

Shakespeare's Hilarious *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to Play at the Clarence Brown Theatre

Witness the mayhem as Sir John Falstaff-- Shakespeare's saucy womanizer--gets his comeuppance at the hands of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* playing February 24 through March 13 on the Clarence Brown Mainstage. In this romp through the Bard's bawdy and timeless comedy, the battle of the sexes has never been more fun! The production is sponsored by Schaad Companies. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK, B97.5, 98.7, Comcast, WBIR, and the Knoxville News Sentinel.

"According to legend, Elizabeth I saw *Henry IV, Part I* and enjoyed the character of Falstaff so much that she commissioned Shakespeare to write a play showing Falstaff 'in love.' The Falstaff Queen Elizabeth saw at the first performance of this new play, was a thief down on his luck. One who devises ways to swindle money from wives and their unsuspecting husbands. You and I being privy to the sufferings of this Falstaff, as he attempts (with a staggering lack of success) to seduce two resourceful women bent on teaching him a lesson, is the basis for Shakespeare's hilarious plot," said Director Kate Buckley.

Over the centuries, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has proven to be one of Shakespeare most popular plays and yet is uncharacteristic of his other comedies. By locating his play in Windsor, summer home to the English Court and bustling center for business and travelers, and by focusing on the lives of the English middle class, he offers us an impression of life as it was lived in his own time and place.

"The show is an energetic comedy bursting with lust for life, eccentric characters and an exploration of the diversity of language. The story contains a whirlwind of activity - true love, false love, revenges, jealousies, deceptions, even cruelty are found in this play. Here no selfish act goes unpunished but as in all of Shakespeare's comedies, we always find forgiveness and acceptance," Buckley said.

In her fourth year as assistant professor of Theatre, Kate Buckley's previous credits at the CBT include *Charley's Aunt*, *Copenhagen*, and *Antigone*. She also has directed at numerous regional theaters across the country. Her international work includes The National Theatre of Slovakia and the Colla Marionette Company in Milan, Italy. She has received four Best Director nominations from the Joseph Jefferson Committee; two After Dark Awards for Outstanding Direction, a Distinguished Alumni Award from Aurora University and a 2008 Creative Research Award from The University of Tennessee. Other credits include her work as one of the founding members of Chicago Shakespeare Theater and four seasons as the Artistic Director of The Next Theatre.

The cast includes CBT resident artists and staff, students, and professional actors residing in Knoxville.

Neil Friedman (Sir John Falstaff) is a resident artist at the CBT. His credits here include: *Man of La Mancha*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Born Yesterday*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Triumph of Love*. Chicago area credits include: The Court Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman Theatre, Marriott Lincolnshire, and The Peninsula Players. He is a recipient of Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Awards. He also has performed at regional theaters throughout the country. **David Brian Alley (Master Frank Ford)** is in his 11th season as resident artist at the CBT. He most recently appeared in *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* and *Amadeus*. He has performed in

regional theaters throughout the country. Film & TV credits include: *The Heart is Deceitful Above All Things*, *Gina: An Actress Age 29*, *The Sleep Seeker*, *It's A Miracle*, and *Unsolved Mysteries*.

