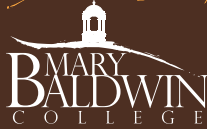


Folio

WINTER 2009
MLitt/MFA



A BI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE'S
MASTER OF LETTERS/MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN SHAKESPEARE AND RENAISSANCE LITERATURE IN PERFORMANCE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER

University Wits Produce Another Successful Tour with *The Tempest*

By Brett Gann

It has been a tradition the past few years for The University Wits — the student organization of the MLitt/MFA program — to produce a quality Shakespearean tour in the summer months. The 2008 tour was a critical success, spreading recognition of the program and the Wits' name across Virginia, Delaware, and New York. The nine-month project to produce *The Tempest* started in December 2007, opened at American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse in May 2008, and closed at Mary Baldwin College's Rose Terrace garden in August.

I joined the project when it was still in the brainstorming phase, and in early January 2008, I joined full time as the touring company's manager. After choosing *The Tempest* and cutting the script, I held auditions for students who will present their theses this spring. I chose

six talented actors: third-years Anna Gonzalez (Miranda, Sebastian) and Chelsea Phillips (Ariel, Boatswain, Ceres), and second-years Erin Baird (Prospero), Nolan Carey (Gonzalo, Stephano), Kitty Keim (Alonzo, Trinculo, Juno), and Victoria Reinsel (Antonio, Ferdinand, Caliban).

Together, the actors staged the play and developed characters without the benefit of a director. Keim and Gonzalez created the costumes. Alumnus Ryan McCarthy '08 and second-year Rachel Kohler helped build properties. Third-year Lauren Mignogno (assistant company manager), second-year Justin Schneider (crew), and I organized, facilitated, moved things, made phone calls, and did all the other fun stuff associated with managing a tour.

(continued on p 4)



Dr. Gary Taylor

Visiting Scholar Brings *Cardenio* Back to Life

By Glenn Schudel

Some Shakespeare scholars thought *The History of Cardenio* was gone for good. This fall, MLitt/MFA students learned a different story about the once-lost early modern play by Shakespeare and his contemporary, John Fletcher: The story of a man who worked to resurrect the play so it could be performed again.

Dr. Gary Taylor, general editor of the Oxford editions of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* and *The Complete Works of Middleton*, explained how he spent the last several years reconstructing the text of the comedic *Cardenio*. The resident company at American Shakespeare Center, under the direction of Aaron Hochhalter, gave a staged reading of the play, a rare treat for Mary Baldwin students, faculty, and local theatre lovers alike.

Taylor's description of the painstaking process to uncover *Cardenio* gave the audience even higher regard for the performance. Beginning with the text of *Double Falsehood*, an 18th-

(continued on p 4)



PHOTO BY BRETT GANN

Kitty Keim (top) and Chelsea Phillips, members of The University Wits, perform *The Tempest* on the Blackfriars Playhouse stage as part of the group's summer 2008 tour.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

On a recent trip to University of Nebraska, I was called upon to explain what is special about the MLitt/MFA program in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance at Mary Baldwin College. One of the things I heard myself say was that we “uniquely marry scholarship and stagecraft.” Later, I found myself meditating over what I meant by that. What exactly does it mean to bring “scholarship” and “stagecraft” into a meaningful relationship with one another?

Relationships rely upon communication (or so I've been told. Often.), so a happy marriage between stagecraft and scholarship must surely depend upon mutual understanding. Increasingly, then, when I study the slender slash between MLitt and MFA, I think of our students, leaning forward, ears cocked, and eyes wide open. In other words, ours is a program that promotes fluency, a bilinguality between two disciplines (performance/scholarship) with different languages.

Toward that end, our program is constantly building textual resources while hosting the most talented scholars and practitioners. This fall, we enjoyed visits from Brendon Fox and Gary Taylor (see features about them in this issue) as well as Dr. Sarah Werner of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Dr. Andrew Hartley of University of North Carolina at Charlotte (and editor of *Shakespeare Bulletin*), Dr. Steven Urkowitz (professor emeritus at City University of New York), director Rob Clare, and scholar Dr. Jeremy Lopez (University of Toronto).

