

**Titania (Joe Ayala)  
and Oberon  
(Caitlin Anderson)  
at the UO's revival  
of *A Midsummer  
Night's Dream*  
Sept. 29-30.**

# Oldies and Goodies

*EW's theater picks range from familiar to new.*

BY AARON RAGAN-FORE

**Actors Cabaret Theater: *Bat Boy: the Musical*** by Keythe Farley, Brian Flemming and Laurence O'Keefe, directed by Joe Zingo, runs Oct. 13-Nov. 4. Straight from the supermarket tabloids comes a story just in time for Halloween. Adapted from years' worth of articles in that ubiquitous birdcage-liner, the *Weekly World News*, the production offers the promise of campy, off-kilter fun for adult audiences. When a half boy/half bat creature emerges from his cave to descend upon an unsuspecting West Virginia town, he's taken in by a well-meaning family and promptly falls in love with his hosts' teenage daughter. The play has nearly been shut down at multiple runs across the country due to controversial content; next month Actors Cabaret tests the mettle (and stomach) of laid back Eugene.

**Cottage Theatre: *The Sound of Music*** by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, directed by Lynda Czajkowska-Thompson, runs Dec. 1-23. Come on — you know you love it! The perennial holiday season mainstay returns with the requisite musically gifted children, star-crossed young lovers, and family appropriate drama, along with one plucky, irrepressible ex-nun governess. We dare you not to hum the songs under your breath at work the next week.

**Lord Leebrick: *Mother Courage*** by Bertolt Brecht, directed by Craig Willis, runs May 11-June 2. Continuing in the political commentary mold of last season's *Assassins*, the Leebrick concludes its 15th season with this wry and dark fable, Brecht's highly stylized and representational tragicomedy. The play, on the national radar screen now because Meryl Streep is playing the title role on Broadway, critiques the realities of war and the economies it spawns, raising questions of the duty private citizens bear to their countries, their families, and their own consciences. The setting of this war profiteering morality play is the 17th century though Brecht used the events of that era to comment on the warfare of the 20th. The audience can expect the Leebrick to find new relevance in the text for life and death at the dawn of the 21st.

**UO's Robinson Theatre: *A Midsummer Night's Dream***, directed by John Schmor, runs Sept. 29-30. The Robinson bows to

popular demand by inaugurating its 2006-07 season with two additional performances of its hit from last spring, arguably Shakespeare's most beloved romantic comedy (see *EW's* 5/25 review in the online archives). Hilarity ensues when the mischievous sprite Puck uses a love potion to scramble the relationships of two young couples trespassing in the sylvan realm of the fairies. The audience is caught up in the action as much as the ensorcelled lovers when the king and queen of the fairies engage in a light-hearted game of supernatural one-upmanship, engendering much confusion and flirtation before all is set right.

**Very Little Theatre: *Fortinbras*** by Lee Blessing, directed by Michael Watkins, runs June 1-23. Any drama buff can tell you that at the end of *Hamlet*, virtually every character in line to rule Denmark has suffered a tragic death. From the chaos emerges Fortinbras, a careless blue blood with a tenuous claim to the throne. In the tradition of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, this comedy follows misadventure and political commentary of Shakespearean proportions as Fortinbras muddles his way through running a medieval kingdom, including attempts to play the media in his favor and the invasion of another sovereign nation in order to rally domestic support. Sound familiar?

**Willamette Repertory Theatre: *The Glass Menagerie***, directed by Pat Patton, runs Feb. 7-25. Middle-aged, overbearing matriarch Amanda Wingfield, a southern belle in her youth, cannot understand why her shy daughter Laura can never match her own girlhood record of "gentleman callers." Perhaps Laura's perceived deficiency stems from embarrassment arising from a mild physical handicap. Perhaps Laura's tortured brother Tom fails to provide an appropriate lifestyle for her to succeed. Or perhaps Amanda's consistent disappointment in her children curses them to lives of self-fulfilling doom. Tennessee Williams' drama (the bane of many an AP English Literature student, beloved later by many) conjures the dangers of nostalgia running unchecked amid the scent of magnolia blossoms beginning to spoil and lauds those golden moments when two spirits connect, even briefly, leaving lives changed forever. ■