

MOVIE REVIEW



This photo shows Anya Taylor-Joy as Thomasin in a scene from “The Witch.”

‘The Witch’ a haunting prequel to Salem trials

★★★★
R, 92 minutes

(AP) — Set under gray Puritan skies in a deathly autumn, “The Witch” is a slow-burning 1600s horror thriller so bone-dry it would only take a match for the whole movie to go up in flames.

“A New England folktale” is how the opening titles describe writer-director Robert Eggers’ impressively rigorous feature debut. The film doesn’t just take place in early 17th century America, but it has effectively summoned the nightmares and superstitions of the era, much of which Eggers faithfully reproduced from various historical sources.

The subject here is less witches as some supernatural fright than the Puritan psychology that dreamed them. Do not expect broomsticks.

A family, led by a prideful patriarch, William (Ralph Ineson, terrific), is banished from the plantation after his stubborn refusal to accept common law as above his own, superior piety. “I would be glad of it,” he seethes when threatened with expulsion.

Our images of the settlement are fleeting. The eldest of the five children, Thomasin (Anya Taylor-Joy, in a breakout performance) peers backward as the wooden gates close behind them as they ride out. The picture is drained of color and the score (by Mark Korven) is eerie and discordant: trouble waits outside the gates.

After setting up a scrappy existence in the wilderness, misfortunes mount. The crops die and when Thomasin takes the newborn out near the forest, the child vanishes. That night, after frantic searching, an image flickers of a witch-like figure floating toward a full moon.

A spell of mysterious source seems to have settled over the family that spookily manifests in various farm animals: a rabbit in the woods, a bloody chick in an egg. Eventually, a goat and a crow get in on the act. A suitably creepy set of toddler twins is here, too.

As things get steadily worse and demons seem literally at the door, the faith of the family is tested. Suspicions begin falling on Thomasin, a fair, pale-white girl whose growth into womanhood is drawing the curious gaze of her younger brother, Caleb (Harvey Scrimshaw). Could she be a witch?

The spell is cast over the viewer, too, as the authentically resurrected world of “The Witch” transports to a time of suffocating fear, born out of a harsh new land and hardened religious fervor. Taking place decades before the Salem witch trials, “The Witch” is a kind of horror chamber piece, a stripped-bare prequel to the forces that propel Arthur Miller’s “The Crucible” and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Scarlet Letter.”

The characters speak in the formal diction of the period — lots of “thees” and such. It’s a kind of time travel, for those looking for a far grimmer trip to colonial America than New England tourist attractions afford. It is, to say the least, not a barrel of laughs.

But what makes “The Witch” more than a mere museum reclamation project is Taylor-Joy. The movie is in many ways seen through Thomasin, who stands apart from her devoted family. Wide-eyed and rebellious, she more resembles a girl of today.

Whether she is, in fact, a witch remains in suspense. But we witness how Puritan paranoia and misogyny turns a pretty young woman like Thomasin into a fearsome seductress in the eyes of her family.

When the combustible “The Witch” finally lets itself ablaze, the brutal and surprisingly sober finale is also — and more thrillingly — Thomasin’s awakening. Drawn by the lure to break free of her upbringing, to “live deliciously,” she turns out to be something scarier than the Puritans could fathom: a teenager.

PENDLETON

Community theater stages ‘Eleemosynary’

Play probes relationships of three generations of women

East Oregonian

Described by the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* and *Dispatch* as “funny, perceptive, and eloquently written,” “Eleemosynary” will be staged by the College Community Theatre.

The play jumps back and forth in time and space, memory and emotion, to examine the lives of three generations of exceptional women.

“Each character is in a quest for love, fulfillment, and, ultimately, forgiveness and understanding,” said Craig McIntosh, College Community Theatre artistic director.

A Pay-What-You-Can preview night is Thursday, Feb. 25 at 7:30 p.m. in Bob Clapp Theatre, located in Pioneer Hall at Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton.

