

WINTER BRAVO! 2013

EUGENE WEEKLY'S GUIDE TO THE PERFORMING ARTS

For this season's *Bravo*, pack your suitcase and grab your passport because the local performing arts scene is about to send you on a rip-roaring trip around the world. Head to London and release the hounds with *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* (Very Little Theatre) and then brush up your British sensibility at the Cottage Theatre with productions of *Angel Street*, *The Secret Garden* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Feeling cheeky? University Theater's *The Importance of Being Ernest* offers a dose of Oscar Wilde, while Ballet Fantastique's *Pride and Prejudice* adds a splash of Jane Austen. Next, head south to France for VLT's brazen *La Cage aux Folles* (the original *The Birdcage*) and then join the revolution for the Actors Cabaret of Eugene's *Les Misérables*. Keep going south to romantic Venice, where you'll witness *The Misadventures of Casanova* (Ballet Fantastique). Hop the Mediterranean to the Middle East, where the lives of Iraqi women spring to life in *9 Faces of Desire* (University Theatre). Travel due east to China for the New Shanghai Circus (Hult Center) and then sail the Andaman Sea to India for the Eugene Ballet Company's *Mowgli: The Jungle Book Ballet* before heading to Africa for the UO's *Dance Africa* and the South African Lady Smith Black Mambazo (The Shedd). Cross the Atlantic and learn about Central American folklore through bilingual productions of *¡Bocón!* (The Majestic Theater) before returning to the good ol' U.S.A.

Revel in the American jazz tradition with the Oregon Jazz Festival and see the best of New World theater with productions like the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Next to Normal* (Lord Leebrick). Come the end of summer, you will be impressing or annoying the bloody hell out of your friends with your new cosmopolitan habits: drinking tea with biscuits (and a stiff upper lip), mastering the clicks of Zulu, debating international policy, using words like *gauche* and rattling on about the proletariat. See listings for details. — Alex Notman



A Loudmouth Worth Listening To

The Majestic Theatre's ¡Bocón! sends kids and adults alike on a fantastical journey BY NICK POUST

Coyotes, talking dogs, mythical two-headed beasts, a bogeywoman with good intentions and family-napping soldiers are all obstacles on 12-year-old Miguel's quest to both literally and figuratively find his voice in *¡Bocón!*, a play produced through Corvallis's The Majestic Theatre this February.

Performed on the theater's main stage this February, *¡Bocón!*, written by the playwright Lisa Loomer (co-writer of the film *Girl, Interrupted*), is a bilingual production (English and Spanish) for all ages and a moving story about the importance of heritage and culture, regaining one's confidence and overcoming adversity. This will be the second education-directed production directed by Willow Norton, a native of Eugene and a South Eugene High School alumnus who has done most of her theatrical work in New York. The Majestic Education program teaches area teens and children about the performing arts, confidence, creativity and communication via "studio-style" instruction.

The connection to Oregon doesn't stop with her. She will be working with a costume designer out of Portland, Alenka Loesch, a fight choreographer from Salem, Ivy Farrel, and a protagonist played by Eugene actor Ulises Ordonez. "It's an Oregon kind of project," she says.

The year is 1989, and the play's protagonist Miguel launches into a journey from El Salvador to Los Angeles, Calif., after soldiers take his parents away. Miguel is known for speaking his mind and being "bocón," meaning "loudmouthed" in Spanish, but when his parents vanish he loses his voice. Along the way to the

City of Angels, Miguel encounters strange, fantastical characters like La Llorona, the "weeping woman" famous in Mexican and Central American folklore.

The play was originally written in response to the turmoil in Central America during the late 1980s, but its allegorical examination of freedom of speech and the effects of war are still relevant today.

"In the little forward at the beginning of the play Loomer writes that the time of the play is any time there is war and refugees," Norton says. "So I think that is something very poignant. The play is all of these different places because it is a journey play. But it is also a memory play."

Norton set out to create a unique adaptation that is suitable for children. In accomplishing this, she balances dark scenes with light ones and incorporates puppets, mask work and new original songs into the production. She believes in the intelligence of today's youth and thinks *¡Bocón!* will tailor to that.

"I truly believe that children are very smart and very aware of what is going on in the world around them," she says. "And by engaging in their creativity and their curiosity and their know-how about what is happening around them through theater, they are much more engaged in the art."

With its poignant storyline and Norton's dedication, *¡Bocón!* will be an educational journey for all ages. ■

¡Bocón! runs 7:30 pm Saturday, Feb. 9 and 16, and 2:30 pm Sunday, Feb. 10 and 17, at The Majestic Theatre; \$8 children, \$12 adults. Visit www.majestic.org or call 758-7827 for more information.