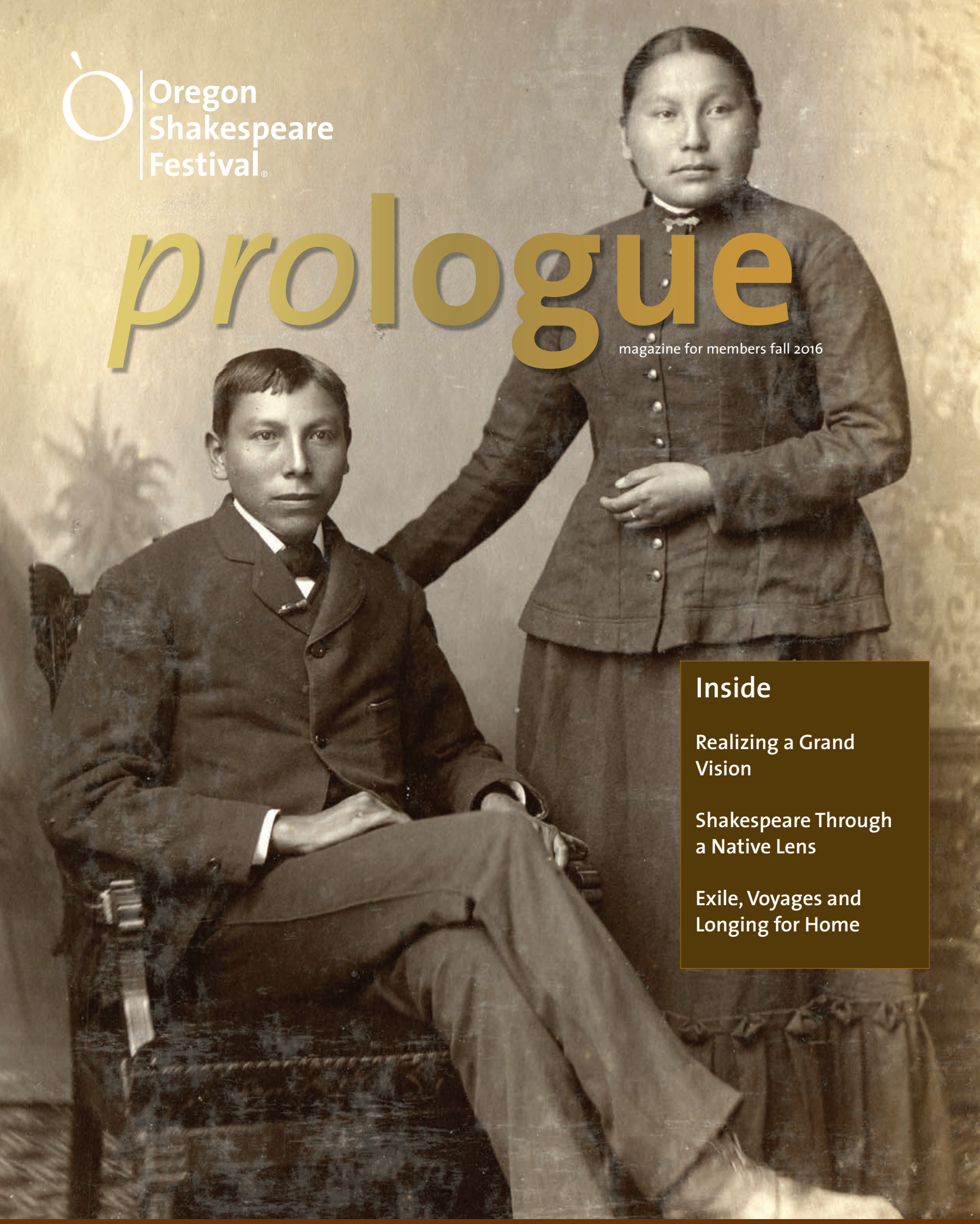
Oregon Shakespeare Festival®

# prologue

magazine for members fall 2016



## Inside



**INTRODUCING THE 2017 SEASON**

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*Shakespeare in Love*
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Based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard
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Directed by Christopher Liam Moore

*Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*
Luis Alfaro
Directed by Juliette Carrillo

August Wilson's poetry in *UniSon*
**World Premiere**
A new musical by UNIVERSES (Steven Sapp, Mildred Ruiz-Sapp, William Ruiz–a.k.a. Ninja) in association with Constanza Romero
Directed by Robert O'Hara

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Randy Reinholz
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2017 opening weekend:
February 24–26

*Cover: Ernie and Jennie Black, Cheyenne siblings who went to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the flagship Indian boarding school, in Carlisle, Penn., in the 1880s. They are dressed in their school uniforms. Indian boarding schools are the setting for* Off the Rails, *Randy Reinholz's play, which will have its world premiere at OSF in 2017.*

*Photo courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Penn.*



*Prologue*
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**Mission Statement**
Inspired by Shakespeare's work and the cultural richness of the United States, we reveal our collective humanity through illuminating interpretations of new and classic plays, deepened by the kaleidoscope of rotating repertory.

## Contents




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From an OSF Board Member
*Darleen Ortega*

# Stories and Social Justice

For more than 30 years, I've been making regular trips to OSF. Stories have always been my favorite tool for surviving trauma and oppression and for placing my own struggles into a larger context.

In recent years, I have appreciated that OSF has ever-more-consciously embraced a social justice mission. I first noticed this before it was articulated to me: The season selection began to include voices I rarely have the opportunity to hear. I saw the work of Lynn Nottage and August Wilson and Qui Nyugen. I noticed it, too, in the casting: I saw Vilma Silva as Julius Caesar and Christiana Clark as Beatrice (*Much Ado about Nothing*) and Daisuke Tsuji as the Fool (*King Lear*).

Each season, I see evolution in realizing that mission. I'm loving the opportunity to see the work of artists from such a variety of backgrounds, and am thrilled to see actors of color so well represented on our stages. And next season I'm eager to see the work of a Native American playwright, using music and humor to look at *Measure for Measure* against the backdrop of the painful history of Indian boarding schools (*Off the Rails*); a surreal exploration of identity, history and the price of success among members of a Korean immigrant family (*Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*); and Luis Alfaro's rich revisioning of classic literature in a Latino immigrant context (*Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*).

I have brought guests with me on most of my trips—but recently, I have focused more intently on bringing people of color. I long for my friends to see the excellent work on OSF's stages, and though my guests are generally enthusiastic about the plays, we grieve together at the lack of diversity among OSF audience members. I have urged my fellow Board members to persist in supporting efforts to diversify our audiences, reminding them that our current audience was built over many decades, and we need to invest in these new audiences with similar fervor.

It is important for all of us to see our stories and voices reflected on stage—and to be enriched by stories that have been neglected. But it is not just about what we see onstage. As we diversify our company of actors and staff and board leaders, we must do the work of making Southern Oregon a welcoming place for them to work and visit. As people from such a variety of historically marginalized backgrounds are increasingly part of this artistic community, we must work to listen well to their experiences among us and to respond to what they tell us in a way that embodies our best ideals of inclusion. I'm delighted to play my small part in that work.