Subsequent performances are Feb. 26-27 and March 3-5 at 7:30 p.m. and matinee shows are Feb. 28 and March 6 at 2 p.m. Tickets



Photo contributed by Debbie McIntosh

Chris Ferguson, Katie Scruggs and Vanessa Hawkins will take the stage in the College Community Theatre production of “Eleemosynary.” It opens with a Pay-What-You-Can Preview Night Thursday, Feb. 25 in the Bob Clapp Theatre at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

for regular performances are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. The show contains some mature language and isn’t really suitable for young children. The box office phone number is 541-278-5953. In addition, tickets will be available at

the door. Dorothea Westbrook, played by Chris Ferguson, is a self-declared eccentric. Her daughter, Artie, portrayed by Vanessa Hawkins, is a brilliant research scholar with total recall. And her daughter, Echo,

WHAT TO DO

Festivals

Eastern Oregon Bridal Show

•Sunday, Feb. 21; noon-4 p.m.
•Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
www.eobridalshow.com
\$7/door, \$5/advance, additional discounts for brides who buy tickets in advance. Offers one-stop wedding planning. Wedding fashion show at 1:30 p.m.

Eastern Oregon Back-country Festival

•Friday, Feb. 26; 7 p.m.
•Art Center East, 1006 Penn Ave., La Grande
•Feb. 27-28; all day
•Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort
www.eou.edu/outdoor/eastern-oregon-backcountry-festival-2016

Donations accepted. The festival kicks off with a showing of the Winter Wildlands Film Festival. Local food and beer are available for purchase and there’s a raffle and silent auction. The party moves to Anthony Lakes on Saturday with an uphill/downhill race, clinics and live music by the Wasteland Kings in the Starbottle Saloon. Sunday features self-organized tours of Anthony Lakes back-country. The festival benefits the Wallowa Avalanche Center. Lift ticket and equipment rental discounts are available for Saturday and Sunday activities.

Beerex Fest

•Saturday, Feb. 27; noon-7 p.m.
•Nookies/Hermiston Brewing Co., 125 N. First St., Hermiston
www.facebook.com/events/207152289629450
\$10/advance, \$15/at the door, \$25/couple. Features 15+ breweries, live music and smoked food specials. 21 and older.

Art & Museums

ArtWORKz 2016

•Monday-Saturdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Tamástlikt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

www.tamastlikt.org
Free reception, regular admission is \$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. Youth art show and competition features original artwork from area youths. Runs through Feb. 27.

In The Footsteps of Charles Heaney

•Tuesday-Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
www.pendletonarts.org
Free. Exhibit features the work of Tom Prochaska and Christy Wyckoff, who created sketches and prints based on the travels of Oregon landscape artist Charles Heaney (1897-1981). Also, in the Lorenzen Board Room is an exhibit by Pendleton artist Andrew Sykes. Runs through end of February.

Heritage Station Museum

•Tuesday-Saturdays
•10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
•108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton
www.heritagestationmuseum.org
\$5/adults, \$2/student, \$4/seniors, \$10/family.

SAGE Center

•Monday-Saturdays
•10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
•101 Olson Road, Boardman
www.visitsage.com
\$5/adults, \$3/students, seniors, free/under 5. An interactive visitor center highlighting sustainable agriculture and energy. On-site store features local art, jewelry, food, wine and gifts.

Music

Inland Northwest Orchestra

•Saturday, Feb. 20; 4 p.m.
•Enterprise High School, 201 S.E. Fourth St.
•Sunday, Feb. 21; 4 p.m.
•Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St.
www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com
Free, but donations accepted. Features Tchaikovsky’s “Ro-

meo and Juliet.” Based on the Shakespeare play, it’s designed like a symphonic poem in sonata form. Program also includes Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 5 Op. 107 - “Reformation.”

His Little Feet

•Saturday, Feb. 20; 6 p.m.
•Armand Larive Middle School, 1497 S.W. Ninth St., Hermiston.
www.hislittlefeet.org
Free, but love offering taken. Faith-based program features orphaned and rescued children ages 6-13 from several countries, including India, Ethiopia and Haiti.

Rock-Bot Karaoke

•Saturday, Feb. 20, 9 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Fun Addicts

•Friday, Feb. 26; Saturday, Feb. 27, 9 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Oregon Mandolin Orchestra

•Saturday, Feb. 27; 7:30 p.m.
•Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
www.oregoneastsymphony.org

\$20/adults, \$15/students, seniors, \$45/family. Presented by the Oregon East Symphony, the Portland-based ensemble will perform some numbers with symphony members.

