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Community Shakespeare Company to Present Fall Festival of Plays

by Leta Currie Marshall

The Community Shakespeare Company will present a mini-festival of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Love's Labor's Lost* starring actors from third grade through high school, Wednesday - Saturday, November 3 through 6, at Lopez Center for Community and the Arts. The curtain will rise on *The Taming of the Shrew* at 4:30pm, and on *Love's Labor's Lost* at 7:30pm. The November 3 shows will be open dress rehearsals, admission by donation. Tickets for all other performances are \$5 at the door.

Director Richard Carter said the mixed-age casts are a "brave experiment that seems to be working very well." In *The Taming of the Shrew*, seventh graders are the oldest cast members, while in *Love's Labor's Lost* they're the youngest. Some students have been in every play since the tradition began—these two

productions are numbers nine and ten. Practice is held almost every day, and rehearsals provide several dozen kids with a fun, safe place to spend Friday nights. Between scenes the younger ones burn off energy running around outside, but when called to the stage, they get right down to business. Under Carter's direction they learn to fill the big space at Lopez Center with their voices, while co-director Susan Wilson reminds them where and when they should be onstage.

Carter said that what began as an annual Shakespeare play put on by Lopez Elementary students has grown into a "living thing with tendrils," an exciting event that a growing number of adults and kids are "falling all over themselves" to be part of. Lopez School students in Greg Ewert's stage design class are creating sets for the plays. Violinist and teacher Celia Rosenberger developed



Leta Currie Marshall photo

Shannon Wilbur adjusts Elsa Lawrence's costume while Miriam Drahn (l) and Maya Haber (r) look on.

her curriculum around the music of Elizabethan England, and will perform with student musicians during the festival.

"I have this feeling there are

levels we don't even know yet," Carter said.

He and Wilson are co-directing Carter's own original adaptation of *Shrew* and his



Leta Currie Marshall photo

Petruccio has met his match in Kate, played by Nate Drahn and Lily Ewert in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

abridged version of *Love's Labor's Lost*. The playwright is

hoping to market his kid-friendly editions and believes they will prove as successful as they have on Lopez.

"The kids are locking themselves in their rooms, practicing their lines," he said. "The miracle of this thing is what happens in rehearsal, how they grow and support each other. There isn't a value you can place on this kind of personal growth."