cliff overlooking a fjord, camp out, and prepare themselves for the final jump. It may sound like a festival of dreariness, but the wonderful surprise is that it actually isn't. The play is touching, engaging, and often quite funny. Steven McCarthy is a very believable angsty teenage dirtbag, and Ieva Lucs brings ABBA-like Nordic cool to the more sophisticated Julie. Sarah Baumann's direction is tight and inventive, but it is Robin Fisher's set design and Romeo Candido's video design that really make the show different. The impressionist cliff with collapsible tent is a beautiful example of creative economy. About halfway through the show, Julie whips out a video camera, to document her and August's last moments together, the results of which are projected on screens behind them. A/V in theatre is always a risk; people can end up watching it like a TV and ignoring the onstage action. But the video in *Norway, Today* is entirely complementary to the actors, never pulling focus away from something more important and, in one instance, making for a wonderful moment of genuine theatre magic.

Tarragon is known for having pretty high-quality rentals, but it's always a treat to see such a great (and professional-calibre) show that isn't part of a theatre's regular season. Look out for Theatre Smash; they've got an exciting future ahead of them.