# REALIZING A GRAND VISION

**OSF's new Bricks renovation project will make the campus easier to traverse, improve the Green Show experience and provide elevators.**

**By Catherine Foster**

For the past 45 years, OSF's central courtyard, popularly known as "The Bricks," has been a well-loved and well-used space, a gathering point for the community and those going to the theatres, the site of the popular Green Show and in more prosaic terms, a driveway for trucks loading and unloading scenery, props, costumes, concessions supplies and more.

But for years, the Bricks has been in poor shape, and the slope of the hillside has always made navigating the courtyard difficult, especially for people with mobility issues. It wasn't a lot of fun for Costume Shop folks who had to push racks of costumes uphill, either.

Now OSF is about to begin the final—and most dramatic—stage of the long-awaited, massive transformation of the courtyard into a welcoming new place.

"The reason for the project is to make the site and our theatres as accessible as possible, given the fact that the steep street is not going to change, and the fact that OSF is built on a hillside," says General Manager Ted DeLong. "The project has three main goals: accessibility, functionality and improving the Green Show venue."

The process has been as long and involved as an O'Neill play (although it will have a happier ending). OSF started talking about replacing the bricks in 2001 during the construction of the New Theatre (now the Thomas Theatre). The new building's contemporary-looking walkway contrasted with the more dated aesthetics of the Bricks. But the renovation plans didn't start moving seriously until 2008, when a local landscape architect designed a new courtyard. The cost estimate was about $800,000. But OSF wasn't in a position to pay for such a costly renovation.

Courtesy of Walker Macy

With the national financial crisis in full swing, OSF leadership felt it wasn't the time to start a capital campaign. Besides, the leadership (it was the end of Artistic Director Libby Appel's tenure and the beginning of Bill Rauch's) and the Board felt other needs took precedence. OSF desperately needed more space for building sets and for rehearsals. "In the final analysis," says Paul Nicholson, Executive Director Emeritus, "it became a matter of priorities. And as we looked at it, creating the Production Building in Talent and then the Hay-Patton Rehearsal Center were higher company-wide priorities that everybody bought into."

Also in the mix were unexpected expenses, like the broken beam in the Angus Bowmer Theatre in 2011 and several summers of heavy smoke that caused performance cancellations.

But the Bricks project, while back-burnered, was never forgotten; it was waiting for the right time and sufficient funding.

**The first bricks**

When the brick pavers were first installed in 1970, they were simply pounded into a sand base. "Over the years, they've been disrupted by tree roots, freeze-thaw cycles, water and trucks," DeLong says, which has led to the pavers becoming chipped, uneven and sticking up at odd angles. Trucks caused the most damage.

"The bricks were never set with an eye toward the size and weight and frequency of vehicle traffic that OSF gets," DeLong says. "Corners chip off, and they break in the middle. During the 1991–1992 construction of the Allen Elizabethan Pavilion, enormous cranes were parked nearby, and those caused a lot of damage. We've replaced the damaged bricks gradually over the years, but they are still in some places."

Plus the courtyard needed to be made more accessible. "One of the most uncomfortable and dangerous aspects of the Bricks is the cross slope—which is a tilt across the path of travel, so you're walking sideways and drifting downhill," says DeLong. Making OSF a place that all could use and enjoy without barriers was a high priority for Rauch, Nicholson, the Board and new Executive Director Cynthia Rider, once she arrived in 2013.

**A timely gift**

In 2013, Joel Axelrod and Judy Yin Shih, who had moved to Ashland from Southern California two years earlier, decided to make a major gift to this company they'd grown to love. (See sidebar.) That generous gift targeted at the Bricks, eventually totaling $1,050,000, got the wheels rolling. It led to the *Access for All* capital campaign, which had its official debut on July 3, 2016, in the Allen Elizabethan Theatre courtyard. "The remainder of the estimated $5.1 million for the project will be raised by a combination of requested donations from OSF patrons, donors, foundations, institutions and corporate sponsorship," says Manager of Special Campaigns Kamilah Long. OSF will also begin a campaign in November to reach out to the more than 17,000 households that visit OSF. Everyone who donates more than $1,200 will have the opportunity to have their name engraved on a brick in the courtyard. The Development office hopes to complete the campaign by June 2017, but will continue to raise funds beyond that through recognition opportunities.

***"This will be a real gift to our audience and our entire community,"***

—Claudia Alick, Community Producer

In 2014, the Portland-based landscape architectural firm Walker Macy was selected to lead the project's design team. Walker Macy stood out for their work designing public spaces such as Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square and San Diego's Horton Plaza, among many others along the West Coast. "We were asked to develop a new design for the space that would bring the courtyard up to current codes, make it work better for OSF loading activities as well as improve audience experience and incorporate better infrastructure for the Green Show and other possible activities in the courtyard," says Walker Macy principal Chelsea McCann. Walker Macy was joined on the project by the architectural firm Hacker, also based in Portland, and general contractors Adroit Construction of Ashland.

Walker Macy and OSF presented three major public meetings and many smaller stakeholder meetings to explain the project and elicit people's opinions about the space. "We heard that key features and materials like shade trees, the brick paving and of course the Green Show were all very important and should be retained or enhanced in the new design," says McCann. "Once we understood what was important, we could create new designs that would respect and celebrate those key features." On the technical side, the grading was a significant challenge. To make the courtyard accessible, Walker Macy had to develop a plan that could address some of the steep slopes, a task made more complicated because there are some 14 different thresholds into surrounding buildings or structures like the historic Chautauqua Wall that cannot change.

The design will make a transition from the steep grades on Pioneer Street into the courtyard area. The courtyard slopes will be modified to meet current code. "They will feel much more level, with cross-slopes under 2 percent," McCann says. "This should make it easier for pedestrians to walk through the courtyard space and get to the nearby theatres, offices and businesses." As grades leveled out in some places, it increased in others. It became apparent that three mechanical devices would need to be installed to transport people and materials from one grade to another. So this year, as part of Phase One, Adroit built a passenger elevator in the Bowmer Theatre, a hydraulic loading dock between the Bowmer and the Allen Elizabethan and a wheelchair lift in the Elizabethan.

**What the project entails**

The Green Show has become increasingly popular over the years and needed more seating. People watching the shows now either squeeze together on the lawn or sit on a few surrounding low walls. Many stand. The new design expands the seating area fivefold and makes the area more accessible.

"Long stepping seat walls will frame the central lawn, creating a variety of seating opportunities for patrons to enjoy the Green Show and other events," says McCann. "These seat walls help alleviate grade challenges, but also create ample seating space, something that is lacking in the current design. The orientation of the seat-walls and paving radiate from the angled wall of the courtyard, opening up to Pioneer Street and creating a welcoming edge to draw people into the space. New landscape and additional trees will frame the space and provide shade."

OSF Archives

The courtyard in the spring of 1970, just before the bricks were put in. They were pounded into a sand base.

Lighting will also be improved. The numerous lighting poles will be replaced by three 35-foot-tall masts with lights at the top that will create an evenly lit plaza. Low bollards placed around the edges of the space will emit a diffuse, indirect light that's directed toward the ground to light the path. Some of the benches will have embedded lights that will point down and define the edges.

"This will be a real gift to our audience and our entire community," says Community Producer Claudia Alick. "As someone with a mobility disorder, I have first-hand experience of how lack of access or difficulty of terrain can diminish a positive experience. I'm excited that we will be able to enjoy our shows together without barriers."

