

ENTERTAINMENT

Young director helms *As You Like It*

BY KATHARINE SEALEY

Staff Writer

In Shakespeare's heyday, Andrew Lamb would have been considered middle aged.

But at just 25, this young director—who already has a long list of credits which include two years at the Globe Theatre in England and a season assistant directing at Toronto's Soulpepper Theatre—is causing a stir in the modern world of theatre.

"I was short-listed for Stratford last year," said Lamb. "But they couldn't believe I had all these things on my resume. I'm just fortunate to have known what I wanted to do early on, and did it."

Lamb's current project is a staging of the comedy *As You Like It* for Brampton's annual Shakespeare in the Square festival, which runs Friday through Mondays, July 18 to August 4.

Lamb was invited to join the festival by local actor/director Scott Lale. Both members of the Advisory Committee for the Shakespeare Globe Centre of Canada. Last fall, Lale did an artistic fellowship at the Globe, which was Shakespeare's home stage. Lamb had done his fellowship the year before, assistant directing *King Lear*.

"I literally wrote my last exam (at university) and moved to England the next day," he said. "My time at the Globe really helped me understand that the most important thing to Shakespeare was his relationship with the audience."

He said Brampton's open-air festival is giving him a chance to explore that idea.

"Usually in theatre, you have that invisible fourth wall between the audience and the actors," he said. "Here, we can see the audience and they can see us, they aren't sitting out in the dark, they are a part of the show, like another character."

Although he now lives in Toronto and did his training at Concordia University in Montreal, Lamb is actually a Brampton native.

"I was born at Peel Memorial and spent my first four years on Banbury Crescent," he said. "So this is a sort of homecoming for me."



Tim Maclean, as Orlando, and Margaret Thompson, as Rosalind (back) rehearse for *As You Like It*, directed by Andrew Lamb (front).

Photo by Joel Robertson

As with the festival's opening production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Lamb has set his tale—which is about two young noble women who disguise themselves to follow a boy that one has fallen in love with, among other things—in present day.

"It's a modern show for modern audiences, but without the gimmicks," he said. "No cell phones or pagers, just the story as Shakespeare wanted to tell it. He wrote this story for the people, he wrote it 'as they like it.'"

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Shakespeare's comedy is kid-friendly

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After the run of *As You Like It*, Lamb will be at the Georgian Theatre Festival, directing their young company in another of Shakespeare's comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Having also spent part of the summer teaching at the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, Lamb is anxious to make *As You Like It* accessible for a junior audience.

"I would love children to be able to see and understand this show," he said. "It's a perfect introduction for them, because it is a simple story, a comedy, there

is no tragedy, no huge violence, just a lot of fun and a very happy ending."

As You Like It features original music by Mike Gauthier. Each performance will also include a two-minute improvised re-cap each night.

Shows will run at 8 p.m., except on opening night, July 18, when it will start at 4 p.m. and July 19 which will begin at noon. The Shakespeare in the Square Festival is held in Ken Whillans Square, next to City Hall. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted. Bring a lawn chair. Call 905-874-2800.