

Elon Cares works to make HIV/AIDS a thing of the past

Meghan Mahoney
Arts & Entertainment Editor

As the lights dimmed, Yeager Recital Hall began to fill with performers dressed in variations of red and black. Once again, Elon Cares 2014 kicked off the show with songs preaching a message of unity, love and to not be afraid to be yourself. A solo guitarist started the show off with the ever popular "Here Comes the Sun."

Each performer wore a red ribbon, a symbol of HIV/AIDS awareness. Elon Cares, held on January 18, supports Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, a nonprofit organization that raises money for AIDS awareness and provides support for those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The show shocked the audiences with staggering facts, such as the more than 25

million people that have been lost to AIDS worldwide. Together, the slideshow read, they hope to make this a thing of the past.

One performance that stood out was a rendition of "It's Time" by Imagine Dragons. Three girls sang with passion that could be felt throughout the room. With every breath, the audience was taken on a journey. The words "I'm never changing who I am," struck a chord in the support of the cause.

Lyrics heard on the radio every day found new meaning in this show. Each song had a message to share, all working in support of HIV/AIDS awareness.

Elon Cares wasn't all seriousness. The crowd laughed as the yearly drag number began after intermission. Six-foot tall men stood on the stage in clothing that left little to the imagination, but it was a favorite of the night with spot-on comedy performed in a

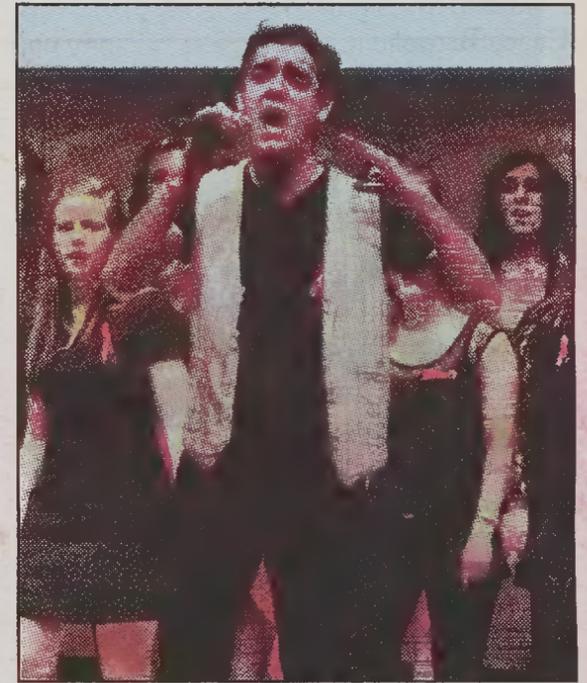
tasteful manner.

Another spotlight moment was the "Unwritten" and "Royals" medley. These songs were sung passionately by two men. They fed off one another's energy to preach the message of living life to the fullest.

The show closed with the classic "Bridge Over Troubled Water" which could not have summed up all the messages of the night better. "I'm on your side when times get rough," "I will comfort you" and "Your time has come to shine" were all preached and practiced.

Audience members participated in raffles and silent auctions for various items from Broadway, including signed posters, gift cards to local restaurants and other Broadway items such as mugs, hats and bags. All money raised went towards Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Elon Cares 2014, it was your time to shine.



RACHEL INGERSOLL | Staff Photographer
Elon Cares students all came together and sang one last group number, led by Senior Brandon Murtagh, called "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Much Ado About Nothing: 16 rehearsals, 11 shows, 1 month

Kelsey Higgins
Senior Reporter

Set in Messina, Italy, Shakespeare's comedy, "Much Ado About Nothing" chronicles two pairs of lovers, Benedick and Beatrice and Claudio and Hero, as they navigate through good, old-fashioned Shakespearean chaos.

Those in Elon University's Department of Performing Arts have been hard at work since the start of Winter Term and will present their rendition of the play in the Black Box Theatre on Jan. 23-27 and Feb. 5-8.

"First and foremost, this is a comedy," assistant director Meagan Schrock said on behalf of the directing team. "That lighthearted feel is something that we've tried to keep at the forefront of our work while keeping in mind that there are lessons to be learned from the story."

Director Kevin Otos leads the team and is assisted by freshman Emily Ciuffetelli and sophomore Meagan Schrock.

"The Winter Term show only has 16 rehearsals before the run of 11 performances begins," Schrock said. "That being said, this cast is extremely diligent and hardworking. Because of this, we've hardly noticed the limiting time factor."

Junior Benedetto Robinson, who plays Claudio, said that this is the most accelerated



BETH LESTER | Staff Photographer
Tyler Alverson and Benedetto Robinson rehearse one of their scenes as Benedick and Claudio in Elon's production of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," on January 16 in the Black Box Theatre.

theatrical process that he has ever worked on.

"It's hard enough to rehearse and prepare a show in six weeks, so I think us doing a full Shakespeare show in a month, from first read through to final performance, calls for a celebration," said senior Tyler Alverson who plays Benedick.

Throughout Winter Term, students on-and-off-stage rehearse seven days a week, from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., with a short break for lunch.

Despite such a hectic schedule, all those in the cast and crew of the show love the work they do and the people they do it with.

"I love my job," senior stage manager Veronica Lee said. "The students and faculty that make up the performing arts department are some of the nicest, funniest and hardest working people you will meet."

With such a heightened schedule, staying healthy is on the top of everyone's priority list.

"We are all together from nine to six, seven days a week. Sickness is bound to spread, but when you miss a day in a schedule like this it's like missing three," said senior Kate Conway, who plays Beatrice. "Trying not to skimp on sleep, drinking tons of water and taking Vitamin C has been unusually high on my to-do list."

Also joining the cast of students is Equity actor and assistant professor of performing arts Dan Matisa.

"He is a professor in the department, which can make it a bit intimidating for the student actors, but this gives them the opportunity to work alongside a true professional," Schrock explained. "This is a wonderful opportunity for

a hands-on learning experience, and we think everyone has enjoyed it thus far."

With everyone giving 100 percent of their time and effort, the group of performers can't wait for opening night.

"One of the best parts about opening night is seeing the shift in energy of the cast," Lee said. "Also, it's always rewarding to see how far everyone has come since the beginning of this production and since the beginning of their time at Elon."

Conway urges people to come despite any wary feelings they may have about Shakespeare.

"I leave rehearsal every day happier than the last and I guarantee 'Much Ado' will put a smile on your face," she said.

If anything, come out to experience the remarkable camaraderie of the Winter Term cast and crew. They could not sing each other's praises louder.

"We're all tackling Shakespeare together and we've established a great community in Messina," Alverson said. "Everyone is just so much fun to work with; Messinians know how to get down."

Director Otos shares one piece of advice: come prepared to laugh.

Reservations for Much Ado About Nothing can be made by calling (336)-278-5650.