The new design will also provide improved signage to better direct people around campus. The iconic wooden "America's First Elizabethan Theatre" sign will be preserved and strengthened, but the marquee sign listing the shows will be replaced with a new signage system that will showcase what's happening at OSF on a daily basis.

**Get out your hard hats**

Demolition is scheduled to begin in November 2016, says Adroit project manager Dave Ross. "Then the new utility installations will begin, followed by new concrete retaining walls and new concrete bench walls. A concrete slab will then be installed," and then new vehicular grade bricks mortared on top. Landscaping will follow.

"We'll have an average of 15–20 workers on site every day," Ross says. OSF estimates the work will be completed by the time the Elizabethan shows open in June 2017. OSF staff will bear the brunt of the construction. They got a preview of the disruption during Phase One.

"This year we knew that they needed to rip out the loading dock," says Director of Production Alys Holden. "We started the Scene Shop staff earlier than their traditional start date by about six weeks so that we could build the first three 2016 Bowmer shows before the end of the 2015 season. The idea is that we would strike all the 2015 shows and then deliver the initial 2016 scenery as quickly as possible. That gave Adroit, the construction company, until load-in of the fourth Bowmer show, *Roe*, to finish the loading dock."

Adroit also built a wooden ramp in the Elizabethan that spanned from the stage to the back of the house so that wardrobe and props could be moved from the Bowmer to the Thomas on wheels. It was a much longer route and everyone had to tussle for parking spaces with the contractors, but it made it at least possible.

"We didn't finish *Great Expectations* in time to get it into the building with *Twelfth Night* and *The River Bride*," Holden says. "So that set had to be delivered across the construction site. Adroit partially craned it in for us and then they just laid plywood over the mud path to help us get it in."

As difficult as Phase One was, Phase Two is going to be much harder. "We know that it is a much, much bigger project and much less contained and longer, with many more workers and trucks, so we're hoping to get that project done in time for the Elizabethan openings," she says. "That means that we are loading in the first four Bowmer shows and three Elizabethan shows, as well as props and wardrobe, through a construction site. We've come up with some alternate pathways to go even farther around and through the Elizabethan."

Audience members for the Bowmer also will be entering the theatre via a construction site for several weeks, and traffic patterns for nearby businesses, residents and OSF staff will be altered. Adroit and OSF are making every effort to ensure that staff, patrons and the public will be able to get where they need to go, despite various degrees of disruption that will last for six months, DeLong says. "Yeah, it's going to drive us crazy," Holden says, "but it's going to be wonderful to have bricks that don't sag, bricks that are on top of concrete. It's going to be wonderful to know where utilities are. It's going to be wonderful to have real seating out there for the Green Show. It's going to be just fabulous and long-needed."

*Catherine Foster is OSF's Senior Editor and Editor of* Prologue.

## The Story Behind the Gift

Judy Yin Shih and Joel Axelrod wanted to do something for this community where they chose to live after retirement. The couple moved to Ashland in 2011 from Southern California. Judy retired from her work in clinical psychology and health policy, Joel as the director of outpatient surgery for a physicians' group. They were immediately taken by Ashland's sense of community spirit and the high level of professionalism at OSF.

"When we had this opportunity to think about donating, we were very much inspired by the people here," said Shih. "People are so welcoming and kind, and we met people who were very giving to the community, like the DeBoer family and many others."

In 2012, they approached OSF's Development Department about a gift to the Festival. "We talked to them about potential areas to contribute," said Shih. "Where does the community spend their time? The Green Show space seems to be a community space, and we thought it would be a good idea to renovate the bricks. It wasn't because anybody talked to us about it. It was only because of our desire to give to the community."

"We weren't even aware of how old the bricks were," said Axelrod. "We felt this was a great space that could use some renovation. The Bricks, being at the center, is the heart of the campus."

Their initial gift of $1 million was divided three ways, with emphasis on improving the theatergoing audience's experience. "We gave $500,000 for the future renovation of the Bricks and $250,000 each to Education and New Works," because, as Axelrod, a former actor, adds, "I know how hard it is for young people to get something on the stage." In 2014, they donated $500,000 for a new sound system for the Allen Elizabethan Theatre. In 2015, they were lead production sponsors for *Secret Love in Peace Blossom Land*. At an earlier meeting this year relating to the Bricks renovation project, they learned about additional needs and contributed $50,000 to cover more handicapped seating in the Bowmer Theatre.

At the launch of the Bricks campaign, called Access for All, the couple was again moved to do more. "This renovation of the Bricks shouldn't be just an OSF idea or our idea, it should involve the community," Shih said. "We put in another $500,000 as a matching fund, so that everybody can have a hand in building this community space." Shih and Axelrod believe it is important for the community to feel a sense of ownership and help make this space their own.

# Shakespeare Through a Native Lens

***Off the Rails* sets *Measure for Measure* against the backdrop of 19th-century American Indian boarding schools.**

**By Catherine Foster**

*Randy Reinholz is a playwright, actor, director and producing artistic director and co-creator of Native Voices at the Autry, a theatre company in Los Angeles devoted to the works of Native playwrights. He is a member of the Choctaw Nation. Jean Bruce Scott, Randy's wife, is producing executive director and co-creator of Native Voices. In an interview at OSF, they talked about how* Off the Rails *came to be written.*

**On combining *Measure for Measure* and a play about Native Americans**

**Randy Reinholz:** I think they came together in the way that two rivers come together and a new one emerges. I like Shakespeare. I was looking for a way to use Shakespeare. Native people are not considered the smartest people in American theatre, so using a robust interpretation of Shakespeare might help address that perception.

*Measure for Measure* is Shakespeare's comedy about men hiding behind the cloak of religion who misappropriate justice for personal and political power and get their comeuppance by clever women. It dives deep into big social issues. It's considered a "problem play," and there's always that challenge of what to do with the ending. I thought there might be some forgiveness from Shakespeare purists if we had a strong rendering of the play.

**How the play came together**

**Jean Bruce Scott:** We started on the process a little over two years ago, both for researching this play but then also with our ensemble. We have a Native Voices ensemble with 42 members, and one of the first things we wanted to look at was the boarding schools, because it's not anything that's taught in anyone's history.

For those who don't know, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Native American children were removed from their families and forced to attend boarding schools. The motto of those schools was "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." All aspects of their culture were forbidden; they were often abused and weren't allowed to speak their native languages, although some secretly managed to.

2015 Craig Schwartz

Elizabeth Frances as Isabelle, Michael Matthys as Angelo in *Off the Rails*' workshop production at Native Voices at the Autry.

Some of the members of our ensemble were children and/or grandchildren of boarding school students. We pulled every book we could find. We started to pull material from first-person narratives and journal writings as well as video to start thinking about how we could tell this story. Within about six months, we had 27 vignettes. We were kind of destroyed by the material; it was very, very difficult, challenging material every step of the way.

