

Perform It! Folio



★Perform It! Young People's Stage Company

Volume 1, Issue 1

★Perform It! Launches “Community Shakespeare Project”

This Fall, Perform It! Young People's Stage Company launched the **Community Shakespeare Project** using the play *As You Like It* as the main focus. In November, the company was awarded a generous grant to help fund the project, which encompasses three new programs:

1. **Shakespeare in the Schools**, a 10-week class for area public schools
2. **The Elders' Project**, a class especially geared for senior citizens
3. **As You Like It**, a full-scale production in April at the Kingswood Auditorium

Shakespeare in the Schools: Perform It! director Jan Helling Croteau along with two student actors from the company have been Artists in Residence at the Alton School since September. Curricu-

lum materials for grades 3 through 6 were developed specifically for the ten-week school residency. Fifty third-grade students created books about William Shakespeare and learned the play *As You Like It*. To culminate the project, the third graders performed a shortened adaptation of the play on November 22, for a crowd of 150 students and parents. Alton School has requested that Perform It! return next fall to extend the ten-week residency by offering the program to the junior high students as well as the elementary school. We hope to take the program into other area elementary and middle schools.

The Elder's Project is scheduled to begin in February. With the help of retired English teacher, Peter Friend, and several young Perform It! actors, Croteau and com-

pany will be teaching William Shakespeare's play, *As You Like It*. The main objective for the Elder's Program is to bring together senior citizens with young people to promote inter-generational learning. This class is for anyone interested in the works of Shakespeare, regardless of whether learners have ever studied the Bard's work. Everyone is invited to attend the classes free of charge. (continued page 6)

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Alton School students confer with Jan.



“All the World’s a Stage”

Kenny (Puck)

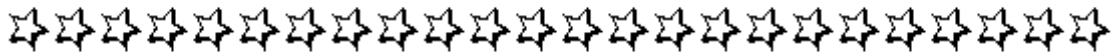
In my mind, acting in a Shakespearean play directed by Jan Croteau is one of the greatest things I do every year. What a better way to do it than with my friends at Perform It! Young People’s Stage Company.

I’ve been with Perform It! for about six years and it’s gotten better every year. I started out as a woodsman in As You Like It (1997). I sang and danced and had one line – “We did, my lady!” Since then my parts have gotten better. I’ve been a servant in Taming of the Shrew, a merchant in A Comedy of Errors, a sailor in Twelfth Night and an apothecary in Romeo and Juliet.



My favorite part was my latest role as Puck in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Puck was a very challenging but fun character. It was challenging because Puck is so energetic. It was fun because as I was memorizing my lines and thinking about my character, I realized the similarities between “him” and me. We both like to make fun of people, we’re both pretty crazy, and we both like to talk and talk and talk...

I’ll be back next year.
Hope to see you there!

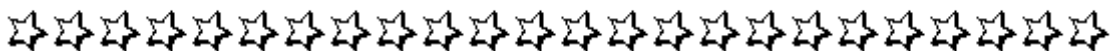


Abe (Nick Bottom)

I began acting for Perform It! Young People’s Stage Company when I was 12 years old. Initially, I really was rather nervous about acting. Acting at home is one thing, but to act in front of people you don’t know, that’s different.



I mustered up all the courage and confidence that I could and found that the classes and rehearsals were fun. It was a great way for me to meet other people and I enjoyed hanging out with my new friends. My first acting role was that of William, a shepherd in As You Like It by William Shakespeare. William was a fun role to play, not being too intense or involved for me. I had eight lines, which I worked very hard to learn. I remember all the encouragement that I received during that first year from Mrs. Croteau as well as from other moms and some of my peers. They praised my efforts and continually urged me to do even better. That type of encouragement was, and still is, characteristic of Perform It! For me, it was one of the highlights of being part of the organization.



Diana (Philostrate)

Hi, my name is Diana Evans. I am 13 and have been a member of Perform It! Young People's Stage Company for four years. I love everything about Perform It! ~ the exercises, the skits, the singing, the friends I make, the poetry of Shakespeare, the costumes, the lights and – of course – the adrenaline rush of acting itself. Every turn I make I learn something new – whether I'm reading or acting out Shakespeare.



Then there are the relationships I make during Perform It! I mean, we're all one, big, happy family by the time it's time for the play. My past four years with Perform It! have been the best!

Abigail (Peaseblossom)

This past spring I was Peaseblossom, one of the fairies, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This was my second year with Perform It! and my first year to have a few lines. I liked the play, and I liked being part of Perform It!, too. I enjoyed being in Perform It! because I liked working with everyone and getting to know them. I also liked being able to see my friends.

