

# Ghostly cast invades latest show

Matthew Ostergren

The Clackamas Print

Everyone loves a good ghost play," said Jake Whitten, who plays Claudius in the upcoming play at Clackamas, "Fortinbras."

"Fortinbras" picks up its story at the very last scene of Shakespeare's "Hamlet." But, while "Hamlet" was a tragedy, "Fortinbras" is a comical play.

Most of the characters from "Hamlet" return in this show, but since they were dead at the end of the play—they return as ghosts.

James Sharinghousen, the college's theater instructor, takes on the main role of Fortinbras.

When asked about the role, Sharinghousen explained that Fortinbras has a childlike nature. He is an ignorant and innocent approach to the role.

"But he has class," he said, and there is something of a growing experience for him. In the end, Fortinbras is a little wiser in his ways.

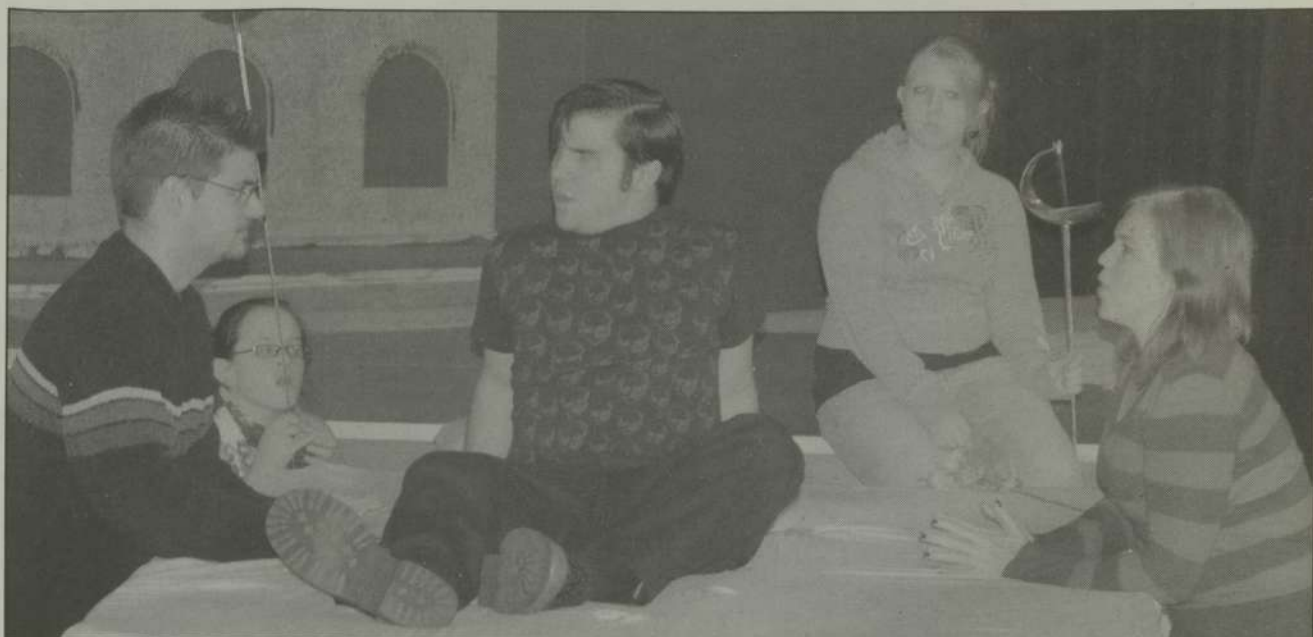
The director, theater instructor James Sharinghousen, is very excited about the production.

The play explains what would happen after Hamlet if you had a sense of humor. It goes from the world's most famous tragedy to a comedy," said Smith-English.

Smith-English explained that a style of comedy that is fast-paced, absurd and usually has some elaborate chase scene. Farces are a difficult style to perform well.

It takes a lot of work, and if not done correctly they can turn into a drama or a soap opera.

"Fortinbras" features a fairly unisexual cast. Because of the many location changes during the show, the set



Fortinbras, center, played by James Sharinghousen, awakens after an amorous night with Ophelia's ghost, played by Annie Scharich, to find the specters of Claudius, left, played by Jake Whitten, and Gertrude, right, played by Kelly Miller, praying over him. His courtiers, Tanya Stiglbauer, back left, and Corrine Stone, back right, look on.

is intended to be malleable.

According to the set designer, Chris Whitten, the scenery changes primarily by moving around furniture and lights. The set is intended to be noninvasive in order to leave things up to audience's imagination.

One of Whitten and Smith-English's favorite parts of the set is used in a few scenes where Hamlet has an out-of-body experience.

In the scenes, Hamlet, who is displayed on a television, has a conver-

sation with other characters from the play. The television even has a skirt around it that is made from the same fabric as Hamlet's costume in the rest of the play.

Alva Bradford, who has been the costume designer at Clackamas for 16 years, displayed a lot of attention to detail in the play's costumes. Because many characters appear both alive and as ghosts in this play, costumes had to be designed that matched each other while still providing a visual queue

that the player is a ghost. A living character's costume uses normal colors, while a ghost's costume uses whites, grays and blacks.

Gender roles are also mixed in this production with the role of Horatio being played by Madelyn Marcotte.

"I get to know how a man thinks. I like getting to fight and be aggressive," said Marcotte of playing a male character.

"Fortinbras" features a wide variety of laughs, yet it is also meant to

teach a lesson.

"Even though it's having a hilarious old-time, it's still meaningful," said Smith-English.

Fortinbras runs Nov. 13 through 23. Thursday through Saturday shows are at 7:30 p.m. Sunday matinees are at 2:30 p.m.

## British author tells a history of war and death among animals

Jess Sheppard

The Clackamas Print

We all grew up on animal fiction, thanks to Walt Disney. For those of us who still enjoy personified critters, there are Robin Jarvis' novels.

Jarvis is best known for his Deptford Mice Trilogy: "The Dark Portal," "The Crystal Prison" and "The Final Reckoning." Now the British writer has followed up his trilogy with a history.

"The Oaken Throne" takes the readers back hundreds of years before the Deptford trilogy to tell the story of the ancient war between the squirrel kingdom and the eclectic bat colonies.

The nature-worshipping squirrels, lead by the Starwife, are accused of casting a horrible curse on the bats, robbing them of their powers of foresight. The bats, who revere the lady of the moon, launch a brutal and devastating attack on Greenreach, the seat of the squirrels' power. With the help of a traitor, the old Starwife is murdered and her symbol of office, the Silver Acorn, is lost.

Into this sudden frenzy of bloodshed two characters are thrust — Ysabelle, a squirrel princess destined to be the next Starwife, and Vespertillio, a young bat aspiring to become one of the feared Knights of the Moon.

Forced together by honor and obligation, the two are charged with uncovering the plot that has set their two species against each other, while avoiding the murderous forces of a ferocious cult.

They are joined in their quest by a pair of pilgrims, Giraldu the leprous mole, and his aid, Tysle the lame shrew, as well as a stoat jester named Wendel and a mouse warrior named Fenny. The group is beset constantly by wary forest dwellers, evil spirits and bloodthirsty cultists.

"The Oaken Throne" is riddled with life lessons and dark humor, and the story is continuously twisting over on itself. Warned in a vision against betrayal, Ysabelle struggles to trust her companions, while Vespertillio wrestles with everything he has been taught in order to find the ultimate truth.

Even though it's a genre usually reserved for children, "The Oaken Throne" — and Jarvis' books in general — are great reads for older audiences. Literally, the books are animal fiction for adults.

