

FEATURES

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Step inside the house of 'The House of York'

BY BEN ACHILLES
STAFF WRITER

Gather your chain mail and armor, along with your lords and ladies, for the new play at Guilford plans to grab your heart out your chest.

Guilford's theatrical adaptation of the Great War of the Roses has blossomed into their next theatre production: "The House of York."

"It's Game of Thrones," said David Hammond, chair of the theatre studies department and director of "The House of York." "Political rivals kill each other, and the other guy who was on the front killed someone else, so it's interesting."

"Everyone always thinks their motivation is the true moral position. You know, I'm fighting for what's right and, odd enough, what one believes is right is usually only (right) for oneself."

Prickling thorns of blood and treachery stem from this true war story, which takes place during 15th century medieval Europe, while the play's true message relates strongly to today.

"(It) is a very old story, but (it is) not even a story," said sophomore Emma Moreno, actress and assistant set designer. "It is a very old piece of history, yet it's incredibly relevant."

"We still have these power struggles. We still have the destructive ambition, and we still have the odd changes of

leadership."

"The House of York" seeks to not only be riveting on stage but also accurate to the time period.

Hammond's script has been a 30-year work in progress, starting from when he taught at Yale Divinity School. The script not only encapsulates some of Shakespeare's writing but also John Crowne's, Colley's, Theophilus Cibber's and many others.

Bringing the immense story to life has required a substantial effort from every aspect of the theatre studies department.

"David and I looked at a lot of medieval architecture and clothing, but we also wanted to celebrate the age of our cast and how they bring their own life into it, so I was looking more at modern art and clothing," said Robin Vest, visiting assistant professor of theatre studies and resident designer and art director for "The House of York."

"I've been to Carolina Thrift and bought out their entire store of clothing, bought all their cowls and (we're) doing some cool dye effects. I took a lot of clothing from the (University of North Carolina) School of the Arts as well."

Shakespeare never has set designs or intricate costumes, so creating the visual effects for the play has been an intriguing challenge.

"How can my paint help to tell that story?" said Moreno. "How do these

colors come to life? It's that constant creation and knowing that I'm never done. You're never bored."

"Working with Robin is excellent. She has a vision which is not separate from the actors and the story that is going on. Her sets are a character."

The valiant efforts of the actors, set designers, costume designers, lighting technicians, sound technicians and directors are all nuts and bolts to the running vehicle, the production of "The House of York."

"It's very stereotypical, but these people are my family members," said junior Lee Sisson, actress and costume supervisor. "I see them more than my family and the people I live with, and we all want the show to do really well."

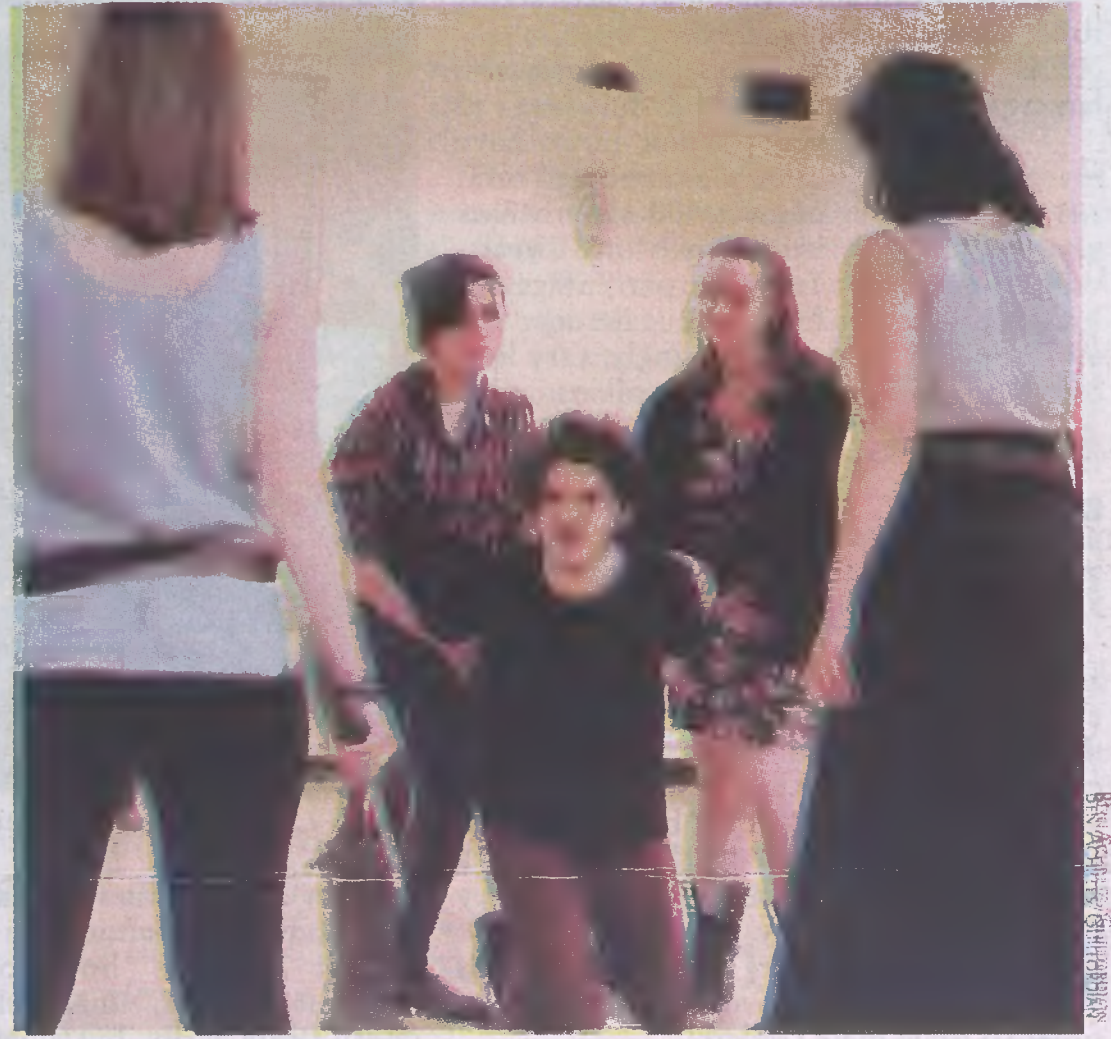
"I watched 'Julius Caesar' at the Globe Theatre abroad this summer, and just sitting there staring and watching, I (realized I) get the same feeling when I watch our rehearsals every day."

