

# FLORENCE GOES APE FOR CROW'S 'TARZAN'

**CROW presents  
Disney's 'Tarzan'**

**REVIEW BY  
BURNEY GARELICK**

The call of the jungle began April 12 at the Florence Events Center with performances for local schoolkids and swelled to a crescendo throughout the weekend, echoing up and down the central Oregon coast.

CROW did it again. The Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) presented another fabulous show, "Tarzan," the stage musical based on the Disney film.

"Tarzan" was a stretch for the young troupe. In addition to a comedy, fantasy, adventure and romance, "Tarzan" is a drama that tackles complex situations — lost babies, lost parents, dysfunctional families, sibling rivalry, adolescent identity, adult anxiety, self-discovery, decisions, loyalties and compromises. Heavy duty stuff for young actors, but the stuff dreams are made of and the challenges CROW prides itself on exploring.

The troupe grows with each performance.

When you entered the theater leading to your seat, you step onto another continent. Maps of Africa line the walls, splashed with large, exotic leaves. At the top of the ramps you passed through an arbor of green vines to view an absolutely stunning stage — a green and purple jungle, thick with mystery, and a rough-hewn gnarly bridge over a bright blue stream.

No sooner are you immersed in the set than the stage fills with some 60 actors sporting ingenious costumes and moving in perpetual harmony.

Managing all those actors ranging from age four to 20 would seem a logistics nightmare, but CROW director and choreographer Melanie Heard and her extraordinary crew had

everything under control for a seamless performance.

Each of the two acts is introduced by 16 tiny telegrammers strung across the stage wearing pith helmets and khaki shorts, a platoon of pint-size Indiana Joneses leading a safari into the heart of darkness. These were the baby CROWs from whom great things will come as time goes by.

Then a tsunami makes waves in the theater aisles and a ship wrecks in front of the stage. A human couple survive long enough to secure their baby's safety before a vicious leopard destroys them. The same beast also takes the baby of a gorilla couple. The human baby becomes Tarzan, named by his adoptive parents, the gorilla couple.

After that hair-raising opener, the show gets down to monkey business, and the years fly by. Tarzan grows up uneasily, loved by his mother but disparaged by his father.

When Tarzan comes of age, he swings gleefully across the stage, clutching a thick, green vine. It is a thrilling sight, enhanced by two professional aerialists from Eugene climbing vines with dazzling dexterity.

Conflict continues when humans arrive to study rare specimens of flora and fauna. That's when Tarzan meets Jane — and the rest is history.

The actors sing to a music by Phil Collins, whose lackadaisical lyrics are infused with passion and wit by accomplished CROW vocalists, including Jake Molano as Tarzan's birth father and Nyah Vollmar in a variety of roles.

In "Who Better Than Me" and its reprise, both Tarzan (Cameron Utz) and his younger self (Joey Greenwood), and his gorilla best friend, Terk (William Owens), and Terk's younger self (Cort Waggoner), sparkle with the energy and generosity of blood brothers looking out for each other.

Halle Anderson as Kala, Tarzan's Gorilla mom, displays a beautiful voice, singing "You'll

Be In My Heart" to baby Tarzan. She also shares a witty patter song, "Sure As Sun Turns To Moon," with Jacob Ternyik, her husband, Kerchak, the leader of the gorilla tribe. Who better to play the silverback than Ternyik, a wise old CROW!

Alizabeth Norton as Jane Porter exhibits a lovely singing voice and speaks with a creditable British accent. She and Utz perform a striking parallel duet, "For The First Time," as each reflected on their new-found affection for each other.

"Trashin' the Camp" is a grand rocker by Terk and the Gorillas as they ransack the camp of the human intruders.

While high praise goes out to the entire cast, special cheers go to Owen Harklerode as Professor Porter, Jane's dad; the seventh-grader is terrific as the elderly Englishman, in both voice and manner!

Cheers also to Victoria Schlager as the oh-so-lithe, stealthy, fluid Leopard who moves faster than you can say "Edgar Rice Burroughs," so fast her spots seemed to vanish.

Huzzahs as well to Isaiah Seeley, who was scary convincing as Clayton, the greedy guide and great white hunter ready to exploit the gorillas and humans for his own profit.

Fortunately, Clayton got a cagey comeuppance, and all was well and ended well.

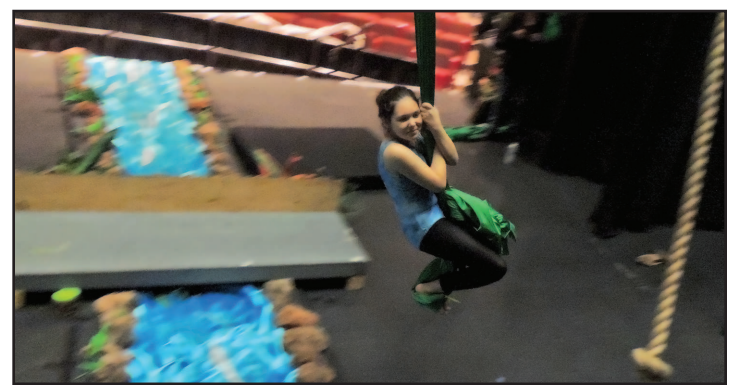
That's why Florence continues to go ape over CROW's "Tarzan," wondering how the troupe's next show can possibly top this one. Look into your playbill for the first announcement of next year's show.

CROW presents "Tarzan" Friday through Sunday, April 13 to 15, at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St. Showings will be at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$12 for youth 10 and under. Purchase tickets at the Box Office, by calling 541-997-1994 or visiting eventcenter.org.



