

# OREGON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

---

## AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

### ***SOU theatre students bring poetry to life with “Stanza to Stage” at OSF Green Show***

(Ashland, OR). The Oregon Center for the Arts at Southern Oregon University will present “Stanza to Stage” in an Oregon Shakespeare Festival Green Show performance on at 6:45 p.m. on Saturday, July 20, at 15 South Pioneer St., in Ashland. The show will feature SOU Theatre students in a 40-minute piece of physical theatre, directed by actor and poet Barret O'Brien.

The acting company, comprised of students enrolled in the four-week intensive SOU class, will bring to its feet the work of 10 poets in a physical, collaborative and fun celebration of movement and word.

“This is an exploration of physical theater through the lens of some of the world's great poetry,” O'Brien said. “I adore poetry. And often after reading a particular passage and being struck by its beauty, I have this strong desire to free the words from its book, send them dancing and twirling and leaping into the streets. ‘Stanza to Stage’ was born from that desire.”

The poets included in “Stanza to Stage” are Joy Harjo, Shel Silverstein, Ullie-Kaye, Denise Levertov, Dove Dupree, Barret O'Brien, Amy Scurria, Billy Collins, Gabi Vidana and Mary Oliver.

The SOU theatre students are Leora Aurilio, Caleb Bunten-Bull, Josh Gefken, Aud Godlove, Joe Guelld, Grant Halverson, Aidan Jenkins, Kendrick Lee, Samantha Sinclair, Wyeth Snyder, Byers Sullivan, Gabi Vidana, Jasmine Welks and Mary-Ellen McGinnis.

“Our company has crafted a piece that represents tender and meaningful aspects of the human experience,” said Samantha Sinclair, a recent SOU theatre graduate. “There is levity, gravity, love and loss. Those attending are in for a treat.”

“This experience has opened my mind to the vast world of possibilities that exist within the ancient arts of physical theater and poetry,” SOU theatre major Leora Aurillio said. “I have felt more alive and connected with my peers in these last few weeks than I have in longer than I can remember! I can confidently say that working on ‘Stanza to Stage’ has been one of the most touching experiences I've had in college.”

The Green Show Class is an annual summer course that provides SOU theatre majors with intensive exploration into a variety of performance styles, voice and movement techniques, while honing their skill-based methodologies related to acting. Students analyze and explore performance material from a specific historical period, genre, playwright or pedagogy, while earning four credits for the summer session.

“The audience can expect to see and feel aspects of the human experience that we aren't normally allowed to express, in the way we use our bodies in relation to one another, in the way we speak, in the way we stand, or sing,” senior theatre major Aidan Jenkins said. “There's truly something primally corporeal about it, and the intention behind the words of beautiful poets will be brought to justice through the human body.”

The OSF Green Show is free and open to the public, and is offered at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday (and selected Tuesdays), from May 31 to October 12. Audience members are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy outdoor performances. For more information on OSF's Green Shows and calendar of events please visit: <https://www.osfashland.org/greenshow>

For and a list of all 2024-25 upcoming SOU events, music and theatre performances visit the OCA website at <https://oca.sou.edu/events>.

### **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

Barret O'Brien is an actor and author from New Orleans. Committed to creating work that is gentle on Earth's natural resources, O'Brien has staged plays internationally in such unconventional locales as abandoned bars, off-grid farms, and after-hours soup kitchens. He is also the founder of "Finding Our Tales," national storytelling workshops that embolden youth to share their voices through the tools of theatre. O'Brien has wagged "Tales" at City University of NY, Southern Rep, Yale University, New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, Seasons Bereavement Programs, Creative Connections, Camp Mak-a-Dream, Beargrass Retreat, The Siskiyou School and Southern Oregon University (among other locales). More at [www.barretobrien.com](http://www.barretobrien.com).