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Tutto Theatre Company

If it's Tuesday, this must be Bomarzo

By Robert Faires

So this is Dustin Wills' schedule: Thursday, June 26, he opened Tutto Theatre Company's production of *Black Snow* at Salvage Vanguard Theater here in Austin. The following Tuesday, June 30, he boarded a plane for a 16-hour flight to Italy. Two days after that, he was in Bomarzo, an hour north of Rome, to begin working with an ensemble of eight actresses (five from Austin, two from London, one from Rome) on a new theatrical work they will collectively create from the ground up over 19 days. Then, Tuesday, July 21, he opens this new work for six performances at the English Theatre of Rome.

So he's pretty much just kicking back this summer.

If you've seen one of the shows Wills has directed – besides *Black Snow*, a pair of Shakespearean riffs, *Ophelia* and *Cymbeline*, and the world premiere of Eve Tulbert's *Ashes, Ashes* – you have a pretty good sense of the man himself: high energy and overflowing with creativity. So if anyone is suited to stage two shows on two continents in two months, it's Wills.

He writes from Italia that he and his ensemble are working "feverishly," writing and rehearsing eight hours a day at a villa owned by Gaby Ford, the English Theatre of Rome's artistic director. Drawing inspiration from Maria Irene Fornes' *Fefu and Her Friends*, the new work, titled *Five*, or *Cinque*, will focus on five women (played by Austinites Keri Boyd, Chase Crossno, Sofia Ruiz, and Emily Tindall and Londoner Amy Briggs) who tell their stories individually in 10-minute pieces set in rooms behind the stage of the Teatro L'Arciliuto. The audience moves through the rooms in five separate groups and then, after an intermezzo, reunite in the theatre to see how the women connect physically with multiple storylines happening simultaneously.

This will be Wills' third new work for the English Theatre of Rome, with which he also staged the European premiere of *Ophelia* in 2006 and *The Moths (Le Falene)*, inspired by Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, in 2007. Now that he's the artistic director for Tutto, Wills wants to develop a relationship between the Austin and Roman companies, with a co-production in Rome every summer and maybe a cultural exchange that will bring Italian artists here.

In other words, Wills' schedule isn't likely to be getting any less busy any time soon. For information, visit www.tuttotheatre.org.

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