One of my favorite parts of the play was playing opposite my brother, Abe, who was Nick Bottom, the weaver. We fairies were supposed to wait on him and do anything he requested. After he became a donkey, I had to tie a ribbon around his muzzle because he was making too much noise with his hee-hawing. I also had to scratch his head.

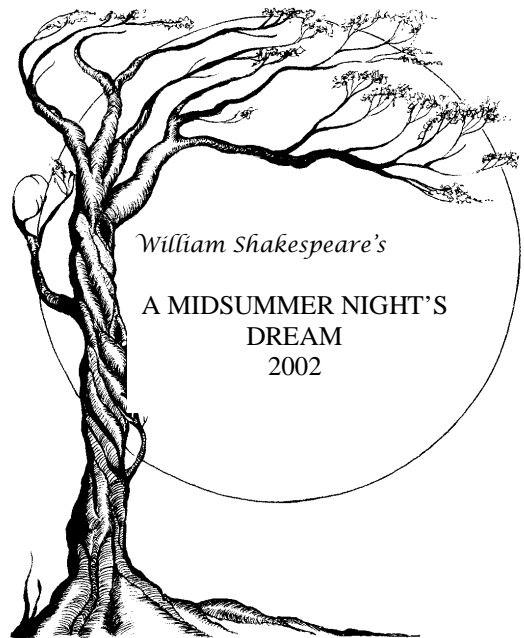


My other favorite part of the play was the fairy dance. It was exciting to hear the audience respond to the set and to us and to our dance. I'm eagerly looking forward to this coming year with Perform It!

Julia (Snug the Joiner)

This past year I was involved for the first time with Perform It! Young People's Stage Company.

It was a wonderful overall experience. From its creation to the excitement backstage on opening night, I had the opportunity to learn a lot. One of the most beneficial things was the autumn theater classes. Led by director, Jan Croteau, the classes helped with much, from voice exercises for pitch and projection, to getting to know fellow actors, to general comfort on the stage. The classes were especially helpful for those of us who were new to Perform It!, allowing us not only the training that everyone received, but also the familiarity with the group that proved crucial later during the year. It was amazing to see how creating a skit about a ball game in October served to improve a court scene in a Shakespearean play in May. As I enter my senior year in high school, part of me wishes that I had been exposed to Perform It! earlier and that the experience could last longer. However, I am grateful for the time that I do have and eagerly anticipate future opportunities.



“With triumph and with reveling!”

Perform It! wins a Moss Hart Theater Award from New England Theater Conference.

In June, Perform It! Young People’s Stage Company, with a cast of 38 young actors ranging in age from 6 to 18, produced William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for over a thousand local residents. With elaborate set and costumes, the theater company performed one of their most successful shows ever. In the fall, Perform It! was notified by the New England Theater Conference at Northeastern University of an Honorable Mention and Certificate of Excellence the company has earned. The award

was given to the Perform It! students at a formal banquet and ceremony at the New England Theater Conference in November.

The Moss Hart Award was established over 50 years ago to give recognition to theater companies whose work portrays dignity, innovation, and excellence in theater production.

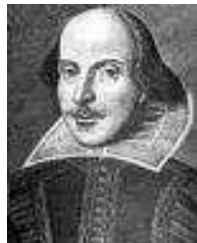
This was the second Moss Hart Award to be given to Perform It! in the past three years. We are proud of the hard work and diligent study that our students put into their performances. They have

gained a reputation for bringing Shakespeare alive for the residents of Wolfeboro and the surrounding communities.

“The New England Theater Conference was a great experience for the students who attended.” states director Jan Helling Croteau, “We took several excellent classes during the day and met many theater professionals. I would like to set up a scholarship fund to help more students attend the conference next year. The students were very honored to receive the award.”

Got Shakespeare-phobia?
We’ve got the cure!

Elder’s Project 2003



If you’re interested in more information on how to participate in the Elder’s Project for *free*, please call 569-5067 or e-mail j_croteau@conknet.com.

“With our mouth full of news.”

The Yearlong Program is off to a strong start

Our **Yearlong Program** is into full swing as we teach theater classes to students ages 8 to 18. This year we have a record 46 students who are seriously having fun learning acting skills, production know-how, and improvisational techniques. The students are progressing well as they gain self-confidence through their theater work.

The **Yearlong Program** is geared specifically to help young people develop in several important ways. Students are encouraged to be creative, to think “outside the box” and to learn important public speaking and communication skills. In the spring the Perform It! students will begin to study Shakespeare’s play *As You Like It* and produce it for the general public in April.