Small Souls

•Monday, March 21; 7 p.m. All ages. No cover.
•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

There is No Mountain

•Thursday, March 24; 7 p.m. All ages. No cover.
•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton

Night life

Dave Coulier

•Thursday, March 10; 7 p.m.
•Wildhorse Rivers Event Center, off Highway 331, Mission.
www.wildhorse.com
\$19/general seating, \$29/

Karaoke

•Fridays 8 p.m. (9 p.m. if game on)
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla
DJ and dancing
•Fridays, 8 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Stage & film

“My Fair Lady”

•Feb. 20, 26-27, March 4-5, 11-12; 7:30 p.m.
•Feb. 20, 27, March 5, 12; 2:30 p.m.
•Elgin Opera House, 104 N. Eighth St.
www.elginoperahouse.com

Reserved \$17/\$8. The Broadway musical hit set in London in 1912 features the transformation of Eliza Doolittle into an upper class lady.

“Eleemosynary”

•Feb. 25-27, March 3-5; 7:30 p.m.
•Feb. 28, March 6; 2 p.m.
•Bob Clapp Theatre, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton
Feb. 25 is pay-what-you-can preview night; other performances, \$10/adults, \$5/students. College Community Theatre production of Lee Blessing that probes multi-generational relationships.

Hot tickets

•**Toby Mac.** March 15, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$26-69.50) available via www.ticketmaster.com
•**Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.** May 10, Windermere Theater, Kennewick. Tickets (\$47-67) available via www.ticketmaster.com
•**Hunter Hayes.** Aug. 26, Benton-Franklin Fair, Pasco. Also Salt N’ Pepa (Aug. 23). Tickets (\$15) available via Kennewick Ranch & Home or www.bentonfranklinfair.com

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

Oregon Mandolin Orchestra performs Feb. 27

PENDLETON — The Oregon East Symphony presents the Oregon Mandolin Orchestra, a Portland-based group of about 30 members.

The concert, which is in memory of Mary Brown, is Saturday, Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students or seniors and \$45 for a family. They are available at the symphony office, Armchair Books or at the door.

The Oregon Mandolin Orchestra was founded by Elizabeth and Brian Oberlin in an effort to revive the beauty and popularity of the traditional mandolin orchestra. The ensemble includes mandolins, mandolas, mandocellos and double basses.

With the emergence of folk music, the mandolin regained popularity, and mandolin orchestras are popular in many U.S. cities. Their presence abroad, which never waned, also continues to grow. The music for mandolin orchestras ranges from classical to swing to jazz and everything in between.

In addition to its program, the Oregon Mandolin Orchestra will perform a selection of collaborative pieces with members of the Oregon East Symphony.

For more information, call 541-276-0320 or visit www.oregoneastsymphony.org.

‘Full House’ star to entertain at Wildhorse

MISSION — Known best for his role as Joey from the hit ABC series “Full House,” Dave Coulier will perform at Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

As part of its 21st anniversary celebration, Coulier will perform stand-up comedy Thursday, March 10 at 7 p.m. at the resort, which is located off Highway 331, Mission.



Contributed photo

The Oregon Mandolin Orchestra directed by Brian Oberlin, front center, will perform Saturday, Feb. 27 at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton.

The 21-and-older show includes a no-host bar.

Tickets are \$19 for general seating or \$29 for premium seats. They can be purchased at the casino’s gift shop or at www.wildhorseresort.com.

Also known for his voice-over talent, Coulier’s additional credits include many Saturday morning cartoon favorites. He began by doing voices on Hanna-Barbera’s “Scooby Doo” and has lent his voice in others including the re-syndicated version of “The Jetsons” and “The Muppet Babies.”

Following the success of “Full House,” Coulier hosted “America’s Funniest People,” ABC’s “World’s Funniest Videos” and his own series, “Out of Control for Nickelodeon.” Recently, Coulier guest starred on “How I Met Your Mother” and “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.”

The show will kick off a weekend of



Coulier

anniversary events at the resort, including the popular fireworks show. The sky will ignite with color Saturday, March 12 at 8 p.m. A special musical medley choreographed with the fireworks will blast from huge speakers or people can listen from a car radio by tuning to Umatilla Tribal radio KCUW, 104.3 FM.

For more information, contact Tiah DeGroff, Wildhorse community relations, at 541-966-1628, tiah.degroff@wildhorseresort.com or visit www.wildhorseresort.com.

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.