

HENFIELD THEATRE COMPANY

'The Winter's Tale' by *William Shakespeare*

Directed by Richard Oswald

An abridged version of '*The Winter's Tale*' was performed by **Henfield Theatre Company** on 1st & 2nd July in the Vicarage Gardens, Henfield and on 3rd & 4th July 2008 at New Hall Gardens, Small Dole was a testament to the incredible depth of talent that exists within this amateur theatre company.

Under the direction of Richard Oswald, from the moment the music started until the final curtain call, the audience was transformed back into Shakespearean England. All of the characters understood and appreciated the language which they were using to such a degree that they were able to transfer that meaning to a knowledgeable audience.

The entire cast were excellent. However, special mention must be made on the brilliant performance by Graeme Muncer, whose portrayal of *Leontes* totally captivated the audience whilst taking them on his emotional journey from jealousy to remorse to jubilation. This same journey was experienced by his wife, *Hermione*, played with wonderful feeling by Heather McFarlane-Cryer.

Both Kings received the wise counsel of *Camillo*, beautifully portrayed by Ian Henham, who successfully showed the audience his total confusion over the allegations made by *Leontes*. The pairing of the *Old Shepherd* played by John Coit and his son, the *Clown*, played by Paul Woodcock was masterful. Both characters played off each other with immaculate comic timing. They were joined in many of the lighter moments by Nick Roughton who showed once again his versatility playing the rogue *Autolycus*.

Jack Bridgewater and Helen Haines, who respectively played *Florizel* and *Perdita*, were entirely convincing as the young lovers who would allow nothing to stop their union.

Performing a play in a garden environment in such close proximity to the audience means that the set design and costumes can very often make or break the overall performance. Again, the skilful set and exquisite costumes by respectively David Hubner's and Janet Oswald's teams, need to be congratulated. The addition of the Madrigals sung during the play and at the interval by the **Henfield Consort** and **Henfield Theatre Company** completed a thoroughly enchanting evening.

Geoff Pratt
02.07.08.