

# Ringging in the Holiday

## Getting into the Christmas spirit with Bill Shakespeare

By NORA MEANY  
Saint Mary's Accent Editor

The "Year of Shakespeare" continues to thrive on the campus of Notre Dame with the Bard's next feature, *Twelfth Night*, running this weekend. The play, student produced and directed, is the work of Notre Dame's own Not-So-Royal-Shakespeare Company. Currently being revived after a few years of hibernation, the company is gaining support beyond the dues-paying members that helped finance the production.

Chris Kudlacz, a graduate student at the University, chose *Twelfth Night* for his collegiate directing debut because of the comfortable and down-to-earth nature of the play. "We're trying to make this play as approachable as we can for those who aren't that familiar with Shakespeare," he said. "We attempted to stay as true to the stage as possible while giving the play a little flavor of the modern Notre Dame community as well."

One way that the production attains its approachability is with the unique venue chosen. While many Notre Dame theater productions find a home in Washington Hall, the Not-So-Royal-Shakespeare-Company breaks the locational trend in favor of the smaller and more intimate setting of the auditorium of the Hesburgh Peace Building. However, this is due to both scheduling and the shoe-string budget of the play, as well as for reasons of artistic integrity.

In fact, *Twelfth Night* is being financed almost entirely from money given to the group by Student Activities and dues from the company. Advertising costs are being shouldered in part by the English department, as well. This makes for a creative and refreshingly simple production of the classic, with the modern apparel choices being motivated by monetary restraints.

"Costumes were found by pulling stuff from people's closets," said Louise Edwards, who plays Olivia. "It was a more laid-back production, with students helping each other out."

The stage is laid simply as well, with the neutral setting being utilized by the entire cast. In fact, the only complex adornment placed on the stage is a fully-decorated Christmas tree. However, this is not foreign to the tone that Kudlacz hopes to create through his directing. Historically speaking, this choice of a prop is in keeping with the original theory behind the title of the play.

"It is believed," Kudlacz noted, "that the play was first performed on the 'Twelfth Night,' one of the feasts of the Christmas season." This is one of the ways the the Christmas tone is alluded to in this production.

Another unique property of this presentation of *Twelfth Night* is the live music utilized throughout the show. Two violinists and a cellist provide on-stage accompaniment to David Go's recorder, as well as for Dan Sullivan's many solos as Feste the Clown. From the soft pre-show instrumentals to the warbled, drunken bar songs

sung by Dan Smith as Fabian, Justyn Harkin as Sir Toby Belch, and Sean Dwyer as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, music is an integral part of the play.

The tightknit cast and crew are a mix of theater majors and novices alike. Many veteran actors in the cast began work on *Twelfth Night* fresh off the success of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. The joining together of a cast with different levels of stage experience is refreshing to Edwards, who says "working with new people provides fresh insights," and keeps the stage work interesting.

Admittedly, it is hard to convey feelings to the audience using such an old text, with obstacles like iambic pentameter getting in the way of speech. However, Elaine Bonifield, who plays Maria, sees the opportunity to act in such a play as a "nice challenge" that the cast is ready to face.

"I really enjoy Shakespeare," Bonifield said. "There is a lot of good humor in *Twelfth Night*, but the audience won't understand it unless you play it up."

Paul Maloney, who plays Sebastian, saw being cast as an "honor," and even looked forward to rehearsals, citing them as "the best part of being in the play." A senior biology major from Dillon, Maloney saw his acting hobby as merely an opportunity to make him a better person on a whole. "Being a well-rounded individual is important to me. Acting is a good way to do it."

For those who are not familiar with the plot, *Twelfth Night* is a misbegotten farce that traces the antics surrounding a love triangle set in Illyria. Packed with wacky subplots and interesting characters, the play has as many twists and turns as a soap opera. For example, the cross-dressing heroine, Viola, pining for her lost twin brother, Sebastian, harbors shades of an episode of Beverly Hills, 90210 gone awry. Also, in a nod to modern day comedic formula, one can compare the mischievous cases of mistaken identity to an episode of *Three's Company*.

However, one cannot forget that *Twelfth Night* was Shakespeare's last comedic work before he delved into the tragedies. Although the play is intended to be a farce, Shakespeare opted for dolor and melancholy when he created some of the play's more memorable secondary characters, such as Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. Although both characters are seen throughout the play creating intoxicated mischief, there is an undertone of happiness fleeting with the onslaught of age.

This move towards the tragic is noted by Kudlacz, who parallels the melancholy evident in the play to the happiness many students experience partying in college, only to find it vanishing with maturity. "The play is definitely appropriate to college," Kudlacz noted, "but we're definitely trying to move on, to minimize the melancholy."

Doors open for *Twelfth Night* tonight and tomorrow at 6:30 p.m., with a 1:20 p.m. matinee Saturday afternoon. Ticket are \$3 for students and \$5 general admission, and are sold at the ticket desk at LaFortune.



Jason Dorwart calls forth and the Not-So-Royal-Shakespeare society answers as it arises from its several year hiatus.

Only three more days head home for the down during one of The answer is music participate in the seasonal good offering up their voices in order. The Notre Dame Glee Club is p 13, the Glee Club guys will stor p.m. Tickets cost \$2 and can (219) 631-8128. Daniel Stowe will benefit the South Bend Cent the Homeless.

For more information on the music department events, send e-mail to music@nd.edu or visit the music department web site at www.nd.edu/music or contact Lisa Ebenhardt at (219) 631-6201.

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- 1) Tickets for a Broadway
  - 2) Winter gear (hats, g
  - 3) Chocolate — lots a
  - 4) A movie — (a good Wedding"
  - 5) Luggage
  - 6) Clothes (BE CAREFU sense!)
  - 7) A goldfish (unless yo it with toothpaste and ki
  - 8) Anything from Victori
  - 9) 3 yr. subscription to
  - 10) Jewelry (remember friend)