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## Athletes Make Olympic History

Minority firsts dominate this year's games

See story, page 4



## Allen Temple Rebuilding

Historic church kicks off remodel after fire

See Local News, page 3

# The Portland Observer 46

'City of Roses'



Volume XLV  
Number 33



www.portlandobserver.com  
Wednesday • August 17, 2016



Established in 1970  
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PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM, OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

Tinman (Rodney Gardiner), Scarecrow (J. Cameron Barnett) and Lion (Christiana Clark) bid farewell to Dorothy (Ashley D. Kelley) in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of 'The Wiz.'

**OPINIONATED JUDGE**  
BY JUDGE DARLEEN ORTEGA



# Art as Social Justice

## A cheer for Ashland plays and racial progress

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's outdoor Elizabethan stage features plays this summer and fall that are all worth seeing, and together they advance the Ashland festival's work in practicing art as social justice.

The angst and seething undercurrents of "Hamlet" are conveyed not only through a fine performance by Danforth Comins in the title role, but also through music and smart casting. Not

strictly tied to one time period, the production uses live rock guitar music (via an onstage heavy metal musician) to gird its moods and questions; the music broods over

contact with the dead and also the accumulation of unaddressed mistakes and questions that undo all the characters in the end.

Meanwhile, Hamlet's blindness

to his privileged social location is underscored by casting three fine African American actors -- Derrick Lee Weeden, Jennie Greenberry, and Tramell Tillman -- as

Polonius (who has long served Hamlet's family), Polonius' daughter Ophelia (the sometime love whom Hamlet casts off so coldly), and her brother Laertes (Hamlet's friend and rival). The dynamic between this trio and their troubled relationships with Hamlet and his family resonates strongly with typical experiences of people of color, including the contrasting vantage points of different generations, and deepens this production's tragic sensibility.

"The Winter's Tale" is staged from the lens of Asian and Asian American experience, affording a too-rare opportunity to see folks

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5