

BARD ON THE BUTTE

Magic things happen when a Texan hikes Skinner's Butte

It's such a good idea. Why didn't someone think of it sooner?

"I was out one day moseying around on Skinner's Butte," Robert Newcomer says. "I thought, 'Wow, this is fairyland up here.'"

Newcomer, a native Texan and theater arts educator who relocated to Eugene four years ago, is directing Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the inaugural production of Bard on the Butte.

Bard on the Butte is a new theater troupe of sorts, working in collaboration with Fools Haven Acting Company, a resident theater company at Springfield's Wildish Theater.

"I moseyed down to the people at the Public Works," Newcomer says of the Eugene city department, "and asked them what the deal is about getting a park for a play and they said, 'Oh, sure!'"

One of Shakespeare's most popular and enduring works, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* tells the story of enchanted love in a fairytale kingdom. Newcomer says the butte's natural beauty is an ideal setting for his production, which he describes as timeless.

"Eugene is one of the most beautiful natural wonders I've ever seen," Newcomer says. "Being outside and in nature, especially for this play in particular, it's very harmonious for sure."

Newcomer's production — which he says will be "kind of pared down" and "pretty simple" — employs a *periaktos*, a three-sided staging device used in ancient Greek theater to rapidly change scenes. And popular classical pieces will be performed on flute and piano for what Newcomer describes as "segues, interludes" and "little pieces here and there."

And just in case a late-summer heat wave hits, Bard on the Butte has made arrangements for shade.

"I was up there in March and thought this place is per-

fect," Newcomer recalls, "and then I came back in June and it's scalding hot Texas-wedding weather. I thought, 'Oh dear what are we going to do?'"

Well, Newcomer answers, "we're going to have this big huge shade tent area up on top of the butte for everyone." He suggests audiences bring blankets or camping chairs and, rest assured, Newcomer says, there will also be a Porta-Potty.

Bard on the Butte Presents A Midsummer Night's Dream on top of Skinner's Butte 6 pm Thursday through Saturday, Aug. 25-28 and Sept. 1-3, as well as 9 pm Sept. 4; FREE.

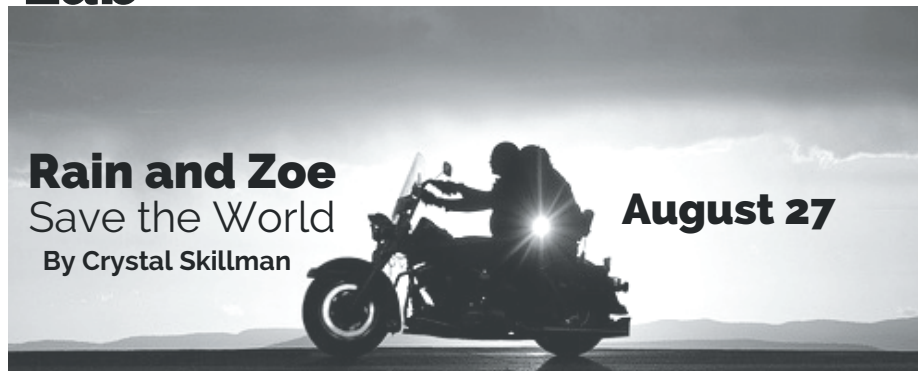


RICHARD LEEBRICK AND PENTA SWANSON IN A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

PHOTO BY CORRIDA WELDING

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