

## **Access to Art, Inc.**

417 E. Pacific Ave.

Cape May Court House, N.J. 08210

**Press Release/for immediate release**

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### **THE BARD COMES TO THE CAPE WITH NYU'S AQUILA THEATRE COMPANY IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'AS YOU LIKE IT'**

**ERMA.** Access to Art, A 17 year old not for profit, that brings the visual and creative arts to Cape May County, brings Aquila Theatre Company, in Shakespeare's "*As You Like It*," to the Cape May region on Nov. 14th. Aquila, the largest touring company of classic theatre in the U.S. will perform in Erma, N.J., at the 1177 seat Paul W. Schmidtchen Theatre, 687 Route 9, at Lower Cape May Regional School on Nov. 14th at 7:30 p.m. The Aquila artists, formed in London, and in residence at NYU in the Ancient Studies Department since the early 1990's, have a mission to bring the classics to the greatest number and they do. They are no exceptions to Shakespearian touring troupes of actors who went from the cities to the hinterlands, usually bringing four men and a boy, to perform. A compact group of actors, they perform several roles. "*As You Like It*," is in modern dress with modified language to make it more accessible to the audience. This year they opened the Shakespeare festival in L.A. to accolades and proceeded to Cincinnati, the South, New England, and parts interior. Aquila has a season each year in NY where they are well reviewed by the NY Times, Backstage, the New Yorker, and then they progress across the country and the world. In Shakespeare's time, the actors performed in town squares, at fairs, in homes, in courtyards at inns, and in great manors like Whitehall and Hampton Court, at the universities like Cambridge and Oxford, and the Inns of Court (the legal societies) plying their story over hill and dale. They left the cities during plagues like the bubonic and took their wares to the countryside. In the provinces, they staged their plays in churches and guild halls. They also performed on hay wagons for a surrounding crowd. Have play, will travel, seems to have been the model. People always took time to hear a good story, when they had one in the offing, although some towns, where they had to get permits to tour, invited them to leave. In Shakespeare's time, all actors were male, and with Shakespeare, in "*As You Like It*," there is lots of identity switching with girls playing men, nobles playing

peasants, courtiers becoming simple country wenches, and general disguises of sex, gender, class running rampant. It's all a running commentary on the sexes, on love, on political corruption, on redemption, and you may take it, as Shakespeare offered it, *as you like it*. Up to their waists in the bad behaviour of the nobility, the heroes and heroines of "***As You Like It***" escape, like Robin Hood, to the forest primeval, where innocence and honesty prevail against the prevailing ill behaviours of those grappling for money and power in the courts and ruling their brothers with the cruelty born of primogeniture. Meanwhile, Shakespeare utters the immortal words that "All the world's a stage," with men making their entrances and exits within the seven stages of life, according to Jacques, the resident melancholic who elaborates eloquently on the brevity of life.

It's a comedy, so they don't drink poison and die, but despite their human frailties, jealousies, greed, vengeance, hatred, etc., they manage to fall in love and become better for it.

Aquila Theatre Company performs across the U.S. in 60-70 cities each year, in the grand Shakespearian tradition, and makes its way to theatre festivals in Europe in the summer. They perform classic theatre including, this upcoming year, "Midsummer's Night Dream," and "Enemy of the People." They have performed "Antigone," in Greece in ancient amphitheatres. They perform to rave reviews.

Tickets are \$25. and \$30. and may be obtained online at [www.accesstoart.org](http://www.accesstoart.org) or by calling (609) 465-3963. They are also available at the door an hour preceding the show on Nov. 14th from 6 p.m. You may send checks to Access to Art, Inc., 417 E. Pacific Ave., Cape May Court House, N.J., 08210. Group rates are available for groups of ten or more. Student tickets are \$10.

Aquila is supported, in part, by a grant from the NJ State Council on the Arts, Department of State, administered by the Cape May County Cultural & Heritage Commission and the Cape May County Library. They are also supported by the Delaware River & Bay Authority, and N.J. Travel & Tourism, Dept. of State.

Access to Art plans on presenting a Renaissance Festival with an emphasis on Shakespeare, 16th century music and dance, and representations of 16th century characters in the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. That will be presented on Oct. 2nd and 3rd next year in the Cape May area. For information on any of the above, call Access to Art at (609) 465-3963.