We kept having discussions about how to tell the story. What is the story beyond the epic attempted annihilation of a people and their culture? What came out through the group was "resilience." The story we wanted to tell as a company was the resilience of Native people. And what we found within those books and in those first-person narratives of resilience were, for example, stories of girls who created four villages in a field using scraps from their sewing class or their broom-making or their lunches. They would play trade, because that's what they remembered from their villages. An instructor who saw their villages and had been told to destroy them decided not to. So that story for us became emblematic of that resilience: that someone took the chance not to destroy what these children had made, and that the children were able to continue.

We culled the 27 stories down to 16 for our first presentation. We presented five that demonstrated the cutting of the hair, the isolation, the starvation, a death. But we surrounded those also with the more uplifting stories about how these children hung on to their culture, their language and their siblings.

**RR:** *Off the Rails* is set about three years into the boarding school experiment. The tribe that's indigenous to the Genoa, Nebraska, region where the play is set is the Pawnee, but other nations—Cree, Lakota, Choctaw—are also represented, because they all went to the boarding school. At the schools, children learned skills to be servants in the homes or businesses of the settlers, where they were categorically unwelcome. And when they went home, they carried a stigma because they had lost their own language and had none of the skills that mattered to their people. So sometimes they would stay in these towns.

By the 1880s, the schools were the benevolent alternative to genocide. A large reformation of the boarding school system started around 1919, because so many atrocities were being reported. Each commander at the boarding schools—like Angelo in the play—reported directly to the President of the United States. It's so paradoxical; I have no doubt that had the U.S. not come up with a boarding school, as a country we would have simply exterminated the rest of the people. By the Great Depression, most of these schools were done away with.

**About the Buffalo Bill variety show**

**JS:** The Buffalo Bill show in *Off the Rails* comes from the Wild West shows that played back East and in Europe. They were initially circus-like spectacles displaying the skills needed in the West, which became very popular in the U.S. and Europe. While the Native Americans in Buffalo Bill's show were exploited and paid a pittance and trotted out everywhere as this exotic thing, at the same time they used the shows as a way to feed themselves, feed their families and keep some of their traditions alive in terms of horseback riding and shooting arrows. The Buffalo Bill show went through many incarnations, and in Randy's play they're doing everything from singing and dancing to tomahawk-throwing. Eventually, it became the story of the Americans annihilating the Natives. But originally it was a carnival, so that's what we're depicting in this play. We went to Genoa, and one of the premier experts on Buffalo Bill lives near there, so we got to meet with him and talk about that whole system. Again, it's a story of Native people's resilience.

Randy Reinholz, playwright and producing artistic director and co-creator of Native Voices at the Autry.

**About the humor in the play**

**RR:** It's an Indian trait; Native people often deal with pain with humor. I think that's true of a lot of communities, actually. I think it's a contemporary thing to beconstantly self-absorbed and constantly presenting ourselves as oppressed and victimized.

I think we've heard a lot of those victimization stories, so where's the power? You know we also live in this paradoxical time in Southern California. Where we are in San Diego County, there are 19 federally recognized tribes. There are 11 tribally owned gaming venues. Three of the gaming tribes are very wealthy—gaming revenues in California topped $7 billion in 2013. What do Indian people do with power? Tribal leaders are asking that question right now. When we speak with elders on those reservations, they want to see improvements to benefit the children and uphold traditional values and ways of living. A generation ago, people lived in poverty. There has been an influx of revenue, so how can those funds benefit the next generation? We have to grab this moment and make something better for the children. And not just Indian children, you know. We've got a whole country of people that need to get together and do this.

**JS:** Early on, the play was called *Measure for Measure: A Boarding School Comedy.* That was a mistake. Because elders in our community said, "It's not funny, and you shouldn't be doing this." In conversation with them and then bringing them into workshops and into the process, they became our biggest supporters. They said, "If all we do is cry about this we'll never get the story told because the audiences wouldn't sit." It's not humor at the expense of the children or the boarding school, it's character kind of humor versus political humor. I think by having that, it allows for some release of the information.

**RR:** It plays very Shakespearean. It's a comedy, so everybody gets married in the end, essentially. And we're celebrating love. I'm looking at reworking the mercy aspects [toward Angelo], because I think mercy is the key to the whole piece instead of revenge.

Jean Bruce Scott, producing executive director and co-creator of Native Voices at the Autry.

Our audiences in talkbacks always ask for us to hang him. So I'm trying to heighten the mercy. And I think for your audiences that come here for a vacation, we will have great fun onstage, and for the people looking for history and information we'll have a deep exploration of truth.

*Catherine Foster is OSF's Senior Editor and Editor of* Prologue.

Wiki Commons

# Exile, Voyages and Longing for Home

Ulixes mosaic at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia, 2nd century A.D.

**Two OSF adaptations of Greek classics tell ancient tales through the different lenses of two modern playwrights.**

By Dawn Monique Williams

As an undergraduate theatre major I was introduced to the drama of the ancient Greeks, the epic performance poems of Homer, and I was especially taken by the tragedies of Euripides. These works have long held their academic context—historical fiction focused on the construction of the patriarchal Greek society, and foundational to Western civilization—but it is their tribal markings that evoke my visceral response. Rich with song and dance and ritual, the voice of a community is what I hear in the writing: collected stories, adventure, loss, heated debate, shared history, exile and a longing for home. In 2017, OSF will tackle two of these big, messy, impossible classic tales with renewed vigor, unlocking the theatricality and heart at the center of these plays.

Among the things prized by the ancient Greeks was the drama. Theatre festivals were civic events, and the plays meant to offer moral instruction, engage in politics, speculate on the life of gods and bring communities together to bask in regional pride. These dramas, the ones we have record of, have persisted some 2,500 years; the poems of Homer, on which the dramas are often based, even longer. Why is that, we may wonder? Humans a lot like us, rich with hamartia (tragic flaws), hubris (overweening pride) and ill-timed anagnorisis (self-recognition) inhabit the worlds of these stories. What zeitgeist were the Greeks tapping into that remains present and ripe for us in our time? Two American dramatists intend to answer just that with their distinct individual takes on two of the best-known Greek stories. *Medea* and *The Odyssey*, while not necessarily intended to work in concert as part of the 2017 season at OSF, will certainly be in conversation; both plays resonate strongly in our current sociopolitical climate as we interrogate big ideas.

**A Boyle Heights *Medea***

OSF Playwright in Residence Luis Alfaro (*Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*, 2008) is working on an adaption of Euripides' *Medea*, while playwright/director Mary Zimmerman (*Guys and Dolls*, 2015; *The White Snake*, 2012) revisits her adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey* after first mounting it 17 years ago in Chicago. Alfaro uses Euripides' exploration of exile and the cost of assimilation in *Medea* as a source text for his contemporary and timely reimagining, *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*. Alfaro brings Medea's immigration experience to the fore as he transplants the play from the ancient Greek city-state of Corinth to the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. While Alfaro goes for a more radical adaptation, Zimmerman stays remarkably faithful to the story of Homer's *The Odyssey* (using Robert Fitzgerald's translation) for her production of the same name, including its nonlinear structure and wildly imaginative characters. Both of these plays borrowed from the ancient Greeks examine community and belonging, and speak on love, sacrifice, betrayal and the near-impossibility of a human heart surviving unscathed.

