

hp ENTERTAINMENT



From left, Jess Alexander, Gabriel Ozaki and James Cullinane rehearse for the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival Touring Co.'s production of "All's Well That Ends Well."

Photos provided: Jason Comerford

Troupe transcending time

Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival Touring Co. adds music to 'All's Well That Ends Well'

By ALEXANDRA NEWMAN
HF Correspondent

When working on a William Shakespeare piece, one of Scotty Arnold's goals is to transcend the centuries between its writing and present day.

"I think music is a powerful way to do that," he said.

Arnold is the director and composer of upcoming performances of "All's Well That Ends Well" in Niles, St. Joseph and Three Oaks.

The Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival Touring Co. will perform the show's for free to make Shakespeare more accessible.

"I think one of the best things the touring company is doing right now is educating the broader Michiana community," said Rachel Thomas, who plays Helen. "I know there are people we've performed for that are ecstatic to see us because they're lovers of Shakespeare. But there are others who have never understood Shakespeare until now."

She calls it Shakespeare with a twist.

Arnold said when he sat down to write the music for the classic play, he thought about what moments might benefit from a song.

"I try to identify moments when the emotions are big and one might sing," he said. "Sometimes, I use his words verbatim in the music, and sometimes I will translate or write a lyric inspired by what I think he's saying."

Thomas said her favorite moment of the show is her opening monologue, which turns into a song about her desire to make Bertram hers.

"She figures out what she's going to do, and she's going to be determined, and nothing is going to get in her way," Thomas said. "You see her desire turning into motivation."

Along the journey, Helen meets Diana, played by Tiana Mudzimurema. The two team up, with the help of Diana's mother, to help get Helen what she wants.

"Diana is feisty and very in control of herself and what she wants."



Tiana Mudzimurema, foreground, and James Cullinane rehearse for the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival Touring Co.'s production of "All's Well That Ends Well."



Rachel Thomas, in front, and Maria Amenabar Farias, Gabriel Ozaki, Josie Mi, Tiana Mudzimurema, Kresby João Roza, in back from left, rehearse for the show.

everyone. It's been fun playing a confident, dynamic role."

Mudzimurema, 22, has been performing Shakespeare since she was 9, and decided to commit to acting more full-time by applying to be an apprentice in the touring company.

She said she does what she does not only because she loves it, but because it brings representation to

Shakespeare, and I think for children, specifically, it's important to expose them to different actors of different races," she said. "Being able to see a Black woman on stage, or we have an Asian actor, Josie, on stage, reciting Shakespeare, is important."

Mudzimurema said Shakespeare isn't just for one kind of person.

"I want everyone to be able

If You Go

What: Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival Touring Co. presents "All's Well That Ends Well"

When/Where: 7 p.m. tonight, Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles

7:30 p.m. Friday, Krasl Art Center, 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph
6:30 p.m. Aug. 6, Dewey Cannon Park, Maple Street, Three Oaks

How much: Free

More info: shakespeare.nd.edu/companies/notre-dame-shakespeare-festival

characters we're portraying, and leave inspired."

Thomas had never performed Shakespeare before auditioning for the touring company.

"I now would consider myself a Shakespearean actor. I've learned more in this program than in a semester in school," she said.

The cast lives together, allowing them to run lines together at any time, grab dinner, talk and build relationships with each other.

"You don't get that too often in a professional setting," Mudzimurema said.

Arnold said he has been inspired by the cast's willingness and enthusiasm to jump in, and very quickly and very courageously learn this complicated show with abandon.

Thomas said they had an actor who had to miss a show, and the cast didn't miss a beat in coming together to run lines and support them.

"These are my friends now that I didn't know a month ago, and now I feel like I've known them all my life," she said.

Arnold said he is excited for even more audiences to experience what he created.

"All's Well" is a nuanced story. At its heart it's about a person who, through resourcefulness, can get something they lost or they want," he said. "I think what we have ex-

WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

Streisand Interpreter comes to the Acorn

THREE OAKS — Barbra Streisand interpreter Steven Brinberg will bring the legend to life in "Simply Barbra" at 7 p.m. Sunday at The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Drive.

Brinberg has been doing his live vocal and comic impression of Streisand for two decades, performing around the world.

Steven spent 11 years touring with Marvin Hamlisch and his symphony orchestra as a special guest star. Stephen Sondheim requested his appearance at his birthday concert at the Library of Congress. Terrence McNally wrote narration for him to read as Barbra at a concert at Lincoln Center. He also has performed at events for such notables as Donna Karan, Joan Rivers, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Lizzy Minelli.

The constantly updated "Simply Barbra" show has earned two MAC awards, a bistro award and was nominated for a 2018 ROBBY award for theater and cabaret in Los Angeles.

Brinberg will sing some of Streisand's greatest hits, songs from her latest album, songs she never sang, and mark the 50th anniversaries of her first three musical movies. A special guest star also will sing a duet with Brinberg.

Tickets are \$35-\$60, and are available online at www.acornlive.org.

TCF, the Box team up for 'Scotland Road'

ST. JOSEPH — A partnership between Twin City Players and the Berrien Artist Guild will bring the first of two shows to the Box Factory for the Arts this weekend.

"Scotland Road" will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday at the venue, 1101 Broad St.

A second show, "Women and War," will be stage Aug. 4-7.

In "Scotland Road," a young woman in the last decade of the 20th century is found floating on an iceberg in the middle of the North Atlantic wearing 19th century clothing. When rescued, she says only one word: Titanic.

During the play, an expert on the ship's sinking tries to get the woman, Winifred, to confess she's a fake and reveal her true identity. His one clue, her enigmatic references to an unknown place called Scotland Road.

Tickets for this weekend's show are \$12-\$15 and can be purchased online at ticketstripe.com/scotlandroad.

For more information, visit boxfactoryforthearts.org.

Exhibit opens at S. Haven art center

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Center for the Arts, 600 Phoenix St., will open a new exhibit this weekend.

The center will host an opening reception for "West Michigan Redux" from