

Hqfruh

Monmouth's 'As You Like It' is 'high-energy, hilarious'

David A. Sargent / Special to the Sun Journal

[Encore](#) | Tuesday, July 15, 2014

Strong performances
should make for
a great season at TAM

MONMOUTH -- In the words of Shakespeare, "All the world's a stage," and of all the stages in this world, the one to head for this summer is at Cumston Hall in Monmouth.

That's where the talented players of Theater at Monmouth (TAM) are presenting a high-energy, hilarious and thoroughly enjoyable production of "As You Like It." Newcomers to Shakespeare will find this play to be delightfully accessible with the action providing clarity to the text.

Under razor-sharp direction by Catherine Weidner, this cast creates a rich array of characters from aristocrats to simple peasants. Many complications of courtship are set in motion by a vindictive duke, and before the show ends, romance is blooming for numerous couples, but especially for Rosalind and Orlando.

Erica Murphy gives a splendid portrayal of Rosalind, whose banishment by the duke leads to her take on a man's disguise. She delivers a zestful performance from beginning to end. This is Murphy's first season with TAM, and audiences are sure to enjoy her appearances in other shows at Monmouth this summer.

Orlando is played by Michael Dix Thomas. A native Mainer, he makes a memorable debut on the Cumston Hall stage in "As You Like It." In rough-and-tumble combat (wrestling rather than swordplay), to wooing Rosalind with poetry, Thomas delivers an able and entertaining performance.

Celia, who is Rosalind's faithful cousin, is played by Lindsay Tornquist in her East Coast debut. In their masquerade as brother and sister, Tornquist is a delightful companion offering valuable guidance to Rosalind as they flee into the Forest of Arden.

The role of Touchstone, the surprisingly wise court jester, is played by Graham Emmons in his TAM debut. Emmons' portrayal of Shakespeare's "motley fool" is excellent. In that role are some of the play's more familiar lines, including "All the world's a stage" with its "ages of man" recitation. Mark S. Cartier, popular TAM veteran of 18 seasons, plays the malevolent

Duke Frederick and his kinder brother who encounters the various players in the forest.

Another popular TAM veteran, Bill Van Horn (13 seasons), gives a delightful performance as Colin, the down-to-earth shepherd whose lack of pretension leads to a resolution of the identity mix-ups and romantic folly.

Wendy Way's portrayal of Adam, an old man, is presented with sensitivity and believability. This is her third season with TAM.

All of the performances in "As You Like It" are noteworthy. There's Will Harrell (third season) as melancholy Jaques, Leighton Samuels (first season) as Oliver, Janis Stevens (13th season) as Madam Lebeau, and several others.

Set design by Dan Bilodeau and costumes by Jonna Klaiber, which have an early 1940s theme, are important contributors to this show's success.

The variety of roles and the expertise of TAM's troupe of repertory performers are sure to bring audiences back for each of the summer season's shows which this year are loosely classified as a "British Invasion."

Opening on July 18 is "A Woman of No Importance" by Oscar Wilde, followed by "Romeo and Juliet" on July 25 and "What the Butler Saw" on August 1. These shows, as well as "Tales from the Blue Fairy Book" are performed in repertory with times and dates listed on TAM's Web site.

Theater at Monmouth, founded in 1970, was named the Shakespearean Theater of Maine by the State Legislature in 1975.

For tickets to Theater at Monmouth productions at Cumston Hall, Monmouth, call 933-9999 or go online to www.theateratmonmouth.org.