

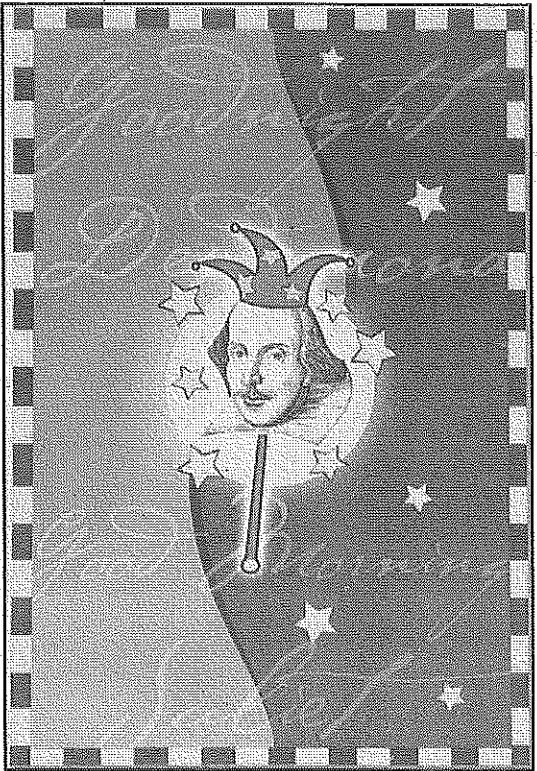
A quirky twist on two Shakespearian classics

By Ali Jarvis
FEATURE EDITOR

Canadian born playwright Ann-Marie Macdonald adds a strange twist of events to two timeless Shakespearian classics, *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Performed at Shiley Theater last weekend, *Goodnight Desdemona* proved that asking the timeless hypothetical question "what if?" is not always without merit.

Constance Ledbelly, a quizzical assistant professor embodied marvelously by senior Nicole Solas, is plagued by the thought that *Desdemona* and *Juliet* could have easily saved themselves from their timeless deaths. She finds herself inside the world of Shakespeare after deciphering an ancient cryptic manuscript believed to hold ancient Shakespearian knowledge and manages to change the tragic outcomes

in both plays. Ironically this causes all of the principal characters to fall in love with her.



USD THEATRE ARTS PROGRAM

Constance's hilarious journey of self-discovery kept the entire theater on the edge of its seat for the whole duration of the play. Filled with quirky characters, sexual innuendos, cross-dressing and action packed sword-fighting scenes, *Goodnight Desdemona* was one of the most exciting and innovative plays I have seen at USD.

The cast also featured the talent of Lutherson Louis, Joan Baumgardner, Camelia Poespowidjojo and Andrew Miles, who, among others, all delivered exceptional comedic performances. Since its premier in 1988, *Goodnight Desdemona* has been performed repeatedly in Japan, Great Britain, the United States and Canada by many theater groups.

"Daily Show" releases book

By Chaley Zachmeier
U-WIRE/SDSU

As the most trusted name in fake news, Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" has made current events cool again. With nightly "Mess-O-Potamia" updates on the war in Iraq and in-depth coverage of "Indecision 2004," Jon Stewart and company let no issue go unscathed.

Setting their comic sights on the publishing world, the comedic crew has made its first foray into fake text books with "America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction." From the school board-issue stamp on the inside cover, to the "Were You Aware?" boxes on each page, "America" explains the evolution and structure of government in sardonic "Daily Show" form.

Dedicated to the "huddled masses," the book includes a forward penned by one of history's most revered statesmen, Thomas "TJ" Jefferson. Throughout the nine chapters, which span from pre-American democracy to "The Rest of the World," critical essays and "Were You Aware?" boxes keep readers educated. Consider Stephen Colbert's poignant "Warren G. Harding: Our Worst President" and Samantha Bee's insightful "Would You Mind if I Told You How We Do It in Canada?" sidebars.

As in a standard textbook, thought-provoking classroom activities and discussion questions accompany each chapter. For example, at the end of Chapter 4 ("Congress: Quagmire of Freedom"), readers are asked if Chancellor Palpatine's abuse of

emergency powers in "Star Wars: Episode II" could happen here. They are also given a gerrymandering exercise to complete.

Clearly geared toward The Daily Show's predominantly young target audience, "America" has its share of un-academic language and snicker-inducing diagrams. It recently joined the ranks of "Catcher in the Rye" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by becoming a banned book -- Wal-Mart has refused to sell "America" because of an