We celebrated in late October the magnificent gifts of Elizabeth Lipscomb, Tom Berger, and Barbara Palmer, who all donated rare and valuable books to add to our burgeoning collection of textual resources. Of particular note is the gift of Lipscomb and her husband Lloyd, who bestowed a rare 1639 quarto of Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King*, as well as an excerpt from Ben Jonson's 1616 *Folio*. Both books now reside in Mary Baldwin College's rare books room in Grafton Library.

A marriage takes work, and that work is never done. To overcome the disciplinary divorce between scholarship and stagecraft, and to broker the distance between modes of working with different terms and technologies, our program promotes cultural and lingual fluency between the world of scholarship and the world of practice. We want every student to be as comfortable in the archive as in the rehearsal room, whether turning over the pages of the *Short Title Catalogue* or blocking a scene from *2 Henry VI*. Therefore, we're striving every day to increase comprehension, understanding, and, above all, communication between scholarship and stagecraft. For every good marriage is built on understanding. And gifts. And gratitude.

— Dr. Paul Menzer



Award Recognizes Vision of Shakespeare Center Pair

By Glenn Schudel

American Shakespeare Center (ASC) co-founders Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen and Jim Warren were among just 10 winners of the 2008 Governor's Awards for the Arts, recognizing their artistic vision and commitment to education at the center. Bestowed by Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, the awards “honor those who encourage, support, and invest in the arts in Virginia.”

Governor's Awards for the Arts have been bestowed only four times since 1979. The Virginia Commission for the Arts selected this year's winners from a pool of 345 nominees.

Kaine praised American Shakespeare Center for its artistic and economic roles in the Staunton area, describing the company as providing “top quality theatre delivered by great talent, great outreach to the community, and wonderful opportunities for children and for people of all ages; particularly tourists who come to Virginia and have a marvelous experience.” The governor also credited ASC's home base,

Blackfriars Playhouse, as an anchor of the revitalized downtown Staunton.

The winning duo was recognized locally at a reception at Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton and again at a statewide celebration at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

At the Richmond reception, Cohen and Warren fondly reminisced about ASC's humble beginnings. Warren, ASC artistic director, recalled the days when actors used their parents' vehicles to transport themselves and other members of the company — then called Shenandoah Shakespeare Express — to venues around the country. Cohen, director of mission at ASC and a professor of Shakespeare and Renaissance literature at Mary Baldwin College, was in a perfect position to put the mission of ASC in context: “What we are finding out in the first decade of the 21st century is that the arts aren't just the effect of a healthy community; they are the cause of one.”



PHOTO BY MICHAEL WHITE, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

(l-r) Jim Warren, American Shakespeare Center artistic director; Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen, director of mission at ASC and professor of Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance at Mary Baldwin; and Michael Dowell, executive director for Artisans Center of Virginia, are all smiles after Warren and Cohen received the Governor's Award for the Arts.

Globe Theatre's Master of Verse Blocks Time for MLitt Lessons

By Christine Parker

At Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, director Giles Block carries the title master of play or master of verse. When Block visits Staunton as guest director for American Shakespeare Center (ASC), people refer to him as "the verse man." Actors on both sides of the Atlantic look to Block to help them speak Shakespeare's verse in a natural and understandable way by exploring the rhythm and meaning of the text.

Last August, Block directed ASC's touring troupe in *The Comedy of Errors*. After the play moved on to dress rehearsals and previews, Block devoted time to the MLitt classes REN 500: Shakespeare and REN 530: Directing I. He worked specifically on verse delivery with students in the Shakespeare fundamentals class, which covers themes and narratives, Early English staging, Shakespeare's life, and more.

In the directing course, Block shared approaches to his production of *The Comedy of Errors*. He examines the text closely for repeating nouns that might illu-



Giles Block

PHOTO BY RALPH ALAN COHEN

minate the meaning of the play. For example, in ACS's 2007 production of *Henry V*, Block discovered the noun "soldiers" was used frequently; Henry V's leadership of and relationship with his soldiers is one key element in the historical play. For this year's *The Comedy of Errors*, he found the word "gold" was one of the most repeated nouns. In *Comedy of Errors*

much of the twin-centered confusion involves misunderstandings about money and possession of a costly gold chain. Block also visualized rich and glittering costumes, which were realized in the fashions created by ASC Costume Designer Jenny McNee.