The theater classes lay a strong foundation so that our students can successfully learn Shakespeare. Theater work helps young people to learn the complex works of Shakespeare thereby functioning at the highest level of literacy. The results are improved academic learning, greater self-confidence in their learning abilities, and deeper understanding of human nature.

Our project-based curriculum makes the complex world of Shakespeare’s plays lively, relevant and moving to our audiences. Students learn the text and translate their learning through each performance. The result is an authentic, vibrant and well-crafted theatrical production of the highest quality.

★Perform It! **Dates-at-a-glance**

February 2003

Elder Project

4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

1:30—3:00 pm

Tuftonboro Free Library

March 2003

**Year-long Program
is practicing for Spring
Production**

April 2003

**Performances of “As You
Like It” by Perform It!**

Friday, 25th - 7:30 pm

Saturday, 26th - 7:30 pm

Sunday, 27th - 2:00 pm

**Tickets available a few
weeks before performances.
Watch the papers!**

“Bring the praise forth”

In January of 2002, Perform It! formed a Board of Advisors to help with community outreach programs and fundraising. We would like to thank Priscilla and John Griffin, Mary Ann Jasienowski, Peter Friend and Dean Richardson who have made an invaluable contribution in time and talent to Perform It! Stage Company.

In April 2002, the Governor Wentworth’s Arts Council made a generous grant to Perform It! for our production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. A grant from the Marriott Foundation is helping us to grow with programs that reach into the community by bringing Shakespeare into the schools and the Elder’s Project.

In April, our first annual appeal was an enormous success thanks to the generous donations made by many members of our community. **Thank you** for helping us to bring theater arts to the young people of our community.

This past year we served:

- Over 400 students with our programs (elementary through high school)
- Over a 900 residents with our shows

In 2002 we:

- Initiated Shakespeare in the Schools Program
- Developed curriculum materials for elementary and middle school students
- Produced our eighth season of shows
- Were recognized by New England Theater Conference with a Moss Hart Award
- Kicked off our ninth year with theater classes for 46 students ages 6 -18
- Provided 35 families with theater arts family experience

Your tax-deductible donation helps Perform It! to use the works of William Shakespeare to provide theater projects that build bridges between people of all ages in our community.

I would like to help Perform It!

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

Perform It! is a 501(c)3 organization. Your tax deductible donations can be made to:

Perform It! Young People’s
Stage Company
P. O. Box 2093
Wolfeboro, NH 03894
(603) 569-5067

The Impact of Theater on Young People

Why Shakespeare?

We teach Shakespeare through performance because it is an excellent way to study language arts, to gain greater insight into human nature, to expand cultural literacy, to become familiar with Elizabethan history, and to submerge a group of eager students in the work of a literary genius.

When young people perform Shakespeare they bring the words, the plot and the characters of each play into their hearts, learning in a fun and stimulating environment. Our students gain understanding of the heightened language of Shakespeare by studying the poetry, memorizing lines, and wrestling with character analysis. Each student experiences Shakespeare differently. The

younger children are fascinated with the plot of the play and become adept at memorization skills, which enhance their academic pursuits. The junior high students begin to look more deeply at the script, which aids them in becoming more perceptive. The high school actors wrestle with identity questions through their role portrayals getting a glimpse of their own true nature in the process. Lots of moral questions are discussed while we rehearse various scenes, which foster moral maturity through the examination of the ethical dilemmas inherent in each play.

For the teenage students, theater arts offers an avenue to process feelings about personal issues giving them a way to translate emerging emotional

maturity onto the roles they portray. As teens approach the works of Shakespeare, they grapple with characters still relevant in today's world. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet* the main characters are teenagers who wrestle with issues of violence, betrayal, death, hope, and the meaning of family love.

Shakespeare's plays continue to be a source of meaning and significance for our modern world. Although the plays were written over 400 years ago, students of all ages can still apply the lessons inherent in each play to the difficult issues we all face in the tumultuous world of the 21st century.

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What is "As You Like It" About?

As You Like It is one of Shakespeare's most delightful comedies. This is the story of two young women who travel into the forest of Arden disguised as a young man and a peasant woman. The play is filled with royalty, woods people, goat herders, and a delicious array of motley fools. Shakespeare exhibits the many faces of love throughout the plot and fills the stage with contrasts between royal princesses and country peasants, a power hungry Duke and his banished brother, and two jesters, one a lively clever fool and the other a melancholy cynic who utters the famous lines of Shakespeare: "All the world's a stage."

The award winning Perform It! Young People's Stage Company will round out the **Community Shakespeare Project** by performing *As You Like It* in April at the Kingswood Auditorium for the general public. The goal of the Community Shakespeare Project is to introduce a play each year to local school students and residents before the company's spring performances to foster a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's work.

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