

MEDIA ADVISORY --

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Inland Stage Features Roaring 20s "12th Night"

The Inland Stage Company features a roaring 20s "12th Night" opening May 6 at the Esplanade Art Center in San Jacinto.

"This is such a crowd-pleaser and an acting challenge to our troupe," said ISC Director Jim Marbury. "The characters of the strange island of Illyria fascinate me. There are so many casting possibilities due to the incredible quality of performers that turned out for our auditions. It really feels as though we have the cream of the actors in the area."

Vanessa Downs will be playing the role of the shipwrecked twin sister Viola.

"Viola is a survivor," Downs said. "She's the kind of person that will do what it takes to make it on her own. To survive, Viola must become Cesario, she must become a man. Yet, at the same time, she is still a girl who has found someone that she cares for in the Duke. She struggles with her feelings in a very real way."

Downs loves being able to play a man.

"Not just any man, I'm playing a girl that is trying to be a man," Downs said. "It's neat because for Viola, shipwrecked in a strange land, it's sort of a do or die kind of situation. I think Viola attempts to be professional about it, and that is kind of fun, the seriousness' of it."

Downs recently played Rosalind in "As You Like It" at ISC, but says Rosalind and Viola are very different.

"Rosalind plays the man in Shakespeares's 'green world,' the countryside, as opposed to the city," Downs said. "Whenever characters go into the green world crazy things happen. So it ends up being okay for Rosalind to be more girly and let her guard down because the farce is more easily accepted in the country. Viola doesn't really get that opportunity, she is in 'man mode' all the time."

Dane Johnston will be playing the part of Feste, the fool.

"Feste is a character with a lot of range," Johnston said. "At times he is fun loving and irreverent; at other occasions, he is territorial and dour, though he is quick to flip from one to another. Like many of Shakespeare's fools, Feste seems to know the intricate workings of the world he is immersed in, even when those around him are blind to it. Like a mad tinkerer, he uses this knowledge to wreak havoc upon the stage like any great mischief maker might. It would seem there is not much that happens in the world around Feste that he is not aware of, even behind the curtains."

"12th Night" runs May 6 through May 21 at the Esplanade Art Center, 2181 W. Esplanade Ave, San Jacinto. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 2 p.m. Sundays.

"Whenever I direct Shakespeare, the principle idea is that we have to have strong actors who understand the text, of course, but in this particular production, I wanted to really emphasize the wit and repartee that this script contains as well as stretch the performers physically," Marbury said. "You have to have this balance with Twelfth Night, because the script has so much comedic potential, yet all this heart. Of course, whenever you perform Shakespearean Comedy, you seek the wit of the piece and find yourself committing an homage to the material's Commedia del'Arte roots."

Tickets cost \$15 for general admission; \$12 for students, seniors and military; and \$7 for student rush tickets, obtained 10 minutes before the show begins.

Next Inland Stage features The 2nd Summer Repertory Festival offering contrasting pieces; The black comedic twist on Charles Shultz's "Peanuts" characters, "Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead," and the heart-felt musical "The Last Five Years," where two actors sing their way through a relationship.

Tickets can be purchased over the phone at the Inland Stage's Box Office (951) 600-7273 Ext.100 or online at <http://www.inlandstage.org/tix.html>.

Visit www.inlandstage.org for details, as well as info about ISC's 2011-2012 season.

