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## "As You Like It" offers glimpse of Shakespearian young love

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With a renowned director, a simple set, innovative costuming, and a deceivably inexperienced cast, Saddleback College's performance of William Shakespeare's "As You Like It" was a delightful way to spend a Thursday evening. The cast consisted of Saddleback students and alumni, as well as actors from the community to round out the company.

The central theme of the play is young, unattainable love. This is a topic that young people can relate to, and is therefore a good choice for a production at the community college level. Older viewers, on the other hand, will recognize Shakespeare's metaphor, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

The story is about "people losing their homes, people living on the streets, people being tortured....," wrote Director William Francis McGuire in a note in the program. "With love and joy, and a lot of good-hearted mischief, these people rise above their harsh conditions and discover a renewed hope and faith in their future. We all go through tough times."

Saddleback students Michelle Parent, 19, theatre and Bryan Rieser, 18, English, said they both enjoyed the show.

"It was a great performance," said Rieser. "The characters were spot on."

The story centers on the adventures of Rosalind and Orlando, and the difficulties they encounter. Meeting for the first time, they fall instantly in love, but are banished to the forest. Eventually, other characters help the two lovers to find each other.

The play ends with an "and-they-all-lived-happily-ever after" theme, with four couples marrying. The bride Rosalind, in her epilogue, declares that both men and women should have learned a lesson, but to only truly enjoy the play if they can personally relate to the theme.

Although several times the actors were speaking too fast for the audience to grasp what they were saying, most of them projected well, and were articulate even with the difficult script.

Actor William Francis McGuire, recognized as the character "the Hemi guy" from the Dodge truck television commercials, directed the play. The actors were enthusiastic about his support and some said that he was the key to their successful portrayal of their roles.

"I was terrified [taking on this role]," said Katie Forester, 18, who played the heroine, Rosalind. "It was intimidating. I didn't understand it. My only experience with Shakespeare was in eighth grade."

She added that McGuire made her read through the play, explaining Shakespeare's old English style and wit.

Mike Williamson, 20, business, who had the audience in stitches as the clever and witty clown Touchstone, said that because of McGuire's



Tim White

*Touchstone (Mike Williamson) jests Le Beau (Bob Faw).*



Tim White

*Rosalind, disguised as Ganymede (Katie Forester), offers love lessons to Orlando (Ian Roland) as her cousin looks on.*

### As You Like It



mentoring, he will probably enroll in more acting classes.

"He's been an actor and director in theatre and film for, like, 20 years," said Williamson. "He's a part-time instructor at Cal State Long Beach, too."



Williamson was the highlight of the show. The audience giggled at his sexual innuendos and roared at his character's witty antics. One would never have known this was Williamson's first time on the stage, or that he only auditioned because a friend suggested he would fit the part.

Several members of the audience were seventh graders from Newhart Middle School in Mission Viejo. These students attended as an assignment to watch their social studies teacher Gary Keene in the dual roles of the evil Duke Frederick and the amiable Duke Senior.

Keene said this was his first attempt at Shakespeare.

"I wanted my students to come because it helps them follow along better with learning about the Renaissance," said Keene. "Shakespeare should be experienced."

Upcoming events at the McKinney Theatre are detailed at [www.lariatnews.com/arts](http://www.lariatnews.com/arts). Experience community college fine arts at their best. There are several events on the calendar before the term ends in May.

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