



## AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH...

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### Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* Is Well Done Indeed

Sojourner's Truth Staff

Here's some good news indeed – you still have an opportunity to catch a wonderful local stage production of one of Shakespeare's comedies courtesy of Glacity Theatre Collective.



The play opened two weekends ago and will play again this upcoming weekend on Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. Don't miss it.

Helen and Bertram, the two young lovers in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* are certainly not the typical love-struck duo that inhabit most of the romantic comedies of Shakespeare's age.

For one thing, Bertram does not particularly care for Helen and spends most of the play – all of the play, save the last scene – running away from the one for whom he seems destined. That, of course, is the twist that Shakespeare himself added to this ages-old love story. He further distinguishes the tale by having the girl play the pursuer in this play and making the boy the reluctant object of her affections.

It works. Shakespeare always works, of course. And this production really works; that's what we have come to expect from Glacity Theatre Collective.

At first glance, it may not be quite so obvious that the production is destined to be as remarkable as it is.

The stage is a small circle in the great outdoors, enclosed by a brick ring, in an amphitheatre at Maumee Valley Country Day School. The backdrop is the natural wooded setting. The stage itself contains a small wooden bench. In the distance, once the music is turned off to allow the play to start, we can hear odd bits of the traffic noise from Reynolds Avenue.

No matter. This wonderful ensemble company of actors makes the ambient noise disappear and the director incorporates the outdoor setting into the action in marvelous fashion.

Cornel Gabara is the director of this particular play and the artistic director for the company. He has done a remarkable job not only with the use of the space but also with the pacing of the play. It sings right along from scene to scene, from stage to woods to the amphitheatre slopes. Gabara hasn't just adapted the play to his surroundings, he has made the surroundings an integral part of the action.

Gabara is also blessed by being able to work with an admirable group of actors in the company's first stab at the Bard.

Gordon James as Bertram and Nikki Soldner as Helena strike just the right notes as the pair of young lovers who don't spend a lot of time loving. They have only a few scenes together

and those are comprised mainly of Helena chasing and Bertram running away – even to war to avoid doing the bidding of his king.

The king, indebted to Helena for curing his ailment has – as she asked in payment – ordered Bertram to marry the lass.

In the end, of course, the lovers are joined and everything ends well ... as one might have anticipated.

Dave DeChristopher as Parolles, Ben Pryor as the clown/Mariana and Pam Tomassetti as both the steward and the widow, provide the comic relief. All three do so in surpassing manner.

The rest of the performers are equally impressive: Risa Beth Cohen as the ever-present Lafeu; Holly Monsos as the Countess (Bertram's mother) and Kevin Hayes as the King (as well as the Duke and the Gentleman).

The company is a blend of Equity actors – DeChristopher and Tomassetti, area stage veterans such as Monsos, Pryor, Hayes and Cohen and relative newcomers such as James and Soldner. Soldner is a recent University of Toledo Theatre and film graduate and James will graduate later this year from the same department.

This company of stars has yet another one – a true newcomer in Corinne Natyshak, a senior at Notre Dame Academy who plays the part of Diana, and more than holds her own in this group of accomplished actors.

*All's Well that Ends Well* opened at Maumee Valley on Saturday, June 13. It will continue this upcoming weekend – Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. Tickets are available at the box office and the Sunday performance is a “pay what you can” special.

For more information on Glacity, go to the website at <http://www.glacity.org/>.

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