

BETRAYAL AND BLOOD — STAGED POOLSIDE

Free Shakespeare in the Park

A brilliant politician who would be king is brutally stabbed to death by a group of senators ... right in the middle of Amazon Park? Now *that's* drama. With daggers at the ready and poetry popping from their lips, it is time again for Shakespeare in the Park's annual show.

This year they take on the bloody, ever-relevant *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. I managed to fire off a few questions to Artistic Producing Director Sharon Se'love as she raced about in the final week before production.

Se'love, a classically trained theater artist who studied in New York and London, started Shakespeare in the Park in 1999; she had a vision of "creating a community theater performing the works of Shakespeare in the park free of charge, to turn on many folks to live theater and to have a mentorship program where student actors can learn from experienced actors."

Shakespeare in the Park differs from your typical theatrical experience. According to Se'love, "I'd say our staging harkens back to Shakespeare's day, where plays were performed in daylight, there was no fourth wall and set pieces and props are minimal." She adds, "We encourage our audiences to hiss and boo the villains and cheer the heroes, to be engaged with the story." Audience members do not, however, get to throw rotten fruit. There's authentic and then there's just plain inappropriate.

For those familiar with previous park performances, it will come as no surprise to see quite a bit of gender-blind casting. I asked Se'love how she decides which roles to cast as female. "We have always gender-bent casting in Free Shakespeare in the Park. When folks come to the audition they are asked which role(s) they'd like to play. With that in mind we cast the best available actor who can bring the character to life, regardless of gender."

In this year's title role is 73-year-old actor David Stuart Bull. Se'love notes that, "David's Caesar is noble, powerful and dramatic. He is quite the trooper ... All I can say is Hail Caesar!" ■



FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK RUNS SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS IN AUGUST AT AMAZON PARK

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar plays 6 pm Saturdays and Sundays, Aug. 3-25, outside on the south lawn at Amazon Community Park; free.



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Produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service, Inc, Englewood, Colorado & in partnership with Amazon Community Center and the City of Eugene Recreation Services.



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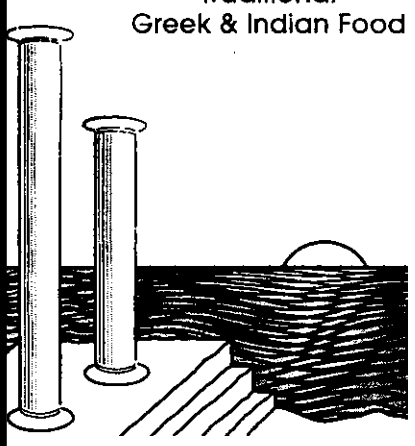


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