

Shakespeare, In Short



The cast of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)," from left, Ian J. Harkins, Shannon Harris and Rafe Terrizzi.

NATHANIEL JOHNSTON

New troupe performs comic take on the Bard's repertoire in Southampton

BY ANISAH ABDULLAH

The Southampton Cultural Center has partnered with the newly founded theater company Purpled Pheasant Productions to present "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)," a comedic mock on Shakespeare's 37 plays performed by three young actors, for the next three weeks.

In just 97 minutes, Ian Harkins, Rafe Terrizzi and Shannon Harris will perform all of Shakespeare's works as comical sketches. To add to the silliness and chaos of the play, each member of the trio will take on both male and female

roles and use props hidden around the set.

"Your eyes are pointing in one direction on the stage, and on the other side, someone is changing," Mr. Terrizzi said as he described what the audience

Manhattan and brought it on tour to Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry. They fell in love with the play and being in it together, especially since their friendship began at its auditions.

Mr. Harkins, a British actor with strong

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should expect. "An actor will show up in a dress; it's unexpected and funny."

Longtime friends Mr. Harkins and Mr. Terrizzi had done the show together in the past with Hudson Warehouse in

ties to the Southampton arts community, had the opportunity to propose the play to the cultural center's board members, who thought it was a great fit for their institution. He asked Mr. Terrizzi to

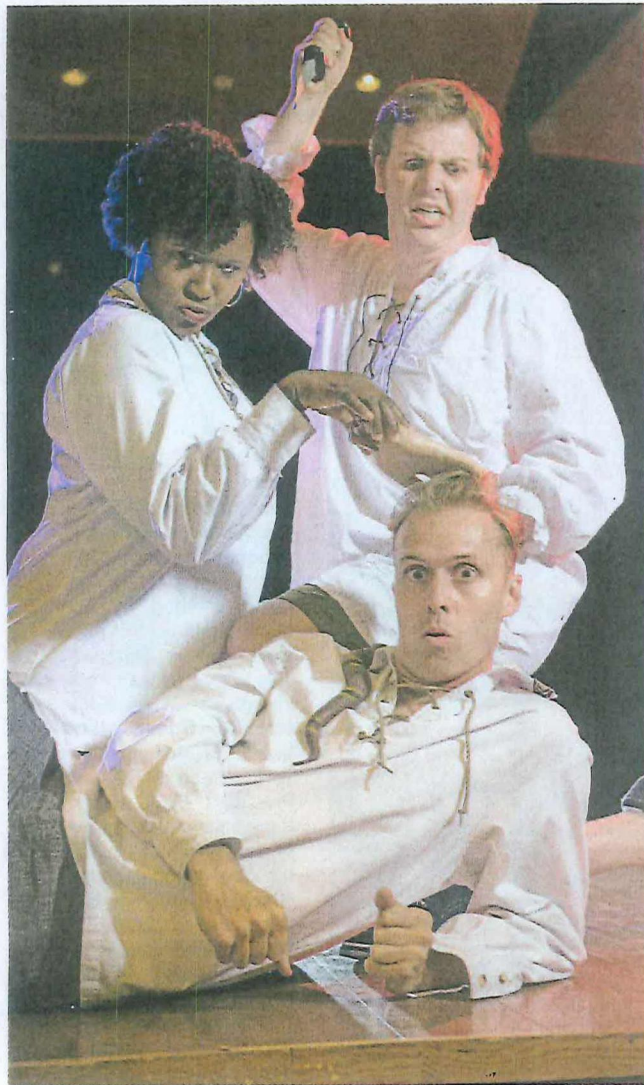
join him in this endeavor, and they have been planning ever since.

With their passion for acting and great on-stage chemistry, the duo couldn't resist being two of the three actors needed to execute the play. A production company was required to put on the play, so they soon founded Purpled Pheasant Productions—a line in Ben Jonson's poem "To Penshurst" inspired the name.

They brought on Kimberly Loren Eaton as a third producer and Southampton resident Craig George as the play's director. Fittingly, Mr. George directed "Twelfth Night" at the Hamptons Shakespeare Festival.

"I love the idea of a summer romp of a comedy," Mr. Harkins said. "Our man-

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The cast of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)," clockwise from left, Shannon Harris, Ian J. Harkins and Rafe Terrizzi.
NATHANIEL JOHNSTON

SHAKESPEARE: *Play Condenses Bard's Works Into 97 Comic Minutes*

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tra is something along the lines of 'fun.' I don't think we are particularly interested in doing a weird experimental drama in the Hamptons. We love the idea of showing people a good time."

He added that it seemed even more appropriate to produce this play because this year is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

Once a professional team was developed, they held auditions for a third actor and picked Ms. Harris, as it was unanimous that her talent stood out from the rest. The trio was primarily rehearsing in Brooklyn but they transferred to the cultural center on July 7 to finalize the show before their first preview night on July 14.

Being that the "The Complete Works" is almost 30 years old

and has been performed by different groups around the world, the Purpled Pheasant team was able to adapt the show to their location. Their version is set in Southampton and includes references to pop culture and the Hamptons.

"As a company, we really want to engage the community," Ms. Loren Eaton explained. "We asked ourselves, 'How can we make this show really accessible?' So we really tied elements of the community into the design."

The play was originally created by the Reduced Shakespeare Company and performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1987. It eventually became the longest running comedy on London's West End and expanded by touring internationally.

The Southampton run begins with previews Thursday, July 14, and Friday, July 15, before the

official opening night Saturday, July 16. The show will continue Thursdays through Sundays until July 31. On Monday, July 25, Purpled Pheasant will host a special performance for the community that Ms. Loren Eaton said would be a way of expressing their gratitude to local supporters and business sponsors.

The production company will also host a Midsummer Night's Theme Party at the Southampton Inn on Saturday, July 16, to raise money for their company and its future endeavors. Held on opening night, the party will include an Elizabethan feast, performers dressed as minstrels, wizards and jesters, a petting zoo and a menu based on Shakespeare quotes.

Although the Purpled Pheasant team is still in the midst of their first major production, they already have ideas for next summer.

"Right now, we're focusing on getting the word out and saying hello to Southampton," Mr. Terrizzi said. "If people really like [the show], then we'll come again."

"The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" will be performed at the Southampton Cultural Center on 25 Pond Lane, Southampton, Thursdays through Sundays until July 31. General admission tickets are \$30 with discounts for seniors and students. The Midsummer Night's Theme Party will be held at the Southampton Inn at 91 Hill St, Southampton, on Saturday, July 16, at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$250 and include a seat to the play, a feast with the cast and creative team, and access to a silent auction. To purchase tickets, call 866-811-4111 or visit purpledpheasant.org.

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