

THE ISLANDS' SOUNDER

Lopez Shakespeare Company pushes the limits

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The Community Shakespeare Company on Lopez Island is gearing up for two of its most challenging productions yet. The young actors and actresses, many of whom have acted with the company in the past, asked company director Richard Carter for a new kind of play this season - one that pushed their abilities and talents. So, Carter responded with two plays often considered problematic: "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "Measure for Measure."



Amanda Leidig / Staff photo

Amanda Leidig / Staff photo Some of the "Measure by Measure" cast, from left to right, are Terrell Carter, Arielle Wilson, Sebastian Lasbo, Elena Bakker and Nate Drahn. Many of the cast members have done multiple performances under the direction of Richard Carter.

"They wanted a challenge," said Carter. "I felt challenged and pushed to bring that to them."

Carter adapted the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" script (which will be performed by third- to seventh-graders), as he has with three previous plays produced by the Community Shakespeare Company. "Measure for Measure" will be performed almost completely as Shakespeare originally wrote it. It will be performed by an upper-middle and high school cast.

Both plays are rarely produced as they are known to be difficult for actors and actresses to mix the humorous and serious storylines in a believable production.

"Measure for Measure" is a play about power and corruption, yet it still contains many of the humorous characters found in the Shakespeare comedies that the company has produced in the past. "I chose it as a transition piece," Carter said of the selection.

"Now that we're older and have more experience, we wanted to try something different," said Arielle Wilson, a high school junior who has performed in nine previous Community Shakespeare Company productions. "This is probably the most challenging role I've ever played - it's not just a comedy, it's a lot deeper."

"Measure for Measure" demands new skills from the cast, such as expressing complicated emotions on stage like anger, pain and sadness. "I've seen some of my actors be moved on stage and we've never gone there before. We've never explored those kinds of emotions," said Carter. "That takes a lot of courage."

Sebastian Lasbo, another actor who has performed in nearly all of the Community Shakespeare Company's productions, asked for a challenge because he was ready to break out of the comic relief roles he has played in the past. Lasbo, a sophomore high school student, wanted to see if he was able to take on a new depth in his roles, ones that dealt with life and death and sadness. "It's a lot different in terms of what we're used to," he said.

The cast of "Measure for Measure" is looking not only to wow the audience, but to improve the company's reputation for stunning performances. "Each year we try to do better than the previous year," said junior Terrell Carter, who has acted in nine previous productions.

"If everything comes together in this show I think they're going to knock people's socks off," said Carter.

The shows will take place this week at the Lopez Center for Community and the Arts at 204 Village Road. There will be an open dress rehearsal on Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 4:30 p.m. A half-price performance will take place on Thursday, Nov. 9 at 4:30 p.m. Tickets will be \$5. On Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10 and 11, performances will begin at 4:30 p.m. also and tickets will be \$10. For more information contact Lopez Center at 468-2203.