

# THE ISLANDS WEEKLY

## Community Shakespeare Fall Festival features a new adaptation and adult faces

By Colleen Smith Armstrong  
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Oberon, Titania, Mercutio, and Friar Lawrence are making their Lopez theatre debut during Community Shakespeare's sixth annual fall festival.

Local author and director Richard Carter, along with Susan Wilson, co-founded Community Shakespeare Company (CSC) to enrich young lives and cultivate community, with theatre as the means and Shakespeare the inspiration.



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**Erin Wilbur (L) and Arielle Wilson (R) in last year's production of "Measure for Measure."**

CSC is presenting "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Romeo and Juliet," featuring actors ranging in age from first to 12th grade.

Carter adapts original Shakespeare plays into material for younger thespians, working with kids on stage presence, voice, diction, and self-confidence in front of an audience.

CSC edition scripts are faithful adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, written in verse, combining the Bard's words with enough modern English to make the plays easy for youngsters, as well as Shakespeare-intimidated adults, to understand.

"The kids get exposure to all that theatre arts have to offer as well as a great bonding experience with their peers and mentoring adults," said Carter, who directs the productions.

"Midsummer Night's" is an all-new verse adaptation, the fifth in a series of scripts for students. Carter currently has four titles now in print, and his scripts were recently exhibited at two national conferences for educational theatre.

Carter has been traveling to educational theatre conferences throughout the year, and his plays have been picked up by schools nationally and internationally. A teacher in South Korea recently contacted Carter about using his plays to teach English as a second language. "That's something I hear often. Teachers are drawn to these scripts to teach both English and Shakespeare."

This year's performances include another world premier: adult actors will be joining the students of CSC onstage for the first time, including Colin Goode as Friar Lawrence and Rosie Sumner as the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet."

"Working with the adults has been even better than I could have asked for. The interaction between the adults and the students gives the kids a whole new adult perspective to act off of. It's really cool and very exciting to watch. It was an experiment and it's working out really well. People in the community are going to be blown away. The notion of putting adult actors with a 16-year-old Romeo and Juliet is rarely done -- this is a whole new experience watching kids who are the right age act it -- and do it well," said Carter.

Wilson is production manager, Celia Rosenberger does the music, and a host of other "really supportive parents and community members" are involved in the process. Tracey Cottingham provides luscious period costumes for the productions, scouring the internet for clothing finds.

Performances are Thursday through Saturday, Nov. 8, 9, 10 at Lopez Center. "A Midsummer Night's Dream" will be at 4:30 p.m. and "Romeo and Juliet" is playing at 7:30 p.m. All seats are \$10. Advance tickets are available at Isلهaven Books.

There are also two open dress rehearsals at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 7. Admission is by donation.