



JEFF ALBERT/Observer Graphic

By BRIAN DOXTADER
Scene Editor

William Shakespeare once wrote, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." Those dreams guide The Not So Royal Shakespeare Company (NSR) throughout its production of "The Tempest."

"The Tempest" follows Prospero (Jeff Eyerman) and his daughter Miranda (Chelsea Moore) as he magically causes a shipwreck to the vessel carrying members of the royal Italian family.

Antonio (Patrick Tighe) and Alonso (Stephan Iwanski), two of those shipwrecked, wronged Prospero years ago and banished him to his current home on an unnamed island, which leads him to seek revenge by causing the shipwreck.

Other characters include Ferdinand (Adam Bonosky), who falls in love with Miranda; Caliban (Devin Preston), Prospero's servant; Stephano (Marty Schroeder, an Observer Assistant Scene Editor) and Trinculo (Andre Valdivia), who decides to kill Prospero and take over the island; and Ariel (Mary Levy), Prospero's servant fairy.

Directed by senior Krysta Dennis, the NSR version of "The Tempest" focuses on the performance aspect of the Bard's text.

"We try to play with Shakespeare and have fun with Shakespeare and not let it be such an academic thing," Dennis said.

She emphasizes that the Bard is meant to be seen and heard, as opposed to analyzed as a text, noting that the original intent of his plays was to entertain.

"I've always liked 'The Tempest,' which is Shakespeare's last play," Dennis said. "It's got all kinds of elements in it, like political unrest, mystical aspects and all kinds of great characters."

Previous NSR productions were notable for their minimalism, but Dennis said "The Tempest" required a more lavish presentation, which is certainly visible throughout.

The lighting (by Ryan Retartha), costuming (by Mary Levy and Ashley Cenicerros) and set design (by Retartha and Samantha Towles) are all impressive and demonstrate



CHRISTIAN SAGARDIA/The Observer

Prospero (Jeff Eyerman) discusses the happenings on his island with one of the incarnations of Ariel (Mary Levy). Prospero's plans are the driving force of Shakespeare's "The Tempest."

just how much effort went into the show.

Eyerman stresses that the NSR production emphasizes both the aspects of spectacle and story. The centerpieces of the spectacle are two dances, performed by the Ariels.

In Shakespeare's text, Ariel is a single character, but the NSR version utilizes six actresses to play the role — Lisa Floran, Meghan Hartmann, Kathleen Hession, Elizabeth Kuhl, Mary Levy and Danielle Truskowski.

"Often when you do 'The Tempest,' you use some kind of concept involving the fairy Ariel," Dennis said. "I decided I wanted to have a whole team of spirits. The sequences involving the dance never made sense to me in the text, but I made it make sense using the dances."

Those dances, choreographed by

Natalie Conneely, are inspired by Kathakali, a classical dance style of Kerala, in southern India.

Conneely explains that in the dances, each dancer is given a mythological god to embody and dance through.

The accompanying soundtrack is taken from Bollywood, an Indian cinema style that often emphasizes music and spectacle.

As fantastic and memorable as these sequences are, they don't necessarily detract from the characters and storyline, especially as embodied by the actors.

"There's not a bad actor in the cast," Eyerman said. "Any one of these actors is strong enough that the entire show could be about them."

Dennis also noted that the play involves students from every class year. Eyerman himself is a second year law student, and both he and Dennis have been impressed with the skill — if not experience — of

the young cast members.

"They've come a long way and have rehearsed hard," Dennis said.

The acting is solid throughout, led by Eyerman, Bonosky and Moore. Schroeder, Valdivia and Preston provide great comic relief, while the extra rehearsal time of the Ariels is evident in their outstanding performances.

The cast is rounded out by Ben Drda, Kevin McCarthy, Timothy Gotcher, Brian Dolinar, Robert DeBroeck, Kevin Stein, Jennifer Betancourt and Alyse Kinchen.

"The Tempest" is one of Shakespeare's more segmented plays, which means that individual storylines are seemingly independent of the rest until the disparate threads rejoin at the end of the play.

"Seeing it come together has been amazing," Eyerman said. "'The Tempest' wasn't one of my favorite Shakespeare shows, but this production has given me new appreciation for it."

Both Eyerman and Dennis hope the show appeals to the larger Notre Dame community. While Dennis said the relevance of studying Shakespeare is still important, she also wants the show to entertain.

"The opportunity to see Shakespeare, at any level, is essential," Eyerman said.

The NSR production of "The Tempest" has obviously been a labor of love that has accomplished Dennis' far-reaching goals. As a fast-paced and lavishly produced version of Shakespeare's text, it succeeds while still allowing the story and acting to impressively shine through.

"The Tempest" will be shown in Washington Hall throughout the weekend, starting tonight.

As a production created completely by Notre Dame students, it is a very strong interpretation of "The Tempest," bringing to life a brave new world.

Contact Brian Doxtader at bdoxtade@nd.edu

"The Tempest"
Not So Royal Shakespeare Company
When: Today through Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Washington Hall
Cost: \$7 general, \$5 students
Tickets can be purchased at the door or at the LaFortune Box Office



CHRISTIAN SAGARDIA/The Observer

The court of the king of Naples is tossed and turned about in a tempest created by Ariel while Prospero's daughter Miranda (Chelsea Moore) looks on from a rock on the island.



CHRISTIAN SAGARDIA/The Observer

Prospero (Jeff Eyerman) contemplates how to further his plans while discussing what to do with the new denizens of his island with his ethereal servant spirit Ariel.