Ohio State and Royal Shakespeare Company Co-present:

The Tempest, July 16-20

Adapted and directed by Kelly Hunter for an audience of children with autism;

Six actors take the children on a journey of clowns, spirits, monsters and wizards on an island where nobody feels ordinary!

This visionary co-production and collaboration between The Ohio State University (Ohio State) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) was adapted and directed by Kelly Hunter, who has created a series of drama-based games over the last 10 years to help combat the challenges of autism.

Introducing the show Hunter says:

“The 75-minute production is played in the round with a maximum of 15 children per performance; within this intimate setting the actors will invite the children to join them, playing sensory games to bring the story to life. The games use the fundamental themes of Shakespeare: the heartbeat rhythm of his language, seeing with the mind's eye and an exploration of the senses to combat the communicative blocks of autism.”

“The games are sensory, physical and fun to play, created to heighten the child's awareness of the world around them and provide an opportunity for them to experience and explore their own physicality, feelings and voice.”

“Making eye contact, improving spatial awareness, developing facial expressiveness and building language skills are key targets within the games as well as introducing imaginative play and the concept of 'playing a part'. Shakespeare is used to wake the children up to their own lives and any child, no matter where they are on the spectrum, can play”.

The production involves cast and audience engaging in a number of games that form The Hunter Heartbeat Method. This method has been developed by Kelly Hunter and is the basis of the Shakespeare and Autism research project at Ohio State, a longitudinal research study looking to determine the effectiveness of Hunter Heartbeat Method to affect change to the core features of autism. The project is a partnership between the Ohio State Department of Theatre, the Nisonger Center for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Ohio State's Wexner Medical Center, Columbus City Schools, and the Ohio State University/Royal Shakespeare Company partnership. The project is funded by the Engagement Impact Grant from the Ohio State University Office of Outreach and Engagement and by support from the College of Arts and Sciences.

The production premiered in Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare, from June 24 to July 4 at The Other Place at the Courtyard Theatre as part of the RSC’s summer season 2014. It was highly received by the UK audience and competitively covered by the UK media including BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5, Times Education Supplement, The Independent, and The Coventry Telegraph.

After its successful run in the UK, The North American premiere occurs in Columbus, and runs from July 16 to 20. The production will open at Ohio State’s Wexner Center for the Arts on July 16 and 17 followed by performances at WOSU@COSI in downtown Columbus on 19 and 20. The production is aimed toward 8-25 year olds.
The Cast comprises Greg Hicks, Chris MacDonald and Eva Lily Tausig from the UK and Kevin McClatchy, Robin Post and Mahmoud Osman from Ohio State.

A maximum of 30 adults may also watch the show. The theatre will be adapted to create a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere and participants will be free to take time out of the auditorium at any time.

Kelly Hunter’s most recent RSC credits include playing Goneril and Hermione in David Farr's productions of *King Lear* and *The Winter’s Tale* in Stratford, London and New York, 2009-2011. She first worked at the RSC playing Lola in *The Blue Angel* directed by Trevor Nunn, the inaugural production when The Other Place re-opened in 1991.

Performance times:
Wexner Center for the Arts: Wednesday, July 16, and Thursday, July 17, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
WOSU@COSI: Saturday, July 19, and Sunday, July 20, at 2 p.m.

For tickets, contact Wexner Center for the Arts [http://tickets.wexarts.org](http://tickets.wexarts.org) / (614) 292-3535.

For details, see the Shakespeare and Autism Website [http://shakespeare.osu.edu/autism](http://shakespeare.osu.edu/autism).

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