

## Ten years of the Bard on Lopez Island

By [HELEN SANDERS](#)

Islands Weekly Staff reporter

Nov 01 2009



Lopez Island's own Richard Carter has been orchestrating the beauty of Shakespeare's language for over ten years, adapting the Bard's plays to make them more accessible to school children and other organizations.

"What I've tried to do is maintain the integrity of the original work," Carter said, "While at the same time making the jokes more understandable to the kids and the audience alike, and using some contemporary language to help them with delivery onstage.

"I've directed 20 plays on Lopez in the last ten years, and each year it's a strange new world," Carter said.

This year Carter is overseeing two productions: *The Tempest*, which will feature younger children, grades K-7, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, featuring grades 8-12.

"Queen Elizabeth asked Shakespeare to revive Falstaff for *Merry Wives*," Carter

commented. "Legend has it that the Queen asked him to bring Falstaff back, and that's why *Merry Wives of Windsor* was written. It's pure fluff and lots of fun."

Carter has added two elements to the productions that he is very excited about. Ann Palmer, Mary Wondra and Stephanie Hylton will be singing Elizabethan acappella madrigals during both plays.

"The other new thing we're adding is that we'll be performing both plays in the round," Carter said. "This is a form of arena staging and it's hardly ever done. The audience is on four sides, up close and personal, and there's a great liveliness that comes from working in the round. There's so much energy with the audience so close."

Carter has adapted many of Shakespeare's plays for children and young people. What makes his adaptations different?

"I eliminate most of the narrative. Mine is pure dialogue and faithful to the original text with a little bit of modern language mixed in to make it accessible. I also tweak the jokes so that the kids understand them."

The Fall Festival, which runs Nov. 18 - 21 at the LCCA, features two shows: *The Tempest* (grades K-7) and *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* (grades 8-12). On Wednesday, Nov. 18, there are preview performances, a "pay what you can" show that is a great deal for Lopez audiences; it's accessible financially and a great time to come. Th. Nov. 19 - all seats \$10, and Fri-Sat. Nov. 20-21,

**all seats \$15. Tickets via LCCA website and at Islehaven Books. These are all-student productions this year (no adults). For more information, go to [www.communityshakespeare.org](http://www.communityshakespeare.org).**

**“For me,” Carter said, “It’s very exciting to have new young people on board. It’s so delightful to watch them grow into their roles. And it changes their lives when they go onstage that very first time and hear the sounds of appreciation from the audience.”**

**Islands Weekly Staff reporter Helen Sanders can be reached at [hsanders@islandssounder.com](mailto:hsanders@islandssounder.com) or (360) 468-4242.**