



6085 NE Alder Street
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
www.bagnbaggage.org
503 516 4840
info@ bagnbaggage.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bag&Baggage Announces Another First For Hillsboro: Outdoor Summer Shakespeare!

Hillsboro, OR - Bag&Baggage Productions, Hillsboro's first and only professional theatre company, has announced plans for yet *another* historic first for the city: Hillsboro's first professional outdoor Shakespeare performance.

This coming summer the company will perform a major adaptation of Shakespeare's greatest tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, at the Tom Hughes Civic Center Plaza in downtown Hillsboro. Performances take place at 7:30pm Thursday through Sunday from July 17 – August 2. Tickets are \$18 for general admission, \$15 for students, seniors, veterans and active military personnel, and groups of 10 or more will pay \$12 per ticket. Opening night, July 16, will be a special Gala Fundraising and Auction event, including dinner, wines from throughout Washington County, and a small auction and paddle raise to support the company's 2009-2010 Venetian Theatre Season.

"Outdoor Shakespeare is a summer tradition across the world," said Scott Palmer, Bag&Baggage's Artistic Director. "From London to New York, Seattle to Orlando, Glasgow to St. Petersburg, millions of people enjoy the Bard's plays in the great outdoors each summer. In fact, performing these works outdoors is the way they were intended to be done, and we believe it is time for Hillsboro, and Washington County, to join the party."

The event has already received significant interest from audiences, and from donors and corporate sponsors. Former Mayor Tom Hughes provided a large donation for the event, along with the City of Hillsboro, US Bank, and others. Palmer expects more than 3,000 people to attend performances during the 3 week run at the Civic Center Plaza.

"The Plaza is a truly unique venue for outdoor performances," said Maggie Chapin, a Bag&Baggage company member who has appeared in every show at The Venetian but who will be working behind the scenes as Assistant Director and Voice Coach on *Romeo and Juliet*. "The Plaza steps provide a perfect seating area for our audiences, there is a balcony already in place for Juliet, and a massive playing space that is ideal for sword fights and stage combat. It is going to be stunning."

Audiences are asked to bring cushions, low lawn chairs, blankets or other seating options as no seating is provided. There will also be food and beverage vendors on hand each evening, including a beer and wine garden, so no outside food and beverages are allowed in the performance.

Kathy Campbell, a member of the Bag&Baggage Board of Directors, said, “Audiences have been enjoying our unique approach to the classics of English and American literature for the past year at The Venetian, but our Artistic Director has some really incredible plans for this show. In fact, Scott is probably one of the most experienced outdoor Shakespeare directors in the country. He has directed critically acclaimed adaptations in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and now here in Hillsboro.”

Palmer has extensive experience directing outdoor Shakespeare. He was the founding Artistic Director of Scotland’s only dedicated Shakespeare company and directed more than a dozen outdoor performances of Shakespeare’s work there, including *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard III*, *The Tempst*, *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and others. For the past three years, Palmer has been the Director of Oregon State University’s Bard in the Quad Summer Shakespeare festival which became the most popular theatrical event in the 140 year history of the University. Palmer’s work on adapting Shakespeare for outdoor performance has been featured in a number of theatre textbooks, and he recently was the focus of a University of Oregon alumni profile.

The adaptation is based on original source material used by Shakespeare for *Romeo and Juliet* and includes new verse writing, selections of material from medieval writings, and, perhaps most unusual, adapted poetry from the writings of John Keats.

Palmer said, “One of the most exciting things for me as a director and adaptor is to follow Shakespeare’s own process by incorporating and editing the works of other writers and poets into a new script. For this script, I’ve adapted the same works Shakespeare used alongside other poetry and, for the first time, I tried my hand at writing my own verse.” Palmer was helped in the adaptation process by world reknowned Shakespeare scholar Heidi Brayman-Hackel of the University of California, Riverside and Corvallis-based actor and writer Robert Hirsch (Artistic Director of Willamette Stage Company). The result is a script that includes a reduced number of characters (including one *new* character) and a shorter performance time (about 2 hours). This adaptation is somewhat darker and more mature than some versions and may not be suitable for children under the age of 12.

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Calendar Listing Information

Bag&Baggage Presents Hillsboro’s First Annual Outdoor Shakespeare Performance!

William Shakespeare’s ROMEO AND JULIET, Adapted and Directed by Scott Palmer

The Tom Hughes Civic Center Plaza (between 1st and 2nd on Main Street)

Hillsboro, OR 97124

July 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31 and August 1, & 2

Thursday - Sunday Evenings: 7:30 p.m

Tickets: \$18 general admission, \$15 students, seniors, military and veterans

Tickets Available on-line at www.bagnbaggage.org or at a box office open each performance evening from 6:30pm at the Civic Center

Editor’s Note: Interviews and Photos available upon request