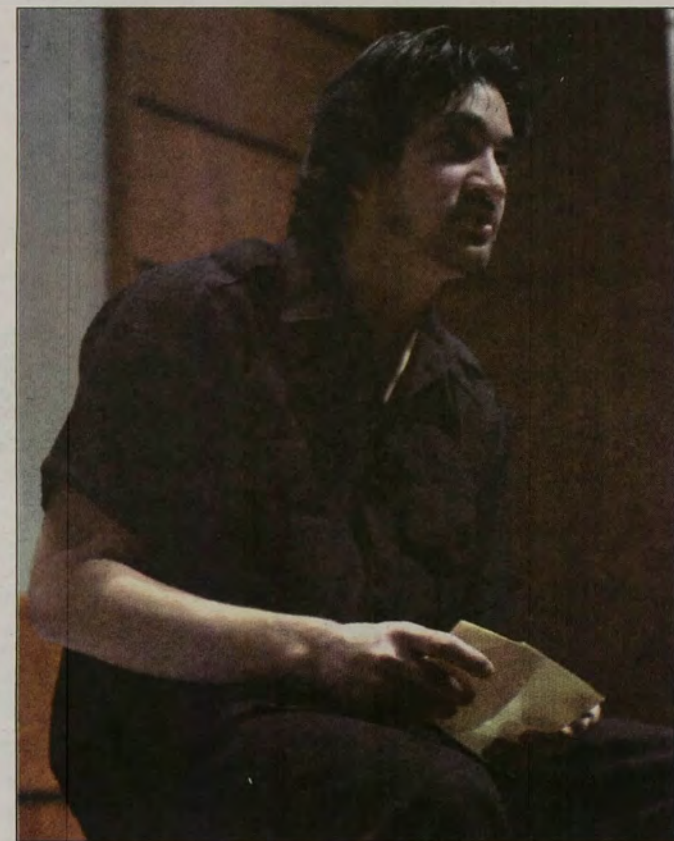




KING



Above, King Lear (Mike Federico) disinherits his daughter Cordelia (Lena Caligiuri) for refusing to flatter him. Federico is a senior with a lot of experience in Shakespearian plays. At left, Edmund (Adel Hanash) reads a letter. Below, half-brothers Edgar (David Tull) and Edmund sword fight in a dual to the death.

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Photos by
SHAWNA MONSON



By MARIA SMITH
Scene Editor

The chance to perform Shakespeare is one of the greatest challenges, and the greatest joys, of professional and amateur actors alike.

The language may be antiquated, the lines may be complicated and the characters may take weeks to understand. But actors and directors with the passion and talent to get past these difficulties can find a world of possibilities in every one of Shakespeare's plays.

Through the years the Not So Royal Shakespeare Company has taken a crack at the comedies, tragedies and histories with equal vigor and varying amounts of success. Last year the group took the stage with *Taming of the Shrew* and *Hamlet*. Fall semester featured many of the group's best old and new actors in the always popular *Much Ado About Nothing*.

This weekend the company will take on a greater challenge in its performance of *King Lear*. In addition to being widely acknowledged as one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, the story of King Lear's descent from his throne into gradually increasing madness at the hands of his treacherous daughters is one of the most difficult to perform. The dark themes of the play and complicated development of the characters place great demands on the actors. While the company's presentation of the play is not flawless, the cast of *King Lear* puts on an admirable performance.

Hamlet may be the role every actor aspires to play, but in many ways *King Lear* may be a more difficult role to perform. Senior Mike Federico's performance in this show makes it clear why the computer science major has been cast in major roles in the company since he came to Notre Dame. In the past four years Federico has played *Mercutio*, *Roderigo*, *Falstaff* and other coveted Shakespearean characters on the Notre Dame stage.

"This role is, first, impossible," Federico said. "To have enough breath to say all the lines and scream them the way he does is really impossible."

Federico certainly has a tough act to follow playing a role that has been filled with great actors such as Laurence Olivier and Orson Welles.

"Most actors play this part when they are at least 60 years plus and have their careers behind them," Federico said. "But that's the beauty of college theatre."

Senior Mario Bird also brings a personal slant to his role as the Earl of Kent with a carefully culti-

vated

Scottish accent drawn from a variety of popular entertainment.

"[The accent] comes from an amalgamation of a number of different sources," Bird said.

The attempt may sound like a gimmick, but is surprisingly effective in developing the character and bringing out Bird's natural acting energy.

The play also features notable performances by some of the University's younger actors. Freshman Connor Woods plays the minor character of Oswald with distinctive character, and sophomore David Tull adapts well to the challenge of playing a character who masquerades as a madman for half the play.



"King



Director: Katy Kertez
Writer: Shakespeare
Starring: Michael Federico, Cricket Slattery, Lena Caligiuri, David Tull, Adel Hanash, M. Ayling, C. Spencer Beggs, Garlock, Patrick Vassel, Burum, Liz Clouse, Al Klei

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said. "With the face of Cordelia the character of the Fool is a lot more powerful."

One problem actors often encounter in performing Shakespeare is the tendency to get lost in the language. At times the actors of the company also run into difficulty interpreting the subtleties of Shakespeare. While the plot and the characters are well developed and several of the actors live up to the challenge of performing Shakespeare as though he wrote for modern audiences, some of the finer points of language and conversation get lost in the company's performance.

The company also uses a mix of props and costumes from different time periods, which may be done for effect, but can feel disjointed. The mix of swords, guns, fur capes and strapless dresses may be a function of the company's limited budget, but does not add to the sense of reality on the stage.

This weekend's performance will be the last time many of the most active performers of the senior class will take the stage as Notre Dame undergraduates. Federico, Kertez, Adel Hanash and Spencer Beggs have been part of the Notre Dame dramatic scene for four years. Bird only began acting onstage at Notre Dame last semester, but has rapidly become an important part of the company.

"A lot of people who have been a huge part of NSR in the past are going to be gone," Tull said. "But a lot of what's fun about this show is leaving spots open for people to come in and fill the ranks. You can see the people getting ready to fill the seniors' spots."

Even for those seniors not intending to pursue a career in acting, the end of the Not So Royal Shakespeare Company does not mean the end of performing Shakespeare. Several of the actors including Hanash, Tull and Kertez will perform in the Summer Shakespeare performance of Romeo and Juliet this summer. Federico was cast in the role of Paris, and graduate Jeff Eyerman, appearing as the Earl of Gloucester in King Lear, works as executive director of the Summer Shakespeare program.

"I think that Shakespeare's every single word feels so special, so magical to perform," Tull said. "They say there's the acting bug, but there's also the Shakespeare bug. Once you get addicted to performing these works, which you do, you get hooked on it."

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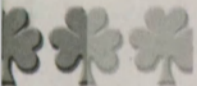


Above, King Lear holds Cordelia's dead body after she is hanged. At right, the Duke of Cornwall (C. Spencer Beggs) with his wife. Cornwall's wife is Lear's second daughter Regan (Cricket Slattery). Below, the Duke of Cornwall threatens Earl of Gloucester (Jeff Eyerman) with a knife.

Photos by
SHAWNA MONSON



Lear"



co, Caitlin Rohn, giuri, Jeff Eyerman, ario Bird, Douglas Connor Woods, Joe andon McGirr, Jocelyn n, Anne Kroeger

cast the same actor for both roles in an effort to contribute to the portrayal of Lear's psychological development.

"I wanted to find a way to express Lear's madness," Kertez