

Access to Art, Inc.
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Press Release/for immediate release
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*Aquila Theatre will present Shakespeare's As You Like It
for Access to Art in Nov. 2009
Grant Awarded from NJSCA and Cape May County Cultural & Heritage
Commission*

Cape May. Access to Art will bring classic theatre to Cape May County on November 14th, 2009. to the Paul W. Schmidtchen Theatre at Lower Cape May Regional School on Rte. 9.

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Dept. of State, and the Cape May County Cultural & Heritage Commission have granted Access to Art \$7,000. toward the cost of the event. "We are very grateful for their generous grant; and we are working very hard to raise the additional funds." said Dolores Giordano, Access to Art, Inc. President. "All of these events are very expensive to produce, and Access volunteers its time to bring them to the community believing that cultural events of excellence lend themselves to a better quality of life." Giordano said.

Aquila, founded in England, resides at NYU in the Ancient studies department. The company is the foremost company in the U.S. for classical touring plays performing in 60-70 theatres annually. Aquila articulates the human essence inherent in classical drama. "The reason things become classics, is because they resound in the human spirit, there is something in them that we all understand and relate to. We want to make sure that our 3000 years of Western tradition are not lost, that we all know what enriched our thought. Shakespeare plumbed the depths of the Greeks, the Romans and the Elizabethans, and we, of course, plumb his depths." Giordano said. "The stories are old, but bear repeating since they reverberate with truths about human nature. We bring them up to date and right now on Broadway, we have "West Side Story," which is a modern version of Romeo & Juliet." she said.

About Aquila, the critics say: "...a classically trained, modernly hip troupe..." The New York Times. The Bermuda Royal Gazette declared: "...a truly innovative and potent theatrical achievement." And the New Yorker stated: "The classics made relevant with superb acting and clever staging."

They have appeared in the region in the Stockton University series with *Midsummer's Night's Dream* in recent years.

The Aquila Theatre Company is a company of British and American artists dedicated to classical drama. Founded in London in 1991 by Peter Meineck, Aquila is now based in New York City. Combining the techniques of British and American theater and following a philosophy of theatrical utilitarianism, Aquila believes that "the greatest works should be seen by the greatest number."

Previous Aquila tours consisted of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Joseph Heller's stage adaptation of the novel *Catch-22*. Currently they are presenting a short run of *The Illiad* in New York City. Backstage said of this play: "If you see only one piece of theatre this year –see Aquila's *Illiad*."

In addition to their American tours, Aquila has presented work internationally at Shakespeare Festivals in Neuss, Germany; Gyula, Hungary; and the Gdansk, Poland in addition to the Festival of the Aegean in Syros, Greece and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Aquila has performed *Much Ado About Nothing* at the White House, and Cherubini's opera *MEDEE* at Carnegie Hall. It collaborates with major American theaters in the presentation of its work, and collaborates with notable artists from other disciplines including dance, music, and opera. They collaborated with choreographer Doug Varone on its New York production of *The Invisible Man*.

Access to Art will bring two lecture demonstrations highlighting "As You Like It," to area schools including one at the Paul W. Schmidtchen theatre for area students, on October 15th at 1 p.m. and one at Atlantic Cape Community College for Atlantic County students. This will not be presented by Aquila, who are too tightly booked to do the lecture demonstration, but by Equity actors from East Lynne Company, with

regional actors and singers. The actors from East Lynne have performed Shakespeare both with the National Shakespeare Company, touring 35 cities, and have studied with Royal Shakespearean actors. The director has directed Othello off Broadway. Access does outreach to the schools prior to most dance and theatre performances to give students an idea and a background on the upcoming event.

To join the committee, for Access to Art, Inc., call (609) 465-3963. “This year we are going to concentrate on Shakespeare, the greatest bard in the English language. Our summer music festival opens with a little Prokofief with Romeo & Juliet as one of the offerings. There is so much in dance (we already presented Romeo & Juliet by Johann Renvall in our second year), and, of course, West Side Story is a takeoff on Romeo & Juliet, as Kiss Me Kate is a takeoff on Taming of the Shrew. Shakespeare kept reinventing the old stories, and so do we. We take the plots and bring them up to date, but they are the same old plots. He had a particular genius with words which we hope to share with you in “*As You Like It.*”said Barbara Beitel, Access Director.

“We are hoping, God willing and the money materializing, with grants and fund raisers, to produce a Renaissance Faire in 2010 at the Delaware River and Bay Authority grounds...featuring Shakespearean vignettes, jugglers, story tellers, actors portraying Renaissance figures like Henry VIII, Sir Thomas More, Elizabeth I, Ann Boleyn, Sir Francis Bacon, Marlowe, etc. We also hope to present Renaissance flavored crafts. It should be a swashbuckling adventure, and we hope to include lots of regional actors, and artisans in the production, making it a South Jersey production.” Beitel said. “If regional actors would like to join our committee, or people interested in the period, please call (609) 465-3963 and ask for Barbara.”