SUNY New Paltz
2022- 2023 Mainstage Season
McKenna Theater

As You Like It
By William Shakespeare

October 28, 29, November 3, 4, 5 at 8 p.m.
October 30, November 6 at 2 p.m.
Director's Note by Isabel Smith-Bernstein, Ph.D.

Each time we take a walk through nature we come out better. We know this in my stunning hometown of Santa Fe, NM, we know this here in the richly wooded Hudson Valley, and Shakespeare certainly knew the transformative power of the wilderness too. The plot of As You Like It is a spiritual journey into a renewing exile. It is about finding love through words and through self-exploration.

As our characters wander the Forest of Arden, so too do we. Arden is a forest which – by its diverse trees, flowing rivers, coastline, snow, and lions – we know to be all places and no place at once. This is part of its magic; it is a setting not just for Rosalind’s self-discovery, but our own.

Part of this self-discovery is that of gender and sexuality. There is a perception that theater artists like myself are “queering the canon.” But if you read a play like As You Like It, it becomes increasingly clear that there is no such thing as queering Shakespeare’s canon—the canon is already queer. This production emphasizes that implicit queerness. Shakespeare already disrupted the gender binary with a man playing a woman pretending to be a man who then plays a woman, and we have simply pushed it further.

I have shortened and rearranged Shakespeare’s text to emphasize the power of Arden. The world of the court is constricting and dark, and the world of the pastoral is freeing and bright. Not only freeing in terms of space, but in terms of identity. In Arden, we can finally take a breath and a long walk in the woods to allow us explore who we really are.

I am grateful for this community of theater-makers and their willingness to journey into these woods together.

As You Like It tells a story of Rosalind, a young noble woman, and her quest to find herself and her community. Helmed by Dr. Isabel Smith-Bernstein, our production of Shakespeare’s pastoral comedy reflects on queerness and the magic of self-discovery. Layered with new music, this story is more timely than ever.

Born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare is the author of some of the most well known plays in the western canon. It is believed to have been written in 1599 and first performed around 1603. As You Like It includes one of the most, if not the most famous of Shakespeare’s monologues: “All the World’s a Stage...” This line and many others from the monologue have been incorporated into popular culture, music, and movies, proving Shakespeare’s everlasting influence on western art.

There is a long and rich history of queerness in our world, and it affects almost all of the media people consume, including Shakespeare’s plays. In As You Like It, there are questions being raised by characters about their own gender and sexuality. While we have updated the play to raise those stakes and talk about identity even more, there is queerness embedded in the roots of this text. Through their journey, Rosalind learns about who they are gender-wise, by taking on the identity of a man, Ganymede, when they travel to Arden. There are underlying queer tensions with the very close and familiar relationship between Celia and Rosalind, and so forth. By exploring what queerness means in this specific time and place, we are creating a direct comparison to what queerness means here and now.

The exploration of queerness in this piece also ties into the theme of family. It can be common for queer people to find their family in their friends and the people that they choose to surround themselves with. In our show, Duke Senior is the head of this found family in Arden and welcomes others in with open arms. This concept of finding a close group of people who love and cherish you, without blood relations, is very closely related to the queer experience and community.

Aside from the deep and intrinsic messages about gender, love, and queerness, this play is truly a comedy. Shakespeare is best known for his dramas, but his comedies also hold a lot of weight in the canon. The character of Touch-stone, for example, is branded a fool very early on in the play, and her comedic timing allows for both characters and audiences to laugh through this time of personal growth and learning. All characters have their moments of humor and laughter because we, as people, need comedy to survive. We cannot grow as people if we refuse to laugh and enjoy the happiness we have been given.

As You Like It weaves a beautiful tale of identity, love, and growth while incorporating moments of laughter and moments of deep honesty. These characters feel as if they are real people, on a journey so similar to one many of us have traveled.
As You Like It
By William Shakespeare

Isabel Smith- Bernstein
Director

Scenic Designer
Natasha D’Amico

Costume Designers
Charlotte Palmer- Lane & Cassie Smith

Dramaturg
Paige Rosko

Production Stage Manager
Kat Collins

Production Manager
Catherine Doherty

Lighting Designer
Travis McHale

Sound Designers
Sun Hee Kil & Keirsten Lamora

Producer
Kaitlyn Kociela Taylor

Rosalind
Celia
Oliver
Touchstone
Orlando
Duke Frederick
Duke Senior
Jacques
Silvius
Phoebe
Le Beau/ Amiens & Musician
Lord 2/ Musician
Charles/ Corrin
Adam
US Rosalind
US Orlando
Ensemble/ US/ Dukes/
Toustone/ Jaques US
Celia/ Phoebe

Cast
Tes Maxwell
Khiara Richards
Jennifer Marshall
Veronica Thiel
Parker Howland
Khalil Coates
Matt Doherty
Sean Walsh
Allen Potter
Kiana Duggan- Haas
William Reymann
Sumire Muratsu
Rae Ferrara
Noah Speek
Jocelyn Mejia
Khalil Coates
Kevin Maguire
Kevin Maguire
Julia Dubinsky

Special thanks to Doug Judson and Aaron Harris from the Scene Shop. Without you two...and the other helper...this set build would have been a lot harder
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<tr>
<th>Crew</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Director</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assistant Lighting Designer</strong></td>
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<td>Alex Lombardo</td>
<td>Abby Rose</td>
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<td><strong>Composer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lightboard Operator</strong></td>
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<td>*Ray Duncan</td>
<td>Luke Pichichero</td>
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<td><strong>Assistant Stage Managers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Props Master</strong></td>
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<td>Kiersten DeLorey, Horatio McLaughlin</td>
<td>Dana Weintraub</td>
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<td><strong>Production Assistant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prop Master</strong></td>
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<td>Christopher Etienne</td>
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<td><strong>Hair and Makeup Supervisor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Paint and Prop Crew</strong></td>
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<td>Alex Vaynerchuck</td>
<td>Joñi Honeywell, Luiza Braga, and Heather</td>
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<td><strong>Wardrobe Supervisor</strong></td>
<td>Kuhn</td>
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<td>Anastasia Blanchet</td>
<td><strong>Assistant Sound Designer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor</strong></td>
<td>Sam Strong</td>
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<td>Faith Abigayle</td>
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<td><strong>Assistant Costume Designers</strong></td>
<td>Joñi Honeywell, Luiza Braga, and Heather</td>
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<td>Anastasia Blanchet &amp; Lily Rutski</td>
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<td><strong>Lead Carpenter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Electricians</strong></td>
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<td>Katherine DeOnis</td>
<td>Maya Battistella, Khalil Coates, Amelia</td>
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<td>Murray &amp; Max Rosenfeld</td>
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<td>Lily Burburan, Elijah London, Shady</td>
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<td>Tadroos, and Simon Woods</td>
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<td><strong>Front of House</strong></td>
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<td>Katie Gudzik, Evan Finke, Stefan Kloss,</td>
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<td>Millie Topper, Cayla Schimmel, Robert</td>
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<td>Manzueta, Ryan D’Alessandro, Ellie Brown</td>
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<td><strong>Program Creators</strong></td>
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<td>Sam Strong</td>
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*The music for this production of *As You Like It* was originally composed for a production of *As You Like It* directed by Emma Rose Went at Scranton Shakespeare Festival in 2018.*