*What zeitgeist were the Greeks tapping into that remains present and ripe for us in our time?*

In a recent interview at OSF, Alfaro said of his adaptation that "everybody in this play is sacrificing in order to survive. So it's not just Medea at the end . . . In order to really feel like they're making

it in the United States, there's an experience of sacrifice." Upon first encountering Euripides' play, the perpetual question is, "What would drive a mother to such horrible acts?" It is the big unanswerable question, and I wonder at it now. Alfaro's adaptation has unearthed something new and revelatory. The play embraces the current social climate of contested immigration views and does not shy away from these identity politics.

Euripides' Medea is canonized as a wicked sorceress and child-murderer, a lesson in keeping foreigners out. Alfaro reminds us she is a mother with hopes and dreams for her child and her family, that she is an immigrant who supports her husband's dreams of prosperity, and this adaptation begs the compassion of an audience who

Playwright in Residence Luis Alfaro, playwright of *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*.

may be wrestling with the complexities of this woman's character. With the very title, *Mojada* (a word that translates to the slur "wetback"), Alfaro goes for the gut, teaching us that Medea enters this play as an "illegal," an undocumented border-crosser, a stranger in a strange land without her language, without family, without her land or culture. The depth of Medea's inconsolable grief permeates our psyches because we understand that grief is without reason; loneliness, isolation, alienation do not align with logical behavior. Perhaps what keeps this tragedy heartbreakingly alive are these striking resonances. As Alfaro's play progresses, with its dense trilingual poetry (it also includes the indigenous language Nahuatl), we understand Medea's exile and that she will never return home.

**A desperate quest for home**

Odysseus, the Greek hero bound for home following the Trojan War, has become so legendary that the word "odyssey" is synonymous with "epic voyage." Mary Zimmerman's *Odyssey* is a dramatic adaptation of Homer's epic poem chronicling the 10 years Odysseus was lost at sea. Zimmerman hasn't set out to modernize or update the tale, because, she said in a recent interview

## *"What would drive a mother to such horrible acts?"*

at OSF, "it has a kind of timelessness," and a "final reunion" that is "hopeful." What Zimmerman does concede, of course, is that the story offers a "description of the lost and the homeless, [and] of the bereft" that will speak to a condition or place for each of us. For many, that may be thoughts or images of the thousands of Syrian refugees tossed at sea in search of a home. Longing for home is a critical theme in *The Odyssey*, and throughout his journey, it is his homecoming that centers Odysseus.

Zimmerman is known for her imaginative and innovative vision, and *The Odyssey* lends itself to her aesthetic with one-eyed monsters and a sorceress who changes man to beast. In a story full of dynamic action sequences, it is the poeticism and the integrity of the writing that so captivates the heart. Structurally, we are first introduced to Odysseus' son, Telemachus, who has been raised without a father. Incomplete, although he is home, he is in many ways on his own quest to find this missing piece of himself. We then find ourselves in the middle of Odysseus' journey with him recounting the parts of the voyage that have come before, he and Telemachus simultaneously bracing us for what is about to happen with Odysseus' homecoming. "I think it's evidence of its own relevance that *The Odyssey* is never out of print, everyone has to study it, and it's just there," said Zimmerman. "It's not a conspiracy of English teachers . . . I remember one of the times I did it in the past, I think a newspaper person asked me, 'What's relevant about this story today?' And I said, 'Oh, so there's no problem in our country of fatherless boys? That's solved, I guess. And there's no problem of homesickness? I guess we have a cure for that now.' Those are the two emotional thrusts of it. Telemachus can't get into his manhood without his father, and Odysseus isn't home." Telemachus must be reconciled with his father—his point of origin—before he can feel a true sense of home. And Zimmerman ensures the audience experiences this coda along with him.

Home is not just physical space or territory, but one's sense of self and well-being. These journeys can cross seas or simply traverse hearts. *The Odyssey* is both the archetypal voyage and a psychological journey. And while *The Odyssey* is highly theatrical, it shares a deep psychological bending profoundly with *Mojada*. In both

Mary Zimmerman, adapter and director of *The Odyssey.*

plays, we are examining the lives of people forced away from their homes who are seeking desperately to get back. Zimmerman reminds us, "You know, Dorothy wants to get home. ET wants to get home. Frodo and Bilbo just want to get home. They're reluctant adventurers." At least as far back as the ancient Greeks, the call to adventure and the impossible journey home has been central to the human experience. They certainly understood that landscape of the human heart, and we are all still deeply invested in exploring it.

*Dawn Monique Williams is Artistic Associate at OSF.*

# Painful and Hilarious


***Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* deals with suicide, land mines and North Korean politics, but in a quirkily humorous way.**

## By Catherine Foster

In *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, which will have its world premiere at OSF in 2017, Hannah is about to become a pediatric neurologist when she receives a mysterious FedEx box from her grandmother in Seoul containing a "wish" and a suicide note. By the time she receives it, her grandmother has jumped off the roof of her retirement home into the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea. Hannah, her parents and her brother come together in South Korea to try to recover the grandmother's body and figure out why she did it. This all sounds serious, but the play is surprisingly funny.

Jiehae Park

"I don't usually write from a conscious place," playwright Jiehae Park said in an interview at OSF in the spring, "and humor is a side effect of my world view. If you talk to funny people, they often understand sadness, and humor can be a coping mechanism or a response to that."

Park, who started her career as an actor, has achieved astonishing recognition for someone who has only been writing plays seriously for about four years. Her work has been produced or developed through the Cherry Lane Mentor Project, Playwrights Horizons, Soho Rep's Writer-Director Lab, Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor, The Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, New York Theater Workshop, Dramatists Guild Fellowship, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival and more. Her plays have won the Leah Ryan Prize, Princess Grace Award and Weissberger Award, and have been included in two years of the Kilroys List of plays written by women.

And Rogue Valley residents might have seen *Hannah* in March as one of three plays selected for the Ashland New Plays Festival Women's Invitational.

Several threads came together to make up the play. During her downtime when she was performing a show away from her home in Los Angeles, Park decided to write her own version of the national origin myth of Korea. The myth involves a bear and a tiger who want to become human. The king of heaven tells them they have to spend a certain time in a cave. The tiger gives up; the bear stays and is transformed into a woman who marries the king.

Park thought about this myth through a more contemporary voice, and the whole thing came out in one sitting. "I was examining this myth through the lens of being an American citizen with roots in Korea, and the complex relationship to my two home countries," she said. "Something about that story was clanking around in my mind and felt like it needed to be reconciled."

Another thread came from a story she heard from a graduate student she sublet an apartment from when she was visiting New York. The woman said that she had been severely depressed as a child and always told her parents, "There's something wrong with me," but they brushed aside her concerns. Then as an adult, she had an accident. In the hospital, they did a scan and found out she had a brain tumor. After they removed it, her whole outlook on life changed.

"Whether that was biological or placebo effect, who knows?" Park said. "But when I met this woman, she was the most joyful, translucent woman, and that struck me." That story found its way into the play.

Hannah's career choice also came from Park's life. She went to a math-and-computer magnet middle school and high school, and one of her childhood friends became a psychiatrist and another a pediatric neurologist.

**Immigration and assimilation**

Park's parents emigrated to the U.S. from Korea as part of a wave in the 1980s. "This happens a lot in developing nations," said Park. "The nation sends its best and brightest abroad to get the level of education not currently available in that home country with the idea that those people will come back and lift up the nation. An unintended side effect can be that those people may end up staying in their newly adopted homelands."

