

Awakening a Sense of What You've Been Missing

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poignant and ripe for exploitation in the way Shakespeare's plot demands. At other times, however, the connection to "Measure for Measure" seems to constrain the more significant stories that beg to be told; I wanted to see, for example, more exploration of the Indian schools than this treatment allows.

What this play lacks in clarity of vision the production makes up for in the beauty and joy of watching seven Native American actors generously lay their hearts out on the stage. They occupy several different intersections that will feel familiar to many mixed and marginalized people: What does cultural loyalty require? What are the reasons to compromise? How, if at all, should one accommodate the culture of white supremacy? Which reasons for doing so are justified? I was moved to watch these Native actors hold these questions with such love and grace, particularly in combination with Momaday's Irish love and two African American characters who convey similar lived wisdom.

One challenge of this production for me is that it locates virtually all white evil perpetrated against indigenous peoples in one character, even inviting the audience to boo him. OSF audiences are still mostly white,



PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM, OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Placed in an Indian school where his culture is erased, a 19th Century Native American (Shaun Taylor-Corbett) is visited by the spirit of his Native American grandfather (Brent Florendo) in 'Off the Rails,' now playing at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland.

and that device lets them off far too easily, especially since oppression of indigenous people is hardly over. Indeed, the problematic choices of two other white characters are brushed off and even played for humor. I suspect that too few audience members will notice how problematic such choices are.

Still, the challenges of absorbing this production, like the challenges I imagine may exist for those playing in it, strike me as resonant with the experiences of indige-

nous and other oppressed peoples. How do we seize the spaces we can for our truth, and find our authentic voices, even when all the spaces we are allowed to enter involve some degree of accommodating the comfort of those with more power? The work of struggling with such questions, beautifully embodied here, may well account for the sort of evolved consciousness one often sees in indigenous leaders, and in many artists.

Three wonderful outdoor shows beauti-

fully round out the season's offerings, all making use of deliciously diverse casts to enliven old stories. My favorite, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," sets Shakespeare's rather messy comedy in a fantasy world that melds Elizabethan and 1980s sensibilities (complete with hilarious use of '80s music, dance moves, and costume touches), and the result evokes nonstop delight. I found it surprisingly moving to watch a production of "Disney's Beauty and the Beast" in which the princess and her evolving prince are played by two brilliant African American actors, assisted by a talented cast of enchanted servants. And a gorgeous production of "The Odyssey" offers a visual feast of movement and imagery; watch especially for what, for me, is now the definitive depiction of the sirens.

The outdoor shows play until mid-October, and "UniSon" and "Off the Rails" play until the season ends the final weekend of October. The journeys are well worth the journey to Ashland.

Darleen Ortega, a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity, serves on the board of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Her movie review column *Opinionated Judge* appears regularly in *The Portland Observer*. Find her movie blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com.



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September 2017 CALENDAR

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">11</div> Make Your Bed Day <i>World Trade Center attack in 2001</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">12</div> National Chocolate Milk Shake Day	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">13</div> National Peanut Day Positive Thinking Day	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">14</div> <i>Francis Scott Key wrote the 'Star Spangled Banner', 1814</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">15</div> Make A Hat Day National Hispanic Heritage Month <i>Begins Sept. 15, ends Oct. 15</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">16</div> Collect Rocks Day Mayflower Day Mexican Independence Day Stepfamily Day	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">17</div> Citizenship Day National Apple Dumpling Day Constitution Day
<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">18</div> <i>The New York Times was first published in 1851</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">19</div> International Talk Like a Pirate Day <i>Poet John Keats Wrote 'To Autumn' in 1819</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">20</div> First Railroad Station Opened <i>Magellan started search for Spice Islands, 1519</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">21</div> Miniature Golf Day World Gratitude Day International Peace Day <i>H.G. Wells born, 1866</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">22</div> First Day of Autumn California Native American Day Dear Diary Day	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">23</div> <i>Nintendo founded in 1889 - made playing cards</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">24</div> Good Neighbor Day National Bluebird of Happiness Day <i>Supreme Court est. in 1789</i>
<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">25</div> <i>Mary Poppins Debuted in 1964</i> <i>Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean in 1513</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">26</div> <i>Johnny Appleseed born John Chapman, in 1774</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">27</div> Crush A Can Day <i>First Steam Locomotive Run (1825)</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">28</div> <i>First Airport Opened (1909)</i> <i>William the Conqueror Invaded England, 1066</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">29</div> <i>Stanley Berenstain The U.S. Army was est. in 1789</i>	<div style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">30</div> <i>Alvin Tresselt born, 1916</i> <i>Safety Pin Invented (1849)</i>	