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Press Release

National Players to Perform Shakespeare's "As You Like It"

Keystone Theatre

April 20, 2009 at 9:30 PM

Tickets are \$6.00 Call 570-268-ARTS (2787) to reserve tickets.

Special School rates available.

On April 20, 2009 at 9:30 a.m., National Players, out of Olney, MD, will be performing Shakespeare's "As You Like It" at the Keystone Theatre. This production is part of the Bradford County Regional Arts Council's Schoolttime Series and is open to the general public, as well as all area schools.

National Players is the longest running touring company in the United States. Now celebrating its 60th anniversary season, this group has earned a distinctive place in American theatre by bringing innovative and accessible productions to audiences across the country.

Performed with high-voltage energy, clarity, and wit, National Players introduces audiences to great works of dramatic literature that are rich in exciting stories and characters, and profound in language and themes. National Players productions touch hearts and minds, inspire imagination and wonder, spark curiosity about the self, the world, and the creative process, and celebrate what it means to be human.

For Immediate Release

National Players was founded in 1949 by Father Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P., a prominent arts educator and then head of the drama department at Catholic University of America. His mission – to stimulate young people’s higher thinking skills and imaginations by presenting classical plays in surprisingly accessible ways – is as urgent and vital today as it was 60 years ago.

National Players continue Father Hartke’s vision and commitment to provide young theatre artists with their first professional opportunities. Players’ alumni include actors, directors, and designers working on dozens of stages across America, and in film and television. National Players has performed in the East Wing of the White House, in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East for American military, and throughout 40 states.

Known for its talent and commitment to excellence, National Players has brought literature to life for more than 2.5 million audience members. “This is a really special year for us, it being the 60th year for the company,” Clay Hopper, Artistic Manager for National Players and director of *As You Like It*, explains. “A lot of great actors that are still working today came through this company. Consider that Chris Sarandon, John Heard, Halo Wines, Paul Morella, and Marybeth Wise were all once part of this program.”

Hopper has created a world for *As You Like It* that’s entirely its own, “but has reference points to worlds we know.” The court scenes will be in black and white; scenes in the Forest of Arden will be saturated with color. Costumes borrow styles from the 1960s, with a *Pleasantville* meets *Austin Powers* flare.

During this tour, National Players will travel more than 23,000 miles, play in 30 states, and perform in approximately 100 different venues. With actors from Rhode Island to Louisiana, Tour 60 presents a diverse group of young talent for the tour. “This group of players is very exciting to watch. Not only are they full of talent, they also have energy, vitality, and humor that helps translate these divergent texts,” said Hopper. This year the Forest of Arden resounds with mischief, confusion, wit, and romance in one of William Shakespeare’s best-loved comedies, *As You Like It*. It is a delightful romp through the forest and an excellent opportunity to introduce your students to a live presentation to Shakespeare’s works.

For ticket reservations and additional information, contact Elaine Poost at the Bradford County Regional Arts Council at 570.268.2787.

National Players is a program of Olney Theatre Center. Olney Theatre Center is funded by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. Funding for the Maryland State Arts Council is also provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

The School Time Series is presented by the Bradford County Regional Arts Council as part of its arts in education mission. This production has been underwritten by Global Tungsten Products, a major sponsor of the 2008-2009 series.

Please see attached photos.

More information at <http://www.bcrac.org>

This is part of the 2008-09 BCRAC School Time Series

Thank you.