Acting as his own dramaturg, Block researched the effect of separation at birth on identical twins to better explain the *Comedy of Errors*' main characters. Block learned that even when separated twins are unaware that they are twins, they feel an inexplicable sense of loss. Block shared with students his belief that this psychological factor helps explain the negative behaviors of the philandering Antipholus of Ephesus, the twin who is ignorant about his identical brother's existence.

Block believes verse study releases the text for performance while research and word study illumines meaning. Students felt privileged to hear how this eminent Shakespeare scholar and director practices the strategies they study in their courses.

Auditioning 101: Advice From Master at The Old Globe

By Eliza Hofman

Last September, American Shakespeare Center and the Mary Baldwin College MLitt/MFA program welcomed Brendon Fox, former associate director at The Old Globe in San Diego. With experience in casting, directing, and new play development, Fox brought skills and expertise from the greater theatre community. Fellow Mary Baldwin graduate student Solomon Romney and I helped provide a glimpse into Fox's audition expertise. In front of an audience of our peers, he coached our monologues and gave general advice for young actors pursuing a career in theatre. Fox was approachable and happy to answer questions, and I feel fortunate to have a new contact in the theatre world.

Fox had a clear and expert method of monologue coaching. We exchanged e-mails a week before the workshop. He asked me to prepare 10 to 15 lines of an age-appropriate Shakespeare monologue with the guideline that I should know how to paraphrase any line of the speech. I chose a monologue by Phoebe from *As You Like It* that I have used for several auditions. After

presenting the piece, Fox worked moment to moment to help me tease out different playable actions. He put the monologue into context, reminding me to keep Silvius' face in mind when I speak the lines. He also used outside situations to help me better connect to the monologue. For example, he compared Phoebe's rationalization process to a scientist who experiments with methods to prove a point. He helped me understand the stakes, direct my actions clearly, and break the rhythm in which the monologue got stuck. His direction was helpful in making my speech more dynamic so auditors would see more of my range at an audition.

During the workshop Fox spoke about his experience casting at The Old Globe and reminded students of the basics: dress professionally and act courteously in the audition room. He also suggested that actors take a moment to prepare before launching into their monologues and remember to think about the audition from the auditor's perspective. He advised that, after presenting a piece, actors should wait



Brendon Fox

PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

to see if auditors want to work on the monologue before they exit the room. Most importantly, Fox stressed that actors remember auditors want to like them; their goal is to fill the role, so they hope the person auditioning is a perfect fit. If actors get nervous, they should realize that the auditors are on their side and wish them well.

Fox's advice couldn't have come at a better time, as MLitt/MFA students will be heading into the world of auditioning and finding jobs soon. I look forward to using Fox's real-world examples to make the auditioning process as smooth and painless as possible.

Spending the Summer as Caliban (and Ferdinand and Antonio)

Personal memories of the University Wits' 2008 touring production

By Victoria Reinsel

Erin Baird, Nolan Carey, Anna Gonzalez, Kitty Keim, Chelsea Phillips, and I formed the cast of the University Wits' summer touring production of *The Tempest* in February 2008. We were honored to open at Blackfriars Playhouse for a group of our peers and Staunton community members. Closing the show in Rose Terrace garden at MBC for an audience of faculty, MLitt/MFA students, and more area residents was a perfect ending. Looking back, though, it's not the beginning or the end that interests me most, but what happened in the middle.

By August 2008, we had performed at venues in Virginia, Delaware, and in New York. I remember many shared laughs and the ways we dealt with challenges and rewards along the way. I remember rehearsals in which we shaped the world of the play, defined relationships between characters, and discussed how best to bring that world and those relationships to life.

I remember the supportive audiences, such as one with a man who nodded his head at every word we spoke — he *really* seemed to understand each character's point of view. And just as memorable were the audiences who forced us to work extra hard to win them over.