Professional actors from the community also will add to the cast. **Damon Boggess (Master Page)** a recent New York City transplant, is making his CBT debut in this production. He has performed in regional theaters across the company and recently completed work on the short film, *Imaginary Friend*, with Australian director Paul Andersen. **Seth Crowe (Fenton)**, is a recent graduate of the University of Tennessee. Past CBT productions include: *Man of La Mancha*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, and *The Laramie Project*. **Donald Thorne (Sir Justice Robert Shallow)** was a seventh grade science teacher for 30 years and now is a Quality Control Specialist for a medical diagnostic manufacturing company. CBT credits include: *Amadeus*, *Oedipus The King*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Life of Galileo*, *A Christmas Carol 2007 & 2008*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *All the Way Home* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Several second-year MFA Acting students will perform in this production. **Suzanne Ankrum (Mistress Margaret Page)** graduated from the College of William and Mary with degrees in Environmental Science and Theatre. She recently performed in the CBT's *A Christmas Carol*. **Ricardo Birnbaum (Dr. Caius)** recently performed in the CBT's *Woyzeck* and *A Christmas Carol*. **H. Conrad Ricamora (Master Abraham Slender)** comes to Knoxville from Philadelphia where he worked regionally at the Walnut Street Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, the Prince Music Theatre, the Media Theatre, and InterAct Theatre Company. He most recently was seen in *A Christmas Carol* at the CBT. **Ashleigh Stochel (Mistress Alice Ford)** hails from Crown Point, Indiana. She received a BA from Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, IN and JD from Valparaiso University School of Law. She most recently appeared on the CBT stage in *A Christmas Carol*. **Magan Wiles (Mistress Quickly)** hails from St. Louis where she performed at the Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, the St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Upstream Theatre Company, Echo Theatre Company, among other companies in St. Louis. Her work there was honored with several Kevin Kline awards, as well as an "A-List" award from St. Louis Magazine and a Mastermind Award from the Riverfront Times.

The following undergraduate students also will perform in this production: **Cody Beyer (John)**; **Kevin Bohleber (Nym)**; **Josh Garon (Simple)**; **Kathryn E. Hale (1st Wench)**; **Lindsey Jenné Hansom (Miss Anne Page)**; **Maggie Hargett (2nd Wench)**; **Patrick Kimberlin (Bardolph)**; **Jonathon Phipps (Sir Hugh Evans)**; **Billy Kyle Roach (Host of the Garter)**; **Erik Schiller (Jack Rugby)**; **Calvin Smith (Pistol)**; and, **Christopher Wilson (Robert)**.

Two visiting guest artists will be designing the Lighting and the Sound for the production. **Noele Stollmack (Lighting Designer)** has designed lighting for productions at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Sydney Opera House, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Ontario, Opera Pacific (Santa Ana), Portland Opera, Vancouver Opera, New Orleans Opera, Madison Opera, Nashville Opera, Milwaukee Rep, The Alley Theatre (Houston), American Players Theatre (Spring Green, WI) and the First Stage Children's Theatre (Milwaukee). Her AIA award winning architectural lighting populates the northern Midwest. **Joe Payne (Sound Designer/Composer)** has designed sound and/or composed music for more than 100 productions in theaters throughout the country. Recent projects include composition of the rock musical, *The Bakkhai*, presented by The

University of Utah's Classical Greek Theatre Festival. His sound design was most recently enjoyed in the CBT's production of *The Who's Tommy*.

Kerry Lee Chipman (Scenic Designer) is a third year Set Design MFA student. Past designs for the CBT include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Flyin' West*, *Speech and Debate*, and *The Story of Opal*. Her designs have been seen in New York's West End Theater, Access Theater, Julie Miles Theater, the Connolley Theater and at Fordham College at Lincoln Center. Recently she was selected as a finalist in a Dance Design competition for the Jose Limón Dance Company in New York.

Kyra Beanland (Costume Designer) is a third year international graduate student in Costume Design. Past costume designs for the CBT include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Flyin' West* and *Speech and Debate*. She earned her undergraduate degree from the Arts Institute at Bournemouth, UK. In the UK she worked as a costume assistant on the BBC drama, *Waking The Dead*, as well as some pilot TV shows. In addition to her CBT credits, her US credits include costume designs for the Monomoy Theatre.

Terry Weber (Vocal & Text Coach) is an associate professor of Theatre at UT. In addition to serving a voice/dialect for numerous CBT productions, he also has worked in this capacity for regional theaters throughout the country. **Casey Sams (Choreographer)** is a member of the UT Theatre faculty and teaches movement and acting. She has directed and choreographed several CBT productions. In addition she also has directed and choreographed for regional theaters throughout the country.

Preview for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is Thursday, February 24. Opening night is February 25. The production runs through March 13.

For more information, contact: Robin Conklin, Marketing Director 974-2497.

Show dates and times:

Feb. 24, 25,26 – 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 27 – 2:00 p.m.

March 2,3,4,5,9,10,11,12 -7:30 p.m.

March 2,6,13 – 2:00 p.m.