Kara Q. Lewis for Ashland New Plays Festival

Annie Yim (Girl) and Sue Jean Kim (Hannah) during a talkback after a reading of *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* at the Ashland New Plays Festival Women's Invitational in March 2016.

Park came to the U.S. when she was three years old. At various points, each of her parents and her brother went to live in Korea and returned. Her parents both work in Korean universities and spend summers and sabbaticals in the States. Park grew up in Stoneybrook, Long Island, and various Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. "I didn't live in one home for more than two years until my current apartment in Queens!" she said.

That feeling of disorientation also made its way into the play. "Every time I go back to Korea, I clock this disparity between the density of the hypermodern development I see and the knowledge that a hundred years ago it was mostly rural," Park said. "Korea industrialized incredibly rapidly after the Korean War. So it can be read as this huge success, but it also has the highest suicide rate in the developed world, and those two facts sit side by side in uncomfortable resonance. What is the spiritual cost of succeeding at creating a new identity? That's also a basic immigrant question that I think underlies my work. What do you give up to get what you think you want?" The play, she added, follows a family "trying to negotiate overwhelming and painfully absurd circumstances and trying to understand what those events mean for them."

Park said *Hannah* has elements of being a broader immigrant story and also one that's specific to the circumstances of Korea. "Sacrificing for and doing anything to protect the good of your children is certainly a universal idea, though there's a certain way family members communicate (or don't) with each other while doing these things that feels specifically Korean."

Another immigrant theme in the play is people not being able to understand an ancestral language, or getting their children to translate for them. "That experience of knowing a bit of the language and having to really pay attention to get what you can from that sonic experience is important to the play," says Park.

> ***"What is the spiritual cost of succeeding at creating a new identity? That's a basic immigrant question that I think underlies my work. What do you give up to get what you think you want?"***
> —Jiehae Park

"I hope that the experience of hearing Korean spoken onstage for audience members who don't speak Korean parallels the perspective of Hannah (who is our entry point into the play) in an interesting way. She understands some things but not everything, and I think it's interesting for the audience to experience that frustration and occasional humor, too."

Now, about that interesting title. Park is reluctant to give much away about it, since she's still working on the play, but she does say this: "There's an absurd and wonderful story in gamer lore called 'Eric and the Dread Gazebo' that folks can look up if they're interested; it's an oblique reference to that story's themes. That, plus the function of gazebos throughout history (as both inside and outside, a point of constructed civilization in a landscape, etc.) are some of the reasons behind the title."

*Catherine Foster is OSF's Senior Editor and Editor of* Prologue.

# Building the Collage

August Wilson (1945–2005), playwright and poet.

## A dramaturg shares how August Wilson combined elements of people he'd met, bits of dialogue and song in his plays and poems.

### By Martine Kei Green-Rogers

*Joan Herrington is dramaturg of* UniSon*, a new play by UNIVERSES, debuting at OSF in 2017 that is inspired by August Wilson's poetry. Herrington is chair of the theatre department at Western Michigan University. Martine Kei Green-Rogers, assistant dramaturg of* UniSon*, interviewed Herrington about her experiences as one of August Wilson's first dramaturgs.*

**Martine Kei Green-Rogers: How did you meet August Wilson?**
**Joan Herrington:** I was working as a dramaturg and critic in New York, and I met August Wilson in the summer of 1983 at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center's National Playwrights Conference. He was there to develop *Fences*. I was the assistant dramaturg to the *Fences* production. The assigned dramaturg was Edith Oliver, theatre critic for *The New Yorker* magazine and longtime O'Neill participant.

**MGR: Tell me more about that initial experience.**
**JH:** The O'Neill has several theatres, and *Fences* was rehearsing in the outdoor amphitheater. It was extremely sunny that summer, and Ms. Oliver was not able to attend the rehearsals because of the heat. So I had the extraordinary opportunity to sit with August at the rehearsals and performances and to assist him in shaping the play.

I became fascinated with August's process of playwriting, and we spent many hours discussing how he worked. As he began a play, you could see the influence of collage artist Romare Bearden. August assembled bits and pieces of character stories, dialogue offered by characters he had not yet finished creating and images that came to him in coffee shops or on buses. He then wove those elements together—perhaps with an incident from African-American history, or a song, or something from his own life. Although his works were not autobiographical, traits of people he knew were sprinkled throughout. He questioned the characters who spoke to him, and, as he learned more about them, he began to shape his dramatic structure. August was an instinctual artist—moving pieces around until the construct made sense to him, and perhaps throwing something new into the mix. He rarely cut anything in his earliest drafts—that came later.

**MGR: Which plays of Wilson's did you work on as a dramaturg?**
**JH:** My relationship to August as a dramaturg was unique. August had many wonderful dramaturgs on his major productions. They provided exceptional guidance, and, like all the artists on any of his productions, they had significant impact on the plays. But for many of the plays—*Fences, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, The Piano Lesson, Two Trains Running, Jitney*—August sent me early drafts and rewrites and met with me, often in his favorite coffee shops, to talk about the plays. I served as a behind-the-scenes consultant.

**MGR: Could you describe your process in working with Wilson?**
**JH:** Early in a play's life, he would recite to me the pieces of stories a character had offered. He would share napkins with scribbled notes of things he wanted in a play; he might offer a scene to

read. We would sit and talk; I'd ask questions, he would scribble on a new napkin. Later, we might just sit and talk about a character, or how the script might work if scene 3 was switched with scene 8, or what would happen if a story was added, removed or moved to a new location within the script.

Earlier in his career, as August's plays moved from theatre to theatre, he did a great deal of rewriting in between productions. Later on, he did more rewriting in rehearsal. So for the first half of the Cycle (his collection of plays about African-American life set in each decade of the 20th century), I was a sounding board, a tester of ideas, a repository for great writing cut from one script that would later find its way into another. I think he liked that I am a terrible playwright. Occasionally, to make a point, I might suggest a line of dialogue. When he picked himself up off the floor where he had fallen with laughter, he would say, "Oh, I see what you mean." I was a constant; someone who knew where the plays had started.

UNIVERSES (William Ruiz, a.k.a. Ninja; Mildred Ruiz-Sapp and Steven Sapp during a Green Show

I very much loved the first drafts of August's work, particularly of the early plays, with their extensive storytelling, nonrealistic dramatic elements and sprawling narrative. As the plays were successively produced, often these artistic impulses needed to be melded with more mainstream theatrical conventions. He and I spoke a great deal about this struggle to blend them, and I think it was important for him to be able to talk about this, particularly early on in each play.

**MGR: How would you describe Wilson's poetry to someone who has never encountered it?**

**JH:** August wrote hundreds of poems, but despite the years we spent working together, I was only familiar with a very small handful of them. Those were his private works and he did not share them broadly. He never gave me any to read. I don't know if he gave anyone poems to read, except Constanza, his wife. But he did recite a few to me. Mid-conversation, if August was moved by a particular moment, he might share some of his poetry; a mention of a boxer or a dancer might inspire him to share something he had written. At other times, when we would discuss a character in a play, he might recite a poem that illuminated the character in some way, and I could see that this character had lived in a poem before he had entered the play. August was a great storyteller, on paper and in person, and when he spoke his poetry, it was mesmerizing.