I remember spending hours in the car singing silly songs with Erin and the night

we were lost in Flushing, New York and were very upset with each other. I remember eating a lot of trail mix and drinking cup after cup of mint tea. I remember down-time between shows spent exploring bookstores in quaint, one-stoplight towns and finding all sorts of treasures. I remember crawling out of rocky caves and rolling around on the lightly mulched earth under the setting sun, collecting leaves and twigs that — no matter how hard I tried — refused to come off the piece of burlap and felt that was Caliban's cloak.

I remember "the tempest during *The Tempest*." It rained so hard while we were performing outdoors at Lime Kiln that we had to stop the show multiple times, first to move under a tent, and then again for the thunder to quiet so that the audience could hear us.

I remember the warmth of our host families when we were out of town: the parents, siblings, and many, many pets of our fabulous crew members, Justin Schneider '09 and Lauren Mignogno '09, who welcomed us into their homes and made it possible for us to perform in New York and Delaware. I remember gaining a new level of respect for actors who tour professionally. I'm not cut out for living out of a small suitcase and having little-to-no privacy. I remember the euphoria of bowing to thunderous applause emanating from small, but appreciative audiences. I remember a journey that lasted seven months, a road trip that lasted 10 days, and hundreds of little, amazing, unforgettable moments that will last a lifetime.

The University Wits' 2008 theatrical season closed in October with *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII* (pictured at left are (l-r) Dawn Tucker and Andrea Kelley). True, it's not one of Shakespeare's most recognizable play titles, but The Wits are committed to producing theatre to complement and support their academic program. "*Henry VIII*, a seldom read and scarcely performed play, written by Shakespeare in collaboration with John Fletcher, is a perfect choice. Okay, mostly perfect," said MLitt student Brett Gann. The Wits joined the ranks of the few American theatres performing *Henry VIII*, including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Gann said. "My intention as both artistic director and director is to bring this play to the forefront of our conversation, even if just for a moment," he said.



PHOTO BY BRETT GANN

University Wits, continued from p 1

After three months of sporadic rehearsals, the company was on its way. We traveled Virginia in June and July, performing at The Dixie Theater, Theatre at Lime Kiln, Baldwin Park, Buchanan Theatre, and June Bug Center. In August, we hit the road for a 10-day tour of Delaware and New York. Stops included Riverfront Theatre and Milford Senior Center in Milford, Delaware, and Brooklyn Lyceum in New York City. *The Tempest* closed with two shows at Rose Terrace at the beginning of fall 2008 semester. All told, the company played 24 performances for audiences on the East Coast.

The MLitt/MFA program generously sponsored the Wits' tour, and Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen continued his annual patronage. The company and the Wits are appreciative of the support, without which the tour couldn't have happened. This semester, the University Wits will start planning next summer's tour.

Cardenio, continued from p 1

century Lewis Theobald play based on *Cardenio*, Taylor worked back in time using his knowledge of Theobald, Shakespeare, and Fletcher to reconstruct the original play as it might have appeared in 1612. He explained that *Cardenio* was, in turn, based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Taylor, who is George Matthew Edgar Professor of English at Florida State University, also conducted an extensive talk-back session, focusing on the performance aspects of his text.

"Gary Taylor revolutionized the way we edit Shakespeare's plays," said Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen, professor in the Shakespeare and Renaissance literature program at MBC. In addition to *Quixote* and *Sancho Panza*, played by ASC actors John Harrell and Chaney Tullus, *Cardenio* features common Shakespearean attributes, such as good and wicked brothers, false lovers, faked deaths, madness, and bawdy jokes. In the final scene, a pair of dragons — less common in Shakespeare — make a brief appearance.

The History of Cardenio was the first presentation in the ASC's 2008-09 Bring 'Em Back Alive series, a program of staged readings of seldom-performed early modern plays.

Making Italy Ours While Exploring Shakespeare

By Sara Landis

The summer 2008 issue of *Folio* included a piece about a group of MLitt/MFA students' three-week trip to investigate Shakespeare's Italian influences. Led by Dr. Ralph Alan Cohen, a group of 11 graduate students visited Venice, Verona, Florence, and Rome. The following is one traveler's personal account.

