

Writer: Doreen Barnes ✎ Photo by: Doreen Barnes

Prescott's friendliness adds to experience of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare festival

By DOREEN BARNES

"Not one, but two plays! We're so excited," says Ian Farthing, artistic director.

This summer the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival has chosen two of Shakespeare's most popular plays. 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' along with 'Romeo and Juliet'.

"What a perfect way to spend the summer here on the banks of the Prescott River. These are wonderful love stories."

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' is a romantic comedy that portrays the adventures of four young lovers is directed by Steve Scott.

Scott brings a wealth of experience through his current role as the associate producer of the Goodman Theatre.

Another familiar face behind the scenes is director Craig Walker, who last season played Benedick in 'Much Ado About Nothing'.

The cast is pleased to return to Prescott.

"From the very first year I was here the sense of the festival and support behind it, there's nothing in the professional world that I've experienced yet. I'm always so honored every year that they've asked me back," said Perry Mucci, who plays Romeo (Romeo and Juliet) and Flute (A Midsummer Night's Dream).

"I love Prescott," admits Mucci. "It's the best of both worlds."

Mucci indicated his definition of success for 'Romeo & Juliet'.

"I think if I bring anything to it, Romeo and Juliet are two people in love and everybody can relate to that. There's two hearts beating up there, real people that are falling in love on the stage in front of this audience. I hope that they sense that these are real people, it's immediate and happening here right now."

Romeo's Juliet is played by newcomer Emma Hunter, also starring as Pease-blossom (A Midsummer Night's Dream). Hunter wanted to be a dancer, but was bit by the acting bug when she auditioned for the 'Tale of Two Cities' in high school.

"I think what I bring is the novelty of professional theatre," states Hunter. "For me there's a feeling of 'oh my gosh, oh my gosh'; there's a level of excitement that comes with the first show."

The quality of the festi-

val is increasing allowing for the attraction of superior talent from across the country.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' Oberon will be played by Ross Neill (actor and opera singer) and Titania played by Molly Lyons (actress, director, teacher and playwright).

"This is my third summer and I was excited to come because Titania is a dream role to play," reveals Lyons. "I'm having fun with that."

More accolades for the Town of Prescott came from Sarah Cutfield, stage manager. "Just being in this town has been such an experience, because as an artist sometimes you feel you are charging up hill in a snowstorm. So it's really nice to have the support of the community behind you and such a great group."

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Romeo and Juliet' continue to August 11, at 7 p.m., with Saturday Matinees.



Get a season's pass for \$60.

A regular adult price is \$20, senior/students \$16 and children under 12 accompanied by an adult, free.

Doreen Barnes is a Brockville freelance writer on assignment for the EMC.

A combination of seasoned and new actors makes the humour of A 'Midsummer's Night Dream' and the pure love of 'Romeo & Juliet' all the more authentic in this year's installation of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival.

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DOREEN BARNES