The theatre studies department is ready to hop into action.

"I hope a lot of people come to see all the hard work we've put into it because I will say I haven't worked harder on a play," said sophomore and actor Colin Tripp. "I will miss our students who are leaving next year and our director as well. He is one of the greatest teachers I've ever had."

Hammond will be leaving after this year for a sabbatical.

"I have papers on this play that



Students rehearse for the production of "The House of York," opening April 22.

I may be able to finish later," said Hammond. "I always love going to this world. I like when young people discover how explosive this world is. In that sense I have dreamed about doing the play at Guilford."

"The House of York" will be

running a free show for Guilford students on April 21 at 7:30 p.m. and then will have paid shows running at that time until April 25. The last show time on April 26 will be at 2 p.m. You can get your tickets in advance at the desk in Founders Hall.

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THEATRE STUDIES

THE HOUSE OF YORK

THE RISE AND FALL OF A DYNASTY THROUGH THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

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WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
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STERNBERGER AUDITORIUM
7:30 PM APRIL 22-25, 2:00 PM APRIL 26.
FREE PREVIEW FOR GUILFORD STUDENTS 7:30 PM APRIL 21.

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Students unleash their inner comedians with Squirrel!

BY BANNING WATSON
STAFF WRITER

"It's not about the audience," said junior and member of Squirrel! Improv Lee Sisson. "It's about the rehearsal process. It's about being together as a community."

Former CCE student Sarah Dreier-Kasik '13 launched Squirrel! Improv in the fall of 2013 as place for students, faculty, staff or random passersby to practice free-form comedy in a safe environment.

"I started the club just because there wasn't a real outlet for improv on campus or, at least, a relaxed atmosphere where students can do improv without a theatre commitment," said Dreier-Kasik. "It was really (hard) to balance school life as my classes got increasingly difficult, and I thought other students might appreciate having a comedy outlet, too."

"I was afraid that I was going to be stepping on people's toes because, apparently, there were improv groups before, but none of them stayed. I'm grateful the club has continued for two years now."

Since Dreier-Kasik graduated, sophomore Nellie Vinograd has been acting as president of the club.

The group gets together to play comedysportz, where the group acts out short skits operating on a simple premise, usually with a physical element.

"Improv is surprisingly physical," said Sisson. "We call it comedysportz because we play all these games and have a referee, but we also throw ourselves out there. I've had to save teammates from falling during practice."

"You develop that level of trust with people because every day is a trust exercise in improv comedy."

According to the group, practicing improv

comedy, despite the occasional fall, has several real-life benefits.

"I think improv in general will help you think on your feet, even if what you come up with isn't super intelligent," said sophomore and club member Elizabeth Houde. "It helps you get better at communicating with people."

The group decided not to focus on performances, not yet anyway.

"We're just people that love doing improv comedy," said Sisson. "I love being able to share what I do but, like in theater, it's not about the audience."

"It's about the rehearsal process. It's about being together as a community."

The group is looking for new members, although they have a couple of recommendations for anyone interested.

"I think a prospective member should just be open-minded," said Sisson.

"This is not supposed to be a competition for biggest laughs or who gets to participate in the next game, it's about being willing to try new things and get out of your comfort zone."

No one should take it too seriously according to sophomore and group member Leah Whetten-Goldstein.

"We only have one theatre major in the group," said Whetten-Goldstein. "It's not very intense. It's just a group of peers laughing together and a place where you can be loud and overdramatic."

"It's great stress relief having a safe place to let your imagination go to work and be able to say the first thing that comes to your mind."

If you are interested in joining contact Nellie Vinograd. Meetings happen every other Sunday at 5 p.m. in Founders West Gallery.

"I think improv in general will help you think on your feet ..."

ELIZABETH HOUDE, SOPHOMORE & CLUB MEMBER