



ASHLAND ON MY MIND

Local theater artists chime in on the upcoming Oregon Shakespeare Festival season

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival kicks off once again Feb. 14. Our internationally recognized theater down I-5 is entertaining with plays ranging from 400 years old to fresh off the press, dark dramas to Marx brothers comedies. I got in touch with a few notable theater artists from Eugene to see what's on their list to see this season.

Water By The Spoonful: A 2012 Pulitzer Prize winner, *Water By The Spoonful* follows the public and virtual lives of a group of recovering addicts who have met and bonded as family in an online chat room.

"I am most enticed by the description for *Water By The Spoonful*," says Oregon Contemporary Theatre's Artistic Director Craig Willis. "Sounds like a great premise for a play, and the writer, director and actors are mostly new to me, so that's intriguing."

A Wrinkle In Time: Madeleine L'Engle's classic youth fantasy novel has been updated for the stage. Emily Hart of Found Space Theatre, last seen in *Two Mothers Speak*, is interested, "simply because it is a play based on one of my most favorite childhood books. I'd be very interested to see how the book translates to the stage."

Into the Woods: Stephen Sondheim's popular 1986 musical looks at the flip side of fairy tales in a dark take on some of childhood's favorite stories. Willis and Hart are both anticipating the production. Willis notes, "being a Sondheim fan, and given my appreciation for Amanda Dehnert's provocative staging of *My Fair Lady*, I am looking forward to *Into The Woods*."

"I'm not generally a fan of musical theater," Hart admits, "but this is a really, really good musical."

Storm Kennedy of KUGN, last seen on stage in OCT's *Who Am I This Time?*, expresses what many in Eugene are thinking: "I have enjoyed [*Into the Woods*] twice before on the community theater level and would love to see what the professionals would deliver."

The Great Society: "I'm excited about *The Great Society* by Robert Schenkkan," says Paul Calandrino, playwright and executive producer of the 10-minute play festival Northwest Ten. "It's a world premiere and the latest production in OSF's American Revolutions series," he says, adding, "I'm fascinated by Bill Rauch's ambition to produce American historical plays on a Shakespearean level."

The Great Society follows last year's *All The Way* and again features Jack Willis as Lyndon Johnson.

"*The Great Society* is the second play of the Lyndon Johnson cycle, like our very own *Henry IV, Part 2*," Calandrino says. "The big challenge, I think, is one of perspective. Schenkkan and a good chunk of his audience lived through this history. It's just 50 years past, whereas Shakespeare was writing about history that had 'settled' for several hundred years."

The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window: Sidney Brustein is a Jewish intellectual unable to find happiness amidst 1960s counterculture in Greenwich Village, until he is thrown into action by a political campaign and forced to examine what he's willing to fight for.

John Schmor, head of UO's Department of Theatre Arts calls it "a neglected play by Lorraine Hansberry (best known for *A Raisin in the Sun*). This is a rare chance to see a different side to Hansberry's art."

The Tempest: Shakespeare's final play of revenge, romance and supernatural powers is on many people's list of favorites. Hart says, "Even if they update it — I'm a Shakespeare purist, mind you — it is one of Shakespeare's plays that lends itself to updating without sacrificing the true meaning of the words."

Schmor singled out a couple of specific actors he is planning to watch this year. "I'm eagerly looking forward to seeing Denis Arndt play Prospero this season," he says. "Arndt was one of the star players during the Jerry Turner years, and I remember him for audacious, fierce performances."

Schmor will also be finding a seat at *Richard III*, Shakespeare's ultimate villain play. "I'm looking forward to Dan Donohue's *Richard III* — he's got the unnerving quickness of thought and comedic surprise for this role, also the bravado."

Other offerings at OSF this year include an all-female cast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Mark Bedard's adaptation of the Marx Brothers comedy *The Cocoanuts*, *The Comedy of Errors* set in the heart of the Harlem Renaissance and the world premiere of *Family Album*. — Anna Grace



Come In and see MARMOLEUM'S Amazing New Colors!
10% OFF through February 23rd

746 Lincoln St. Eugene
541-485-6984
gardnerfc.com

GARDNER
Floor Covering

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE
"A dance company all America should see."
-Clive Barnes, New York Post

One night only!

rdt
repertory dance theatre
Since 1966 preserving creating enriching

Historic works by renowned modern dance pioneer Michio Ito
Ze'eva Cohen's Rainwood
Molissa Fenley's Desert Sea
Joanie Smith's Bolero

Tuesday, January 28th at 7:30 PM
Ragozzino Performance Hall
Lane Community College

\$10 General / \$5 Student
lanecc.edu/tickets

DANCE
LANE PERFORMING ARTS

Lane
Community College
ACHIEVING DREAMS