

Coming Soon!

UAHuntsville Theatre Presents:

WHERE THE GREAT ONES RUN



by Mark Roberts/directed by David Harwell

UAHuntsville Theatre and English present



by William Shakespeare/directed by Chad Thomas

Director's Notes

As a director, I look for moments in a play that an audience can recognize, and hopefully empathize with. I'm not interested in putting on productions, especially of Shakespeare, in which the sense of a play's history or a playwright's cultural value outweighs an audience's ability to relate to a story. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare explores too many issues to highlight in one production: xenophobia, madness, changeability, the fallibility of appearance, a sense of wonder in the supernatural, and the providence of luck (as opposed to fate). For our production, I have attempted to emphasize some of these themes by including elements of stagecraft that would have been familiar to audiences in London in 1594, when the play was first performed, while remembering that we are presenting the play in Huntsville in 2011, many miles away and many centuries later.

In choosing actors for several roles, for example, I followed a practice from Shakespeare's time and have employed cross-gender casting; that is, in our production some women's roles are played by men, as was the custom in 1594, and many men's roles are played by women, which is a decidedly modern take on this theatrical tradition. It's a tremendous challenge for an actor to play a different gender, and gender-bending is one of the pleasures implicit in so many of Shakespeare's plays, that it seemed to make dramaturgical sense. I hope you will appreciate the work of our brave actors who have elected to play gender-crossed parts.

As well, in our production, I have asked our actors to speak in their natural accents; rather than acting Shakespeare with British accents (a style of performance that too often reminds me of Jon Lovitz's "Master Thespian"), our actors will speak on stage as they might in any public setting, or even at home. If someone has a distinct Alabama accent, I want his/her character to sound like he/she comes from the American South; if an actor hails from Philadelphia, I want the audience to hear Philly in that actor's voice. In this way, performance becomes a reflection of the community that produces it, a dynamic melting pot, rather than an attempt at reenacting what Shakespeare's plays might have sounded (or looked) like at the Globe Theatre.

In truth, there is no standard approach to performing Shakespeare, a fact that is both liberating and intimidating to a director. On the one hand, Shakespearean performance can accommodate a tremendous amount of artistic and creative freedom. Shakespeare's plays have a tremendous capacity for adaptation. On the other hand, Shakespeare really knew how to turn a phrase and one doesn't want the text to be lost. His words are beautiful, meaningful, and affecting and I want audience to experience the same please in hearing those words spoken as I do when I read them. Hopefully this production has found a balance between these two possibilities.

Regardless, I sincerely hope you enjoy our presentation of *The Comedy of Errors*. And I thank you for your patronage.

Chad Thomas

Study Ancient Greek Theatre in Greece!

The UAHuntsville Global studies program is pleased to offer this unique opportunity to UAH students. Classes later in the spring semester will prepare students for a ten-day excursion in May to Athens, Greece—the birthplace of theatre. Hosted by the American College in Greece, students will visit ancient theatre sites including the theatres at Delphi and Epidauros and the Acropolis. Students from the campus in Greece will host receptions and give tours designed to bridge the gap between our countries and our cultures. Master classes will take place in the outdoor amphitheatre at ACG overlooking the city. Explore the origins of theatre in Athens where it began in 534 BC. Students enroll in GS199 or CM340.



For more information including schedule and price contact:

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