We swept through Venice, Verona, San Gimignano, Vicenza, Padua, Florence, and Rome, encountering Tintoretto, Giotto, and Michelangelo, and the great Caesar's tomb. We relished every moment of investigating the birth of the Renaissance. I could thrill you with any number of memories: dancing in the reflection of St. Mark's Basilica as the square slowly flooded, eating doughnuts at Poggibonsi, writing love notes to Juliet, sharing a morsel of horse meat with a darling dog named Nutella, seeing the Teatro Olimpico, removing toxins from our lungs before entering the Scrovegni Chapel, and making a trip to the Vatican.

We also enjoyed private adventures, whether it was a lone pilgrimage to Sienna or simply paying far too much for an elaborate gelato concoction. Now Italy endures in our hearts and minds, and each of us maintains that special Italian corner of his or her imagination.

When I remember Italy, the first place I think of is the Chiesa de San Anastasia, the Church of St. Anastasia. We only spent a few sunny, endlessly happy days in Verona, but I managed an extra two hours in that bright and beautiful church. One of the largest churches in Verona, San Anastasia contains more light and color than the others combined. Green marble stripes and simple, colorful designs across the ceiling make the large space feel cozy.

Sitting in an oversized pew, I understood the evolution of Shakespeare's Juliet: in Chiesa de San Anastasia, a devout yet optimistic faith seems both natural and luxurious. Yes, Chiesa de San Anastasia does contain several gruesome examples of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion; however, it also houses Pisanello's famous Gothic fresco of Saint George slaying the dragon. Another reason I adore Chiesa de San Anastasia is the fact that far away from Pisanello's fresco, nearly all the way down the nave, two frustrated little gremlins eternally hold basins of holy water with looks of weary acceptance.

The sound of *Ave Maria* echoing, a love of Italy spread through me and I recall leaving the Chiesa de San Anastasia. Traveling down a side street of Verona I happened upon the ordination of a new priest. I watched as a mob exploded in cheers, lifting the young priest up and up, until they literally tossed him fully five feet into the air. As their zeal quieted, I followed another side street now in my memory — into a small restaurant for a pizza with gorgonzola, parma ham, and figs, served by a waitress with only one word of English: goodbye. I replied, "*buona sera*," and drifted away along another avenue.

I have my own Italy now, but I'm not alone. Ask my fellow travelers, and he or she will provide a different memory of our voyage. Meanwhile, I will be sitting in the luminous pews of the Chiesa de San Anastasia.



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUEDEL

(l-r, above) Andrew Blasenak, Chelsea Phillips, and Justin Schneider sanctify a Highland cow at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. (below) The interior of Chiesa de San Anastasia.



PHOTO BY DAVID MONNIAUX COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

“... Where have *you* been gadding?”

ALUMNI

CASSIE ASH '08 is tour manager and assistant director for ASC's 2008–09 Stark Raving Sane tour and its three shows, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Comedy of Errors* and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. The tour visits eastern and southern states this season, with a stay in Staunton in December for *A Christmas Carol* and a spring run starting in March 2009 at Blackfriars Playhouse.

MEGAN BAYONET '08 continues to serve as interlibrary loan coordinator at Mary Baldwin's Grafton Library. She and husband Chris are expecting their first baby in February.

ANDREW BLASENAK '08 is in the thick of three classes at Ohio State University, including a heavy-duty clas-

sical criticism course. He is also working on three research papers and submitting papers to conferences — normal PhD work. He presented his paper “Rhetorical Aims (Ethos, Logos, and Pathos) as an Actor's Tool” at the American Society for Theatre Research conference in November.

RICK BLUNT '06 is in the midst of the ASC Stark Raving Sane tour with alumna Cassie Ash '08. Blunt plays Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, Rosencrantz in *Hamlet*, and Rosencrantz in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. He takes every opportunity to point out that his MLitt and MFA are from Mary Baldwin College.

CATHY BROOKSHIRE '04 continues to teach at University of South Carolina

(USC) in the theatre and dance department. She recently directed *This Close*, a new play commissioned by the university. She also wrote and directed the play *At the Water's Edge*. Brookshire is fight director for USC Opera, where she is choreographing a sword cane fight for *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

SARAH BUDGE '08 lives in Seattle and played Emilia in *Othello* during November and December at the city's Balagan Theatre.

