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'As You Like It'

Whitney Egbert (Rosalind), Cody Jamison Strand (Touchstone) and Brianna Wetrosky (Celia) are pictured in this scene of William Shakespeare's "As You Like It." The comedy performed Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, June 8, 9 and 10, in the outdoor theatre at Prentis Park, was the highlight of the first annual South Dakota Shakespeare Festival held in Vermillion those three days. See more photos of the performance at spotted.plaintalk.net.

(Photo by David Lias)

Roundtable: Shakespeare's work strikes familiar chord

Shakespeare session lets kids get physical

By Travis Gulbrandson

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Not all of the audience members attending Friday's opening night of "As You Like It" – the first production of the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival – could be expected to be familiar with the play.

But judging from their reactions, you never would have guessed, with the majority of them fully engaged and enjoying themselves throughout.

That's hardly surprising, Peter Kamelos said during the festival's Scholars Roundtable Saturday afternoon in Farber Hall – Shakespeare's plays often seem familiar.

"We often have these moments of déjà vu in watching a Shakespeare play we've never seen before or read before, because of the



Shakespeare experts Lois Potter of the University of Delaware, Peter Kanelos of Loyola University and Darlene Farabee of the University of South Dakota discuss "As You Like It" as part of a scholars' roundtable Saturday afternoon.

(Photo by David Lias)

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By David Lias

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Young people gained a unique perspective regarding the works of William Shakespeare at one of many workshops held last weekend in conjunction with the first annual Shakespeare Festival in Vermillion.

In one particular learning experience, a group of kids didn't have to memorize lines, or learn how to project their voices loudly so that they could clearly be heard by an audience, should they decide one day to take part in a Shakespeare production.

In fact, they didn't have to make a sound.

The Vermillion husband and wife team of Brian Begley and Mary Inman Begley, co-founders of Discovery Mime Theatre, demonstrated how physical movement and action on stage is just as important to good storytelling as the words of a script.

"Our workshops are focused on physical performance," Brian said, "and we use mime as the main tool to arrive at a physical performance, both in character work so that they are physically a different character when they walk on stage, and also the technique of mime which is the illusions and the magical stuff that goes on."

None of Shakespeare's works feature mimes as characters. But many scenes are physical in nature, including the wrestling that takes part early in the first act of "As You Like It," the Shakespeare comedy that was performed in Prentis Park Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

"The physical work that goes on is the foundation of all acting," Brian said. "Otherwise, you're just sitting and reading a story."

"Also, during the time period when Shakespeare wrote – the Renaissance time period – there was what was known as Commedia dell'Arte, which was a type of performance touring troupe that really started in Italy," Mary said. "That whole performance genre was very physical, very movement-oriented."

"They wore masks and they told the same types of stories in an improv kind of situation," she said. "They used an actual slapstick, and



Brian Begley and Mary Inman Begley, co-founders of Discovery Mime Theatre, demonstrate to a group of young people the importance of physical movement to stage performances.

(Photo by David Lias)

Workshop brings bard's scenes to life for local youth

By Travis Gulbrandson

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While the evenings of June 8-10 saw the staging of Shakespeare's "As You Like It" in Prentis Park, the afternoons of each day gave area youths a chance to take part in impromptu stagings of several of the play's scenes.

Open to kids aged 8 to 13, "Shakespeare Alive!" was one of several workshops that were held over the three days of the inaugural South Dakota Shakespeare Festival.

The workshop was led by Whitney Egbert, who played Rosalind in the production, and Isreal Scott, who played



Oliver.

Both actors live in New York City, and were recruited specifically for the festival.

"For a lot of kids with 'As You Like It,' they don't know the story yet, and so we're

trying to give them something to look at and know, and then add in a lot of extra comments about the time period so they can brag to their parents about stuff that they know now," Egbert said.

Whitney Egbert leads a workshop called "Shakespeare Alive!" for youths aged 8 to 13, which had the kids participating in warm-up exercises and the staging of scenes from "As You Like It." Isreal Scott was the other workshop leader.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

"I want them to get a seed," Scott added. "The most important thing is having a seed planted for them to explore Shakespeare at their

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