

Shakespeare Festival is set and ready to go

Production has a bit of comedy and humour for all to enjoy

By Nathan Willard

PRESCOTT - Craig Walker will direct the play Twelfth Night, which opens on Friday July 8th. He will be infusing the play with an Irish flavour – audiences will enjoy lots of toe-tapping Celtic music mixed with uproarious laughter.

This year's festival will see the return of Artistic Director Ian Farthing who will be playing the role of Malvolio in Twelfth Night. It took very little arm-twisting to get Farthing to play a main character in this playlist.

“Director Craig Walker would only direct this play if I played the character Malvolio,” said Farthing. “Things worked out well for me because I have always wanted to play the role of Malvolio... it was one of the characters left on my bucket list.”

Walker was equally as excited to be working with Farthing also.

“One of the reasons I wanted to do this play at this time was the presence of Ian Farthing”, said Walker. “Malvolio is probably the touchstone character of the play, and Ian's ability to be very funny combined with the ability to move from authority to wounded dignity with extreme vulnerability makes him ideal casting for this role”.

Janet Irwin will be directing the other Shakespeare play, All's Well That Ends Well. It opens up on Tuesday July 12th. It is set in a magical fairytale land where the heroine must rely on more than just magic to win her happily ever after story ending.

“This play [All's Well that Ends Well] will be a good contrast and counter balance to Twelfth Night,” said Farthing.

For those who attended last year's festival, you will see some familiar faces as some members of the cast are coming back to help with both productions. Amongst those returning to this years festival will be Kerry Ann Doherty, Warren Bain and Quincy Armorer. New faces to the festival will include Canadian Idol finalist Elena Juatco and recent St. Lawrence College Music Theatre graduate Dan Thompson.

There are three new initiatives for the 2011 St. Lawrence Shakespeare festival. The first major change will include a Wednesday matinee each week.

The second change will be the creation of a 'pay what you can preview.' The pay what you can preview will be on July 8th and 12th.

“Although our ticket prices are very reasonable, we know there will always be people who still can’t afford to go. We want to make Shakespeare available to all, regardless of financial circumstance, and this is one way for us to enable that,” said Farthing.

Finally, the Festival will host a ‘Tuesday Talk’ session that will start every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Audience members will be able to sit down with the actors and be given a brief 15-minute introduction to the play where you can learn more about the story, the characters and the theme of the play. You may also be able to learn about the “behind the scene” gossip that goes on from time to time.

Also, like last year, kids under the age of twelve get in for free.

The St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival has historically been a successful production here in Prescott – and this year looks to be no different. Advance sales are up by 150% over last year’s figures.

“It is encouraging to see such an increase,” said General Manager Rebecca Campbell. “We hope this is a sign of larger audiences to come all the way throughout the summer”.

The festival has grown ever since its inauguration. People from around the area, people who used to live in Prescott, and first-timers continue to flock to Prescott to watch live Shakespearean theatre. This year is shaping up to be no different.

For more information or to book tickets:

Call 613-925-5788 or visit www.stlawrenceshakespeare.ca

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