**Revelers Aerial Works teaches students how to ascend silks in a special workshop Thursday.**



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



## Tarzan from 1A

Heard contacted Brewer about both "Tarzan" and CROW's Black and White Ball fundraiser in February.

"She was super receptive to coming and working with the CROW kids and just positive about this whole process from the very beginning," Heard said.

It was Brewer's idea to train Tarzan, played by Cameron Utz, on the silks.

Heard said other companies can spend upwards of \$15,000 to hire a professional theater flying company for one show, and that can mean a bulky harness for Tarzan and other actors to wear.

"We had to be creative," Heard said. "This way Cameron can be free and fun, and have that adrenaline swing when he comes on stage."

That "adrenaline swing" is something that the 10 students who attended an aerial workshop learned on Thursday night. Revelers Aerial Works agreed to host the class on aerial basics, and let each CROW student fly on Tarzan's swing. The students ranged from 8 to 16 years old, and each also has a role in "Tarzan."

"It was the best thing I've ever done in my entire life," said Haylee Cole. "I want to do it like a thousand times, and I want to

do it every single day."

The students talked over each other, saying that the class was both painful and incredibly exciting. They expressed interest in taking further classes, showed each other sores on their skin, cheered on whoever was up in the silks, and commiserated after a graceless fall.

"I feel like I've grown as a dancer," Elyse Stewart said. "It helped technique wise, because you have to keep your feet pointed, you have to stay strong and you have to use all your core muscles. I thought it was really cool."

Clover Holbrook, the youngest participant at only 8, impressed her castmates, the instructors and the family members in the audience. She said she was only "a little bit" afraid of the heights.

The girls added that they loved the "flippy-dos" and other spins that Brewer and Milliot trained them to do.

"It was terrifying, but so much fun," Eryn Morgan said.

Besides the workshop, Brewer also taught Utz and Alizabeth Norton, who plays Jane in "Tarzan," in special sessions at her studio space in Northwest Ninja Park in Springfield, Ore. In addition to running Revelers, she also teaches aerial workshops for adults and youth.

"We're just so excited to work with the kids in this cast," Brewer said. "They're the kindest group of kids and so respectful. They've been nothing but welcoming and wonderful to us. I'm having the best time ever hanging out with these cool kids and swinging like Tarzan."

Milliot added that the kids in the workshop were "enthusiastic thrill seekers" as they volunteered to do spins and new and more moves.

"This is the beginning of more stuff like this for us," Heard said. "We're going to have to find more fun ways to do aerial silks out here, because the kids love it. It's a good tool for them to have in their real-life toolkit."

CROW's presentation of Disney's "Tarzan" opened Friday and continues today and Sunday at Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for youth 12 and under. They are available at the Box Office, by calling 541-997-1994 or by visiting eventcenter.org.

For more information about CROW, visit crowkids.com.

For more information about Revelers, visit www.revelersaerialworks.com.

"I'm really grateful that they were able to be part of this production," Heard said. "Their energy just adds so much."

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**FLORENCEFEST '18 JAZZ BAND & MUSICIAN SCHEDULE**

<b>Friday, April 27, 2018</b> 2:00 pm - <b>Bossa PDX</b> Bossa PDX plays a selection of upbeat Brazilian jazz tunes. Our instrumentation includes vocals, piano, flute, guitar, bass, and percussion. ~ <a href="http://www.bossapdx.com">www.bossapdx.com</a> 4:00 pm - <b>Paula Byrne Quartet</b> Paula's voice is like chilled champagne on a hot summer day. She moves easily between songs that are lush and beautiful to highly rhythmic, wild rides. ~ <a href="http://www.paulabyrnenmusic.com">www.paulabyrnenmusic.com</a> 6:30 pm - <b>Tony Glausi Quartet</b> New York based trumpeter returns home! Tony will be joined by some of the finest musicians in Oregon and perform original compositions and arrangements of well-known standards. ~ <a href="http://www.tonyglausi.com">www.tonyglausi.com</a>	<b>Saturday, April 28, 2018</b> 12:00 pm - <b>Michael Anderson Jazz Trio</b> Straight ahead jazz standards – swing, Latin ballads – vocals by Michael Anderson ~ <a href="http://www.michael-anderson.net">www.michael-anderson.net</a> 2:00 pm - <b>Bossanaire</b> Featuring two female singers, Bossanaire's sound is reminiscent of the original 'Brasil 66' group. Bossanaire creates and highlights the fun, festive and sultry sound that made this style so popular and timeless. ~ <a href="http://www.bossanaire.com">www.bossanaire.com</a> 4:00 pm - <b>Gerry Rempel Jazz Syndicate</b> The 7-piece Gerry Rempel Jazz Syndicate is an eclectic fusion group combining jazz, latin, swing, funk, world music and rock in a rich array of original compositions. ~ <a href="http://www.gerryrempe.com">www.gerryrempe.com</a> 6:30 pm - <b>George Colligan Quartet</b> George is a New York based pianist, organist, drummer, trumpeter, teacher, and bandleader, who is one of the most original and compelling jazz artists of his generation. ~ <a href="http://www.georgecolligan.com">www.georgecolligan.com</a>
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**Additional Band Information:**  
[florencefestoregon.com](http://florencefestoregon.com)

**ART SHOW & SALE**  
Florence Regional Arts Alliance is coordinating the juried art show and sale which will feature 55 art pieces selected from artists in six different states. While local Florence artists are very well represented, there is work from artists in Portland and Eugene, as well as the North and South Oregon Coast. In addition, artists from Washington, Idaho, Colorado, Texas, and New Jersey were selected for the show. Well over 130 entries were submitted in multiple categories including 2D, 3D, and photography. \$2,500 in cash prizes will be awarded for best in each category and for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall. Festival attendees will be given a ballot for a people's choice award.

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