So it was thrilling to encounter all of this writing when UNIVERSES and I began our work on *UniSon*, the play that is inspired by his poems. I felt as if I was meeting him all over again. And I made many, many discoveries. Now the poems aren't dated, but I know that the majority of them are from the years before he wrote most of his plays. So it was very exciting to read stories in the poems that later found their way into the plays. The names of several characters and traits of people in the poems were combined to create characters in the plays. Because the poems are very different stylistically, I could see how the language of the plays had been developed in them. Some of the poetry is almost conversational but quite musical in the same manner as the dialogue in the plays. And in the most elevated language that August uses in his plays—those spectacular, beautifully metaphoric monologues that are magically scattered throughout his drama—the ties to his work as a poet are infinitely evident. As a playwright, he is considered to be a powerful storyteller with a unique ability to capture both the lyrical speech he heard on the corner and the most powerful metaphor to reveal a character's deepest emotion. It is very clear that his great love for poetry enabled him to hone his writing in this way; this was the result of not only his love for the world of published poetry but also his love for what he termed "the poetry that was inherent in the way Black people spoke."

**MGR: What is one thing you would like our audience to know about working with Wilson?**

**JH:** August Wilson gave me a great gift: To sit with him as he fell silent and a scene began to play out in his head was glorious. I am certain his work would have been just as brilliant had he never met me . . . but I am very thankful he took me along for the ride.

*Martine Kei Green-Rogers is an assistant professor of theatre at the University of Utah.*

# *Casting Spells* and BREAKING BARRIERS

**Developing new audiences involves going beyond special events or targeted advertising; it requires more personal outreach.**

**By Julie Cortez**

I have seen Freda Casillas work her magic. She has worked it on me.

I was the editor-in-chief of a bilingual—Spanish and English—newspaper in Portland when emails began arriving in 2011 from a woman who said she would be in town soon and would like to talk about the Latino community and OSF.

I was no stranger to OSF, having attended twice as an adolescent with a school group and returning semi-regularly starting in my late 20s at the behest of my then-partner, but I was skeptical of this outreach. Why would a festival at the other end of Oregon use its resources to entice Latinos to make a five-hour journey for theatre? Freda came to my sparse office in a struggling shopping mall near Portland's northernmost tip, and what stands out in her memory is my irritation and impatience when I misinterpreted her visit as a sales pitch. I was a journalist, damn it. Talk to our owner if you want to buy some ads.

But while Freda was keenly aware of the need to financially support media outlets for underrepresented communities, I realize now—five years and a few friendship-forming evenings of chicken wings and beer later, as I sit at my desk at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, close enough to Freda's office to hear her raucous laughter through the thin walls on good days, and on bad ones when laughing is a mechanism of survival and sanity maintenance—

BRAD EASTBURN


Associate Director of Audience Development Freda Casillas (center, with nametag) with members of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists (CAATA).

that Freda wasn't there for a short-term transaction. She was doing the long-term work of audience development. She had come to cast her spell of invitation.

**Setting the stage**

"It's the task of pretty much anyone who wants to increase the participation of a community: you need to welcome them first," Freda, OSF's Associate Director of Audience Development, says. "And that does not mean advertising to them or actually scheduling special events—even the CultureFest event that we have biannually to celebrate multi-ethnic heritage and the diverse work onstage. That's part of it, but you actually have to go into the community and say, 'Hey, what's happening with everybody? Do you come to OSF?' "

When Freda first visited the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in the mid-2000s, she learned firsthand that the answer to the latter question was, largely, "no" among people of color, as she looked around at her fellow audience members and saw that the vast majority were white, despite the diverse actors onstage.

Freda's introduction to OSF rings familiar for Carmen Morgan, who for more than eight years has served as diversity consultant for OSF—though she prefers the descriptor of "agitator and provocateur for equity" at the Festival—and who recently founded artEquity, a national program that provides tools and resources to support the intersection of art and activism.

***"Personally, whenever I have sat in the audience, I felt very conspicuous here at OSF as a person of color, as a black woman in particular,"***
—Carmen Morgan

"Personally, whenever I have sat in the audience, I felt very conspicuous here at OSF as a person of color, as a black woman in particular," Carmen says, adding that this sense of conspicuousness can extend to performers. "I can't tell you how many actors I have spoken to who talk about that experience of being onstage, being vulnerable and exposing themselves, and really seeing a monolithic canvas looking back at them. The makeup of the audience is just not neutral."

Freda insists that her work in audience development is not about the numbers or percentages of various groups represented in the audience—though appealing to a diversity of people is certainly in the financial interest of any arts organization, with the U.S. Census Bureau's forecast that the majority of American children will be non-white by 2020.

It would actually be easier, she says, to plan community partnerships based on OSF's goals for audience makeup and ticket revenue, but instead she focuses on building authentic relationships based on the priorities of those communities.

"The very first thing I did when I started here in 2006 was to grab my phone and call some people I happened to know as leaders in the Latino community in Southern Oregon and say, 'Hey, do you ever attend OSF?' And most of the answers were, 'No, absolutely not. Isn't that for tourists? Or, 'I don't really have an interest in Shakespeare,' or 'I'm not really sure what they do,' " she recalls. "So I started by inviting people to our openings. I used to have to beg people to come to OSF, with free tickets—beg them, locally. And I'm happy to say that now I get emails from people all over the West Coast asking if they can be ambassadors for OSF."

Today OSF has more than 100 "Audience Development Ambassadors" throughout Oregon, and next year cultivation will extend to the Bay Area. These ambassadors are leaders of color who are invited to be guests at every opening of OSF's 11 shows, and who then extend that invitation to their communities by bringing groups of new audience members, inviting Festival representatives to speak at their organizations and workplaces, and spreading their newfound enthusiasm for OSF through social media and day-to-day interactions.

As OSF prepares to stage Randy Reinholz's *Off the Rails* in 2017—the Festival's first play by a Native American writer—Freda is working with ambassadors Brent Florendo and Brooke Colley from Southern Oregon University's Native American Studies program to get their help introducing the play to the Native community and communicating that OSF wants to be a partner that honors Native art forms. Freda is also forging relationships in Portland with Tamara Henderson of Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) and Melissa Bennett of Portland State University's Native American Student and Community Center. Under their direction OSF will send speakers to discuss *Off the Rails* and the intersection of life and art, and will host groups of students traveling down to see the play.

Freda and the Festival will see these and other efforts related to *Off the Rails* as a success if Native groups and individuals attend, see themselves in the work and become part of OSF's audience in the long-term—and if in the process OSF's entire audience is exposed to an underrepresented voice in American theatre.

"We go to the new community group," Freda says, "and build a relationship and acknowledge that sometimes it's taken us too long to reach out."

**"I feel a little taller now"**

When Lilia Caballero, community liaison coordinator for the Medford Police Department, first met Freda at a meeting of Jackson County's Hispanic Interagency Committee, she had never been to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, though she lived and worked a mere 14 miles away. Despite a strong attraction to the arts, she had minimal exposure to theatre throughout her youth in a small Mexican town and during her adult years in the Rogue Valley.