NOAH JONES '08 works (more than full time, he says) as photography producer at Rosetta Stone in Harrisonburg, VA. In addition, his Leet Shakes/Golden Duck Productions theatre company continues its weekly murder mysteries, employing several actors from among the

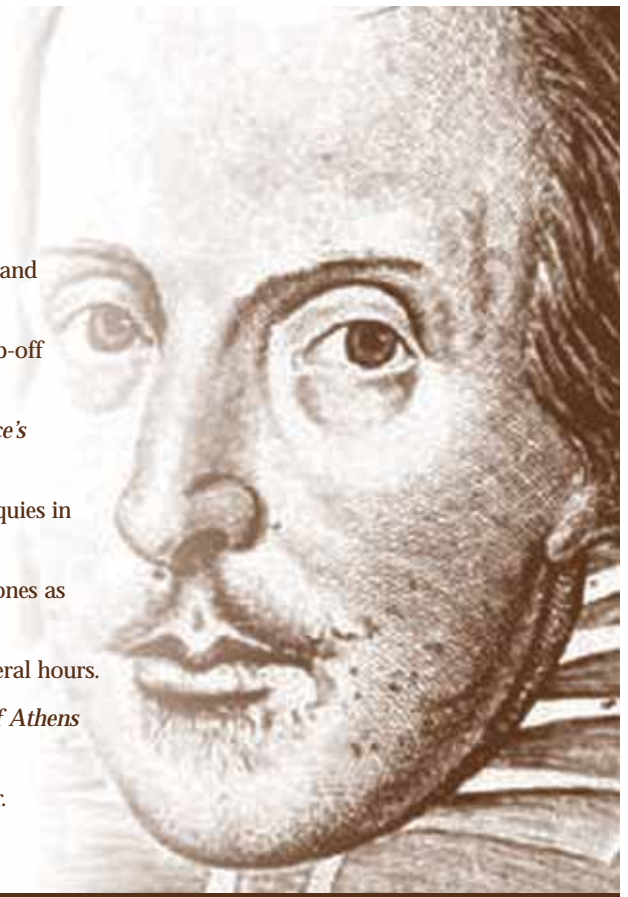
MLitt/MFA students. Noah and Jennifer will be married in early spring, and are in the process of unpacking and acclimating their new cats in their new house.

JAMES O'CONNELL '08 is assistant technical director for the graduate theatre program at Columbia University. He is also technical director/master carpenter for New Players Company. He presented papers for the Southeastern Renaissance Conference in October at Blackfriars Playhouse and for the American Society for Theatre Research conference in November. O'Connell is also assisting in the research for American Shakespeare Center's Globe II project.

You know you're a Shakespeare geek when ...

Contributed by Erin Baird, Cassie Robertson, and Glenn Schudel

- # 10 ... you have more editions of Shakespeare in your house than you do food.
- # 9 ... you have more editions of Shakespeare in your house than you do food and you use your grocery money to buy more plays.
- # 8 ... you get into heated debates over whether Disney's *The Lion King* is a rip-off of *Hamlet* or the *Henry IV* plays.
- # 7 ... you think, at least in your giddier moments, that *The Merchant of Venice's* Tubal deserves his own Broadway musical.
- # 6 ... you can recite, word-for-word and in an appropriate context, five soliloquies in the course of one conversation, even after you've had a few drinks.
- # 5 ... you talk about Geoffrey Tennant, Darren Nichols, and Richard Smith-Jones as though they are personal acquaintances.
- # 4 ... you suddenly realize that you've been thinking in iambs for the past several hours.
- # 3 ... you get visibly angry whenever another Shakespeare geek calls *Timon of Athens* “a crappy play.”
- # 2 ... you catch yourself singing *Hey-ho, the Wind and the Rain* in the shower.
- # 1 ... you name your first-born child Arden (like Sarah Henley '06).



