



PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM, OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

Mother Cai (Natsuko Ohama, left) and Tianyun (Amy Kim Waschke) share some harsh truths about their pasts in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's current production of "Snow in Midsummer," a classic Chinese drama about a young woman who is wrongly executed for a crime she didn't commit.

Absorbed by the Experience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

more of a rumination on the mystery and power of theater—its fleeting particularity, its beauty as a container for collaboration and deep friendship, and the healing power of the embodied spoken word. This production benefits from brilliant direction by Christopher Liam Moore, an evocative set designed by Christopher Acebo, and the opportunity to see some of OSF's most talented veterans savoring the opportunity to collaborate in portraying a group of theater veterans collaborating. And the moving finale is worth the price of admission. Runs until Oct. 13]

Both of the late-opening indoor productions of newer work resonate with the environmental and political turmoil outside. "Snow in Midsummer" unpacks a classical Chinese drama about a young woman, Dou Yi, who is wrongly executed for a crime she didn't commit. As the play unfolds, this formerly gentle and warm young woman becomes an avenging spirit, wreak-



PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM, OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL.

Martha (Christiana Clark) and Orson (Rodney Gardiner), a formerly enslaved couple, face perils of natural and human origin in "The Way the Mountain Moved," one of the featured attractions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. Now playing through Oct. 27.

ing havoc on humans as she seeks justice for the many wrongs that have robbed her of life and agency. The story unfolds the mystery of how bad human choices contributed to Dou Yi's fate--members of a privileged family who have pillaged the community to purchase their own comforts, a business woman who has fought past her own tragedy to achieve success but whose young daughter channels Dou Yi's rage, and community members whose fate is affected by the bad choices of those with more agency. This ancient story reveals the connections that bind each character's fate to that of every other character, and demonstrates how humans hurt themselves by hurting others. The play is packed with strong performances, most notably by the amazing Jessica Ko, who embodies Dou Yi with complexity, sorrow, vulnerability and power. [Runs until Oct. 28]

"The Way the Mountain Moved" awakens curiosity about stories we never thought to ponder, and exposes the dearth of factual support for the typical American Western. Idris Goodwin's play is set in the 1850s as a survey expedition sets out to chart a path for the transcontinental railroad. The expedition is conceived as a military operation, and the white colonizers navigate the hostile mountain terrain with help from a Native guide who leaves the expedition as he senses what it will mean; a besieged Mexican sharpshooter who finds himself an alien in his own territory; and a silent Asian illustrator who documents the journey in pictures. Traversing the same terrain are Martha and Orson, a formerly enslaved African American couple (played with particular brilliance by Rodney Gardiner and Christiana Clark), who have embraced the Mormon faith and whose lives have required faith of a different kind; a resolute white woman (Sara Bruner, very fine) and her teenage daughter, who strive for survival after their family is decimated by tragedy; and two Paiute women staying out of sight of the colonizers. As the paths of these travelers interlock over the mountains, they all feel the mountain move and groan as if to rebel against what is coming, and we sense the danger of what lies ahead for both land and humans. This world premiere production (commissioned as part of OSF's American History Cycle) feels a bit confining in the Thomas Theater, OSF's smallest venue -- and indeed, Goodwin's play itself feels a bit confined; it can only touch the edges of so many stories. Yet the play helps us struggle with our lack of curiosity over the last 150 years about all of those who truly "built" the American West: How did African American and Asian people come to be in the frontier, and how did they experience the challenges and dangers they met there? What hope did any woman have without a man's protection, and what hope did she have with that protection? How did Mexicans experience occupation of their territory by the U.S.? What did it feel like to American Indians to be both relied upon and denigrated in harsh land on which they had survived for centuries? This play leaves us to begin to struggle with these questions and to long for further stories. [Runs until Oct. 27]

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

Safe homes! Healthy homes!

A series of free community events including food, music, raffles and prizes.

Friday, September 14

2 to 6 p.m.

North By Northeast Community Health Center

714 NE Alberta St., Portland

- Sharps and needle collection
- Blood pressure checks
- Healthy cooking demonstrations
- Green cleaning options
- Garbage and recycling tips
- Medication collection

Upcoming events

- 2 to 5 p.m.
- November 9, 2018
- January 11, 2019
- March 8, 2019
- May 10, 2019

Hosted by North by Northeast and Metro.

north
by
northeast
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

