

British Theatre Guide

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As You Like It

William Shakespeare

Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh

(2005)

What sticks most in one's mind after seeing the Lyceum's production of *As You Like It* is the first image from designer Grgory Smith's forest: two snowflake-like structures in silhouette which instantly transport the audience to the ethereal and delightful setting for the latter half of the play.

Prior to this transformation, the power-suit-influenced boardroom of the courts is oppressive. Though director Mark Thomson's choices to include frappucino-slurping bodyguards and camera phones provoked a few giggles, it largely falls to Robin Laing as Touchstone to liven up these early scenes.

Although this first portion of the play holds many of the comedy's darker elements, it is kept light with delightful performances from Laing, as well as Emma Cuniffe (a spunky, sparky Rosilind) and Eilidh Macdonald (her cousin Celia). Both actresses give wholehearted performances even in the most ludicrous moments of the play, and the plays' convoluted webs of emotional intrigue are made much more enjoyable for it.

In addition to being a comedy, *As You Like It* differs from Thomson's previous Shakespearean outings in that the age of the characters skews slightly lower than that in both *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*. This, coupled with the energetic performances, might make *As You Like It* a production well-suited to younger audiences, in terms of a light first look at Shakespeare. Although there are times when the show drags a bit - certain musical numbers could have stood trimming, though the actual tunes are lively and enjoyable - overall the pace of the show works well.

Thomson's director's note expresses a hope that audiences will find *As You Like It* fresh and joyous. While one wishes certain aspects of the staging (frappucino-slurping bodyguards, a cokehead duke, and the use of camera phones) had been explored more fully, overall it seems that the company has indeed achieved this goal.

Reviewer: [Rachel Lynn Brody](#)