

The Bard is Back

AFTER TAKING 2021 OFF, A MUCH-CHANGED OSF KICKS OFF A NEW SEASON

By Bob Keefer

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival is back. After two years of pandemic shutdown, made worse by summer wildfire closures and the layoffs of 90 percent of the nationally prominent theater's performers and staff, OSF opened two live plays April 16 to kick off an eight-play season.

Mona Mansour's *unseen* is a tight little drama, cast with just three actors, that examines familiar issues surrounding conflict photography. Is it moral to take photos of suffering for a living? Shouldn't the photographer put her cameras down and comfort the dying? How much risk should a journalist take for a story?

As the lights come up in the festival's small Thomas Theatre, where *unseen* runs through July 31, Mia (Helen Sadler) is having a low-energy argument with Salima (Nora el Samahy), a teacher she's photographing amid the wreckage of a computer center. Mia, we see, is near the end of her psychological rope.

We jump quickly around in a series of confusing flashbacks until we grab hold of the main story: Mia wakes up at her ex-girlfriend's house in Istanbul after being found, unconscious and near death, at the scene of a massacre — and unable to remember what led up to her collapse. Her mother, Jane (OSF veteran Caroline Shaffer), has flown out from San Francisco, and the three women begin to solve the mystery.

In the end, *unseen* is more given to simplistic ethical issues than much humanity.

Director Evren Odckin, one of OSF's new associate artistic directors, does a good job of presenting a somewhat labored tale, but the beautifully intriguing set design by Mariana Sánchez upstages the work done by the three actors.

Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty's popular musical *Once on This Island* took over the large indoor Angus Bowmer Theatre, inviting us into a tale set in Haiti. The show, which opened on Broadway in 1990 and took a Tony for Best Revival of a Musical in 2018, is a sure-fire crowd pleaser, and this good-hearted production is no exception.

In the story — an interpretation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" — Ti Moune (played perfectly by Ciera Dawn), a young dark-skinned woman living in island poverty, saves the life of a French aristocrat's mixed-race son, Daniel (Dominique Lawson), after he's badly injured in an accident. The charming young couple then struggles to forge their future together against the deep prejudices of both his family and hers and the occasional intervention of the gods.

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown, the play is an energetic examination of love, fate, colonialism and racism — all made more interesting by non-stop music and dance. One of the best performances is turned in by Chuckie Benson as Papa Ge, the Demon of Death, with whom Ti Moune makes a fateful deal. See it if you're in Ashland before it closes Oct. 30.

This is not the OSF of the past. The company has long been dedicated to racial equity, but is now making that central to its mission — from the land acknowledgement before each show to the racial make-up of the company, which is now 73 percent BIPOC.

OSF is also directly challenging its own past. In an interview with OPB on April 13, OSF Artistic Director Nataki Garrett said, "For a long time OSF has been resting on its laurels." That may come as news to OSF fans who are used to reading about the festival's successes in *The New York Times*.

Such fast-moving change comes with bumps, such as confusion over whether I saw opening performances or previews on April 16. OSF announced in March the openings were to be on April 16, so I ordered seats; when I arrived, I read on the OSF website that the opening dates for the two shows were actually on April 22 and 23. Neither performance I saw had the zest of previous OSF openings, and *unseen* drew nowhere near a full house. An OSF spokesman later explained that I saw the actual openings, but the following weekend would include opening-night celebrations with donors. ■

For more on the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and its season, go to OSFAshland.org.

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rattan bassinett on casters, male torso
mannequins, black glass heads, footwear
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WANTED: Exp. Caregiver for senior man,
M-F split, AM/PM. Bed bath, Apt clean, etc,
no cooking. Good wage, must have own
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LEGAL NOTICES

Legal Notices

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OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LANE
Department of Probate CASE #
22PB03046 NOTICE TO INTERESTED
PERSONS In the Matter of the ESTATE OF
Stephen Howard Adams Sr., Deceased,
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Stephen
Adams has been appointed as personal
representative of the above estate. All
persons having claims against the estate
are hereby required to present these
claims, with proper vouchers, within four
months after the date of the first publica-
tion of this notice, to the attorney for the
personal representative, Susan Ezzy
Jordan, Jordan & Williams, LLC, 180 West
6th Ave., Junction City, OR 97448 (541)
342-8110, or they may be barred. All per-
sons whose rights may be affected by the
proceeding in this estate may obtain addi-
tional information from the records of the
attorney for the personal representative.
DATED AND FIRST PUBLISHED: 04/14/22

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE STATE OF
OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LANE
Probate Department CASE #22PB03343
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS In the
Matter of the ESTATE of Arthur Eugene
Ohlhauser, Deceased, NOTICE IS HEREBY
GIVEN that on April 6, 2022, Erich G.
Ohlhauser was appointed and deemed
qualified to act as the personal represen-
tative of the above estate. All persons
having claims against the estate are here-
by required to present these claims, with
proper vouchers, within four months after
the date of the first publication of this
notice, as stated below to the personal
representative's attorney, Susan Ezzy
Jordan, Jordan & Williams, LLC, 180 West
6th Ave., Junction City, OR 97448 (541)
342-8110, or they may be barred. All per-
sons whose rights may be affected by the
proceeding in this estate may obtain addi-
tional information from the records of the
attorney for the personal representative.
DATED AND FIRST PUBLISHED: 04/14/22

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF
OREGON FOR LANE COUNTY Case No.
22PB00580 NOTICE TO INTERESTED
PERSONS in the matter of the Estate of
Ethel Rosemary Becraft, Deceased.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Kenneth
Becraft has qualified and been appointed
as the Personal Representative of the
estate. All persons having claims against
the estate are hereby required to present
them, with proper vouchers, within four
months after the date of first publication
of this notice, as stated below, to the
Personal Representative, Kenneth Becraft
933639 Pitney Lane Junction City, OR

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HEAR YE!!

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