



Dec 5, 2011

'As You Like It' Dec. 7-11

Partnerships help develop student actors and Milwaukee's classical theater scene



When the Department of Theatre in UWM's Peck School of the Arts presents William Shakespeare's "As You Like It" in December, it will be tapping into a growing partnership with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass.

"As You Like It" is part of the department's goal of "increasing and deepening our students' and our audiences' experience with Shakespeare and other classic theatre," says Associate Professor Bill Watson, who is directing the production. "As You Like It" will be presented Dec. 7-11 in the Mainstage Theatre.

Shakespeare & Company is one of the primary Shakespeare theatres in the United States, founded in the 1970s by Royal Shakespeare Company actress Tina Packer. Packer, partner Kristen Linklater, and co-founders Dennis Krausnik and Kevin Coleman set the company's mission: Developing new approaches to the performance of Shakespeare and training actors to act the plays.

During the last 35 years, Shakespeare & Company has grown to become the foremost training ground for performing Shakespeare in the U.S., according to Watson. "Also, Kristen Linklater's voice training method may be the most-used model for training actor's vocal use across much of the world."

The partnership was launched two years ago, when PSOA brought Packer, Krausnik and Coleman to Milwaukee for a weekend of intensive training with student actors. The company's sessions included a master class with Packer, held for professional actors in the Milwaukee area, shortly after the close of Milwaukee Shakespeare.

Since that time, several Theatre Department faculty and students have traveled to Lenox for Shakespeare & Company's four- and six-week training intensives. In turn, company members visited campus in 2010 and in spring 2011.

"Several of the student actors in 'As You Like It' spent their summer training and attending the season at Shakespeare & Company," says Watson. "These students are now bringing that experience and those tools to our production."

This summer, Associate Professor Rebecca Holderness is directing "King Lear" in Shakespeare & Company's mainstage summer season, with Krausnik playing Lear. Watson and several UWM students will act and understudy in the production.

For 2012-13, The Year of The Arts in the PSOA, Holderness will remount "King Lear" in the UWM Mainstage Theatre next December. "Dennis will be reprising the role of Lear, with the students playing the roles they understudied." In addition, Watson and

another faculty member will be part of the cast.

“This is the next phase of our relationship with Shakespeare & Company. Our goals are restoring a strong classical presence to the Milwaukee theatre scene in the wake of the demise of Milwaukee Shakespeare. We’re also working toward establishing UWM’s theatre program as a regional center for the development of classical actors – complementing the strong contemporary nature of the program we’ve developed over the last five years.”

The play will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, with the final performance Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are available through the Peck School of the Arts Box Office, 414-229-4308. Admission is \$17/general public; \$12/seniors (60 and over) and UWM faculty, staff and alumni; and \$10/students.

