'Shakespeare in Hollywood'

'Midsummer' fairies land in 1930's La La Land

By Emily Mentzer The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — A fairy king and his mischievous servant did not intend to land in 1930's Hollywood, but when Puck messes up a spell, he and Oberon find themselves out of their magic

wood and into Hollywood. "Sometimes rights and lefts are hard," said Sarah Cotter, who plays Puck in Western Oregon University's production of "Shakespeare in Hollywood." "So when I was performing my spell, I was supposed to spin around three times to the left. I may have spun around three times to the right, and then we went the wrong direction in time.'

What are the two to do but direct a movie of "Midsummer Night's Dream," of course.

That's the premise behind WOU's production, opening Thursday through Saturday and March 9 through 11.

"This is basically a farce about the 1935 version of 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' that Max Reinhardt and William Dieterle directed," said director Ted de Chatelet. "This is a farce as if the real fairies Oberon and Puck land in Hollywood for a day and are filming this movie."

The play is filled with laughs, action and physical comedy, and it is clear from rehearsal that the actors are enjoying themselves as much as the audience.

"It's a great show," Cotter said. "Don't be intimidated by the Shakespeare. They poke so much fun at it that it's accessible to everyone. It's more comedy than any-

Cotter, who played Puck during the summer Shakespeare production of "Midsummer," said this time around the characters are quite different, both in cos-



Puck, played by Sarah Cotter, rehearses a scene from "Shakespeare in Hollywood," which opens on Thursday.

tume and in personality.

"He's much more Hollywood, much more uppity," Cotter said. "This Puck is a flashy guy. ... He loves to cause mischief."

Gabriel Elmore, who plays Oberon, king of the fairies, said he and Puck are out of their element.

"They were already pretty crazy and pretty loose in the way they do things in 'Midsummer,' but here they're taken completely out of their comfort zone of their magic wood and forced to

interact with a very specific style," he said. "They're forced to come to terms with things that they, as immortal fairies, think is bizarre, which is ironic." Both Oberon and Puck

are a bit confused and baffled by the Hollywood scene, surrounded by aspiring divas and developing egos.

"It's not often that the character Oberon feels powerless," Elmore said.

Becky Bond plays Lydia, a blond chorus girl who aspires to be cast in a beautiful show.

Showtime

What: Western Oregon University presents, 'Shakespeare in Holly-

When: Thursday through Saturday, 7 p.m.; March 9 through 11, 7 p.m. Matinee on Saturday at 2 p.m.

Where: Rice Auditorium, Western Oregon Uni-

Admission: \$14, general; \$10, faculty, staff and seniors; \$8, students.

"She's a bit of a bimbo, I guess you could say," Bond

Bond also has experience with "Midsummer," having been in the summer performance, and notes the differences.

"This one's crazy because it's a farce," she said. "It's so huge and elaborate. With Shakespeare, it's more about the text as opposed to your actions. This one, it's more about the comedy."

The comedy has presented a challenge for the actors — WOU theater does not often do farces.

"It's really fun as well because I'm able to do whatever I please on a whim," Bond said. "No ideas are shut down because it's just a lot of testing the water and see if things work out. If it doesn't, we'll cut it."

Elmore said one trick to pulling off the physical comedy is exaggeration.

"If you have to bend down for a joke, bend down just a little lower than you think you do, sort of take it to extremes, it's the only way we can pull it off," he said.

The lighthearted show is filled with bright costumes, characters and set pieces. It's sure to please.

"And, if you're into audience interaction, do sit in the front row," Cotter added.

SCHOOL NOTES

Chemeketa to increase tuition, fees

SALEM — The Chemeketa Board of Education voted unanimously to increase the cost of taking classes at the community

Starting with the summer term, Chemeketa students who are Oregon residents will pay either \$4 or \$5 more in tuition and \$1 more in fees per credit based on the Legislature's funding of community colleges.

If the Legislature funds community colleges at \$550 million or less, Chemeketa's in-state students will pay \$100 per credit in tuition and fees. If the state appropriation exceeds \$550 million, students will be charged \$99 per credit in tuition and fees. International and out-of-state students will see comparable tu-

Board of Education member Diane Watson said the increase will be used to maintain current service levels.

"I always hate to burden our students but with the anticipated shortfall from the state, we don't have other options," Wat-

Chemeketa has not raised tuition and fees for four years.

Baer is Nov. Distinguished Educator

DALLAS — Lyle Elementary School educational assistant Rachel Baer is Dallas School District's November Distinguished Her nominator was Elizabeth Blake,

heart for her students" and "makes an effort

teacher at Lyle Elementary, and she was presented the award last week. Blake said Baer "has a tender and caring

to connect with each of them individually" The students shared drawings and writings with Baer, expressing their appreciation for all the help she gives them with writing.

The Distinguished Educator Program recognizes "excellence in teaching and learning" in Dallas School District schools.

Dallas places deadline on transfers

DALLAS — The Dallas School Board voted Monday to place a deadline of April 1 on transfer applications for out-of-district students for the 2017-18 school year. The board did not limit the number of interdistrict transfers

the district would accept, but established the deadline for budgeting purposes. Previously, the district took nonresident

Nonresident students do not live in the Dallas School District, but transfer in to attend school.

Superintendent Michelle Johnstone said that district staff began to look at the cost of allowing nonresident students to enroll at any time as it prepares for possible budget cuts in the coming year.

The decision does not impact students who move into the district druing the year.

For more information: 503-623-5594.

ACADEMIC HONORS

Costa named to president's list

FRONT ROYAL, Va. — Lucas Costa, of Monmouth, a senior at Randolph-Macon Academy, earned a place on the president's list for the second quarter of the 2016-17 school year. Students who achieve a grade-point average of 4.0 or higher at Randolph-Macon Academy Upper School (grades nine through 12) are named to the dean's list.

Lucas is the son of Cinthia Costa Jones, of Monmouth, and Alexandre D T Costa, of Curitiba, Puerto Rico.



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