



Confederates (2022) Photo by Jenny Graham

# Oregon Shakespeare Festival King John & Confederates

**OPINIONATED JUDGE**  
BY **DARLEEN ORTEGA**



Having now made my own final trip to Ashland this season, I heartily recommend that you make the effort, too—particularly to see the two final shows to open.

“King John” is the show I would most have hated to miss this season. That’s saying a lot, since I can’t claim to be a fan of Shakespeare’s history plays, which are always dense with political battles that are a fair distance beyond what I know I am motivated to absorb. But director Rosa Joshi has a gift for transforming the Bard’s histories into the most riveting theater which also manages to evoke with surprising clarity the misuses of power that plague us in the present. Only Joshi can keep me on the edge of my seat with material like this.

A piece of how Joshi does this is by engaging actors who we don’t

normally see in these hyper-masculine, war-driven stories—that is, a very diverse cast of female and non-binary artists. The production was mounted in conjunction with upstart crowd collective, Joshi’s long-standing project with cast members Kate Wisniewski (a mercurial King John) and Betsy Schwartz (seen here as the dangerously self-assured Lewis) that has for 16 years produced strong productions of Shakespeare’s histories with casts of female and non-binary artists. Joshi and her artistic partners are not so much saying something about gender as they are capitalizing on what these artists can bring to these hyper-masculine stories about power and violence and intrigue and unchecked ambition. They present male characters as male, but don’t underline the point; there are no fake beards in evidence, and there is no artificial lowering of voices. Yet the artists capture things in breath-catching ways—a battle scene broken down to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

# Meet Parkrose’s Drumline Instructor

By PHYLLIS HARRIS

From a distance, if you listen closely you can hear modern pop music being played and accompanied by the laughter of students. As students engage and focus on Beyoncé’s Crazy In Love, they attentively shift into their next song of this year’s themed “Pop Divas” performances in preparation for upcoming football games. This is thanks to Johnnie Ballard, the new drum instructor at Parkrose high school.

Keija Lee, head band director at PHS boasted about her colleagues track record with the program over the last fourteen years. “It’s a joy to work with him, he’s so positive all the time he’s been kind of a rock.” With a genuine smile on her face she added “he’s been kind of a rock and steady in the program. He truly loves our kids and just has a heart of gold.”

Ballard recalls some of the adults that had an impact on his life, “my uncles are all musicians and the story goes that I would tap and beat on everything! My parents told me they took me to the Ringling Brothers Circus and that’s how I started drumming.”



Johnnie Ballard, native of Rochester New York is currently a husband, father, and Special Education champion.

Ballard perfected his craft at the School for Performing Arts in Rochester along with indulging in the mentors around him, “like I said, my family are all musicians and my uncle was kind of like a

big influence because he too was a drummer. I used to watch him at tent revivals and listen to my big cousin play. I started play-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



**north by northeast**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

**Black Health Matters**

North by Northeast Community Health Center is the only clinic in Oregon devoted to African American health. We provide welcoming, high quality health care to adults who have Oregon Health Plan. Since 2006, our priority has been to serve the local African American community and to reduce the deadly effects of high blood pressure and diabetes. We are accepting new patients, and if you’re uninsured, we can help you get covered!

To make an appointment or learn about our services, contact us:

[www.nxneclinic.org](http://www.nxneclinic.org)  
(503) 287-4932

714 NE Alberta Street  
Portland, Oregon 97211

**north by northeast**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

We want to see our community stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please:



Protect yourself and others by getting the COVID-19 vaccine (and booster when you are eligible). Call us at (503) 287-4932 to schedule a vaccine appointment.



Wear a well-fitting mask over your mouth and nose, ideally a surgical, N95 or KN95 mask.



income4u.savingshighwayglobal.com

Membership \$29.00 (Gold) \$100.00 (Platinum) Payday is every week.

\$20.00 Gold Membership \$100.00 Platinum  
**PAYDAY "IS" EVERY WEEK**  
potential earnings is \$100-\$10,000+ per week/month

?s Please call Coach John 503-358-9655