



Mark Hayes (right) plays the fool, and Rhaetia Hanscum (left) follows in line. EVAN A. DENBAUM/Emerald

Shakespeare: Actors chose Amphitheater for celebration

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playwright's birthday. It is usually performed in the EMU Courtyard outside the ASUO offices. But the actors decided to use the new Amphitheater this year, which wasn't available on his birthday.

"It was a good venue for the show because there were a lot of people passing through who saw the show," said Von Appen, who wore a black suit and a sash for his performance in a scene from "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Sanders, who has now performed in two of the events, said he preferred the courtyard, but junior Bridie Harrington said she also liked using the amphitheater.

"It's nice to have that playing area," she said, adding that the amphitheater is better because of its location and stage.

"The best thing about it is there's an audience relationship," said Harrington, a two-time "Shakespeare's Birthday" performer who found herself in an Elizabethan-style verbal joust on Monday with her roommate, Holly Thomas, during an improv piece.

ing an improv piece.

"Just being able to play off the audience and have that relationship was fun."

Von Appen plans on participating in Shakespeare's Birthday again next year. "It allowed young people to put some vibrancy into something I think is fun," he said. Both Harrington and Sanders said holding the event outdoors has the advantage of a public crowd. This leaves the group open to jeers, but it also means they can hook a crowd that does not normally watch.

The event may also have aroused attention with spoof skits, such as the Spice Girls as the Weird Sisters of "Macbeth" and portrayals of Keanu Reeves as a foolish actor reading directly out of the book for "Much Ado About Nothing."

Monday's performance showed that, even though he's long gone, Shakespeare can dress a bunch of people up in Elizabethan clothing, give them silly accents and a pompous vocabulary and still win over a crowd, even in Eugene.

CD: Amos' music is more polished and fluid on 'hotel'

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times. Almost all of the music is more polished and more fluid than past albums such as "Little Earthquakes" and "Under the Pink."

In "Spark," Amos addresses the theme of the struggling single mother. "She's convinced she could hold back a glacier ... but she couldn't keep baby alive ... doubting if there's a woman in there somewhere." She seems to hint at drug addiction when she sings, "trusting my soul to the ice cream assassin ... you say you don't want it again ... and again you don't really mean it." The song is also a perfect primer for a listener who is unfamiliar with Amos' past work, with prominent vocals and piano and the almost lack of an audible drum track at times.

The three strongest tracks on the album are all ballads. "Jackie's Strength" is a woman's recollection of her scarred youth on her wedding day. Amos sings of Jackie Kennedy on the day her husband died, a David Cassidy lunch box, smoking pot and staying popular as a youth.

"Liquid Diamonds" features one of the album's strongest melodies and gives Amos a chance to really stretch her vocal range. When she ascends a musical scale, she manages to retain the fullness of her tone and not succumb to

the breathy style she has on previous albums.

And "Northern Land," which is basically just Amos on vocals and piano, could be the album's strongest song. It begins as a quiet acoustic ballad before reaching an emotionally charged peak.

"Hotel" follows "Northern Land," and is the best of the experimental tracks on the album. There are no less than three musical motifs used in the song, each inherently different but each significant.

One theme that still pervades Amos' music is its distinct femininity; all but two songs refer to female characters, either through the word "she," "her," or, in one case, "girls."

With the untimely demise of Madonna, Amos and Sarah McLachlan are now the torch-bearers for female artists in popular music today. In "From the Choirgirl Hotel," Amos does more than her share to brighten her already shining status.

For those who have never picked up a Tori Amos album, this is a great introduction. For those who have followed her career from the start, be prepared for what is quite possibly her best album to date.



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