24-Hour Theatre Project Creates Long-Lasting Impressions

By Paul Rycik

I admit that I was a little resistant at first. I had heard about this kind of theatre project before, and everyone at MBC who had done it before seemed to enjoy it, but I was reluctant to give up nine solid hours to rehearse a play. The University Wits' annual 24-Hour Theatre Project takes the idea that theatre is ephemeral to another level. I was worried that after the time sequestered in a room rehearsing, the actors would come together for one performance, and then the event would disappear. Fortunately, my experience in the 24-Hour Theatre Project lives in my memory, and I smile whenever I think of it.

The premise of the project — organized by the MLitt/MFA student University Wits organization since 2003 — is to challenge participants to write, direct, rehearse, and perform an original play in just 24 hours.

Three groups of writers penned three interpretations based on the project's theme, "Indecision 2008," then handed their work to three groups of actors and three directors. The first play, *Howard the Duck 2; Or, I Can See Russia From My*

Platypus, dealt with a crisis of faith as a novice in a nunnery decided whether to fulfill her vows or embark on a strange quest with a mentally unstable man and his invisible platypus friend. *The Remarkable, Yet True, Record of the Grandiose and Secret M.Y.T.H.O.S.: 1906*, the second play, was a whimsical fairy tale of a platypus trying to gain initiation into a secret society. My group worked on a Monty Python-like series of skits titled *William Shakespeare's 2 Scooby Doo 6: The First Part of the Contention Between the Two Noble Houses of Hanna and Barbera; Or, Ruh-Roh, My Metatheatrics Are Showing*. The piece was about television and movie trends, the indecision and apathy surrounding the presidential election, and the indecision of Shakespeare's most famous character, Hamlet.

Rehearsals were refreshingly democratic. All of us — including the director — had very little time with the scripts, so we were all on the same level and all contributed equally. Actors cast the parts themselves, shared staging ideas, and

chose the costumes. It imparted a real sense of ownership of the production.

I loved our script. It was full of raunchy jokes, parodies, satire, and high-energy, fast-paced action. One minute we were performing *Hamlet*, the next we were doing a mock-presidential debate with sock puppets as the candidates. I got to sing Rick Astley's *Never Gonna Give You Up* in a totally random moment.

My biggest difficulty was learning lines. I never got them absolutely perfect, so I frequently paraphrased. I wondered how early modern actors could possibly have learned their lines in the limited time they had to rehearse.

The audience was great, responding to the inside jokes. Energy filled the black box theatre in Deming Fine Arts Center. I could hear the audience's laughter across the hall! People came after the show to high-five and clap us on the back. I remembered my worry that people would just walk out, letting the experience dissolve, but as I saw the laughter in their faces, I knew they'd remember the project. We created something lasting.

SUPPORT THE MBC MLITT/MFA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

"[You] shall receive such thanks as befits A King's remembrance."

— Hamlet II.2

Mary Baldwin College has combined the academic and applied aspects of Shakespearean theatrical studies to offer a unique Master of Letters/Master of Fine Arts in Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature in Performance (MLitt/MFA) in partnership with the internationally acclaimed American Shakespeare Center and its authentically recreated Blackfriars Playhouse. This marriage of scholarship and stagecraft sets this program apart from other theatre graduate programs. Launched in fall 2001, the MLitt/MFA program attracts applicants from around the country and beyond. Please visit us at: www.mbc.edu/shakespeare/mlitt.

Use the form at right to contribute to the MLitt/MFA Scholarship Fund. Growing this fund will enable us to award more scholarships to qualified students. Thank you, in advance, for your support of our program's educational goals.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

THESIS PROJECT FESTIVAL

February 15, 16, and 22 at 6 p.m.

February 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Blackfriars Playhouse

Featuring MLitt students Erin Baird, Nolan Carey, Matthieu Chapman, Brett Gann, Reesa Graham, Kitty Keim, Sarah Klingbeil, Mollie Reznick, Justin Schneider, Cassie Robertson, Victoria Reinsel, Christine Schmidle, and Dawn Tucker, and MFA presentations by Raven Claflin, Anna Gonzalez, Christine Parker, and Chelsea Phillips. Lauren Mignogno will also give two performances of her MFA directing production, Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

MFA DIRECTING PRODUCTION

Henry IV, Part 2

March 16 and 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Blackfriars Playhouse

Two performances of Johnny Adkins' MFA directing production of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 2*.



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