

ENTERTAINMENT & STARS

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For one summer, the 71-year-old swaps his home in the heart of the Wild West in the US state of Montana for the prairie of Bad Segeberg to play the equally charming and evil Emery Forster in the Karl May plays.



In "Winnetou II - Ribanna and Old Firehand" Nick Wilder (71) plays Emery Forster this year. © Markus Scholz/dpa

The sets for the play "Winnetou 2 - Ribanna and Old Firehand" have been erected and rehearsals are underway in all weathers.

"This is phenomenal, almost overwhelming," said Wilder. Having grown up on Fehmarn, he had already seen the Karl May plays as a child. The television series "Bonanza" was an inspiration for his life.

"That was exactly what I always dreamed of. I'm living it today," said Wilder, who built a house overlooking a lake in the mountains of Montana with his wife around 25 years ago.

Nick Wilder: "Everything I've done in my life could have gone wrong"



From left to right: Actors Jan Hartmann (43) as Old Firehand, Sila Sahin (38) as Ribanna and Nick Wilder as Emery Forster. © Markus Scholz/dpa

It was clear to him from the outset that it would be very physically demanding in Bad Segeberg (Schleswig-Holstein). The biggest challenge was the riding.

"I've always had a lot of respect for horses because I never really learned to ride." However, he has several neighbors in Montana where he can ride. His neighbor Judy Trevor taught him a lot.

To prepare, Wilder relies on his usual training with running and working with weights. He has noticed one thing during rehearsals: "What I need to do more of is stretching."

Was he afraid of anything during the open-air performances in front of thousands of spectators? "Everything I've done in my life could have gone wrong. Something can go wrong here too. I'm never afraid, but I always have respect for everything." That's why every single performance requires a high level of attentiveness and full concentration.

You can see Wilder's huge anticipation. "Experiencing this with my colleagues is already fun for me," he said. "I'm going to enjoy the 72 performances and I already know that the last performance will probably be filled with tears." The whole group is growing together quickly. "I haven't laughed so much in a long time. We have a lot of fun. The colleagues all have a very good sense of humor. And Bad Segeberg is a cool town. I feel very much at home here."

The premiere is on June 29.