At Freda's invitation, Lilia discovered stories that reflected her own experience, like OSF's 2010 *American Night: The Ballad of Juan José*. In 2011 she found herself "yelling and screaming with happiness"

along with other audience members who looked like her as artists who looked like them belted out mariachi songs in *Measure for Measure*.

Lilia has learned about U.S. history from shows like *Party People* (2012), was enchanted by *The River Bride*, swept up in the manic interactivity of *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and, thanks to *Vietgone*, struck by just how similar the issues were that immigrants in the U.S. faced.

"You come to a new country, you don't speak the language, you don't know the culture, you don't know the food," she says. "You don't know anybody. It doesn't matter what country you come from, because we go through the same thing."

That perception is no accident at a theatre company whose mission includes the aspiration to "reveal our collective humanity."

"The best tool that I have at OSF to have standing in a community of color," Freda says, "is to tell that community that we tell their stories too. The art reflects communities of color, and OSF has increased its own value in Oregon and throughout the United States, because it does include people of color. We have ambassadors who are from all walks of life, whether they be teachers or entrepreneurs, and so many of them are now dedicated to OSF because they see themselves reflected here."

As an ambassador, Lilia is eager to share her OSF experiences with her community, from convincing nuns to allow her to speak to a Catholic faith group about theatre's value, to educating teachers of English Language Learners at Rogue Community College about resources like OSF's Spanish Open Captioned performances.

"I have grown in the theatre," she says. "And I feel a little taller now, because I can talk about theatre and what a difference it makes and how it has enriched my life. I love the fact that I was introduced to it and it just—it just makes me happy."

**The right thing is the smart thing**

The goal of developing a more diverse audience is not merely one of altruism and spreading joy. During her first couple of years as the Festival's first full-time employee dedicated to audience development, Freda says then-brand-new Artistic Director Bill Rauch, who was hired in 2007, and then–Executive Director (now Emeritus) Paul Nicholson were often asked why they were putting so much emphasis on audience development.

"At that time the answers were: It's a smart thing to do in the business case, and it's the right thing to do in the human case," Freda recalls. "How can you go wrong bringing new folks who have never been involved with OSF? You have the opportunity to have a new audience who can have the same passion that our loyal audiences have now. That's the right thing to do, and the smart thing to do."

***"We go to the new community group and build a relationship and acknowledge that sometimes it's taken us too long to reach out."***
—Freda Casillas

As she set out to help OSF do the smart thing, Freda began to realize that Bill and Paul "had very different ideas about what diversity meant, what inclusion meant, what core audience meant. And I said to both of them that we should probably all have some meetings to unpack and get on the same page. Otherwise, I wasn't going to be successful."

The group expanded to include Director of Marketing and Communications Mallory Pierce and Associate Artistic Director Christopher Acebo, and what Freda assumed would be three 90-minute meetings turned into more than 50 hours of meetings over the course of a year and a half. Part of that process was unpacking 22 assumptions—some their own, some they'd heard—about theatre audiences, ranging from whether young people were more drawn to contemporary plays to whether people of color had the financial means to purchase OSF tickets. Bill urged the group to convert the results of those examinations into positive statements that ultimately morphed in 2010 into their Audience Development Manifesto—a document outlining "the philosophy that forms the foundation of our commitment to Audience Development and will be used to guide the development of future benchmarks and strategies." The manifesto's areas of focus were socioeconomic, age, and racial and ethnic diversity, as well as increasing access for people with disabilities.

**What lies ahead**

Six years later, Freda believes it's about time for Audience Development Manifesto 2.0. "We now know certain tactics that work and certain tactics that we would abandon," she says. "I think that it probably needs to be refreshed every two or three years, and this is the year that we need to refresh tactics in marketing, in recognizing who the communities are that we need to embrace in order to make them our core audience. We were very new when we wrote the first manifesto. We were in really good spirits and had really good vibes at the time. Now we're a little more like warriors about audience development, and I think we can actually include actions, not just aspirational statements."

Carmen Morgan hopes that the next phase of the manifesto includes an emphasis on more structural support, staffing and resources. "I feel that the next layer of this audience development work is really the exciting experiment and opportunity around how you get the most diverse audience in the seats here in . . . Ashland, Oregon," Carmen says. "How do you actually get the national diversity represented into the seats here at OSF? What do we do to compel folks to come and see these incredibly rich stories onstage? Freda has been doing a brilliant job of that. She will take a story and curate an experience for a group of people; it is related to deep relationship building. The amount of staff and time it takes to do that around the clock non-stop is daunting. I feel like the methodology is a strong one. It is not transactional; it is very relational. It is also just unrelenting."

Currently, efforts are underway to spread more of that daunting work throughout

the Marketing Department and the larger OSF organization as OSF acknowledges that audience development is really at the heart of all of its work.

**Living up to our mission**

Carolina Morones, who came to OSF in 2012 as a FAIR (Fellowships, Assistantships, Internships, Residencies) assistant in marketing and audience development and is now a resident teaching artist in the Education Department, is seeing some of that shift in thinking.

"Something I've heard around here a lot in past years is: 'This is how we've always done it, and it's always worked, so why are we changing something that's always worked? We are a theatre that is often at 80 percent to 90 percent capacity. That's astonishing for a theatre company!' It really is—congratulations," Carolina says. "But at the same time, we could do more to transform and really live up to our mission as a company. You need to be an integrated company in which every department is thinking about equity, diversity and inclusion, where every department is thinking about how their program overlaps with other programming. I think it's about being integrated in different ways, and I think that that's something that we have grown toward, and have still a ways to go toward."

Alice Ly, the current audience development FAIR assistant, sees a role for the wider community as well. "Who we attract is a reflection of our values as a company," she says. "And a company is a part of a community regardless of its international fame. We are located here and remain so for a reason. We can't stand alone."

That will likely mean more public actions like the open letter to OSF's community sent out in late July in an attempt to spell out how the Festival's social justice actions relate to its mission. That means more participation in events like the recent community gatherings that drew hundreds to the Historic Ashland Armory and Southern Oregon University to address the racial reality in Southern Oregon and keep dialogue and action moving forward.

"It really is about justice," Freda says. "We really are talking about how do we achieve justice, how do we achieve equity, and I think that OSF is located in a natural paradise that allows for just a fantastic vacation, and while you're on vacation, you really get to talk about the issues that are the most perplexing in life.

"In Audience Development, we are bridge-builders and also barrier-breakers," she continues. "The result of breaking barriers means community, a community that lives its life with theatre, a theatre with more vibrancy because the audience is part of its creativity. OSF creates art, theatre that honors life, that asks the hard questions, that allows us to relate to the person sitting next to you, whom you have never met, but together we learn of heartbreak and of joys, and then we all talk and talk and laugh and live."

That's the spell that truly inclusive theatre casts.

*Julie Cortez is OSF's Communications Manager.*

Brad Eastburn

Attracting a more diverse audience means that all OSF departments think about equity, diversity and inclusion and work in concert.

# Declare your passion today with a gift to the Festival.

Contact the Development Team to learn about all of your options to connect more closely with the work you adore. We look forward to a lifelong love affair with you.

541-482-2111, ext. 472. OR email: premier@osfashland.org.

Sara Bruner, *Twelfth Night*.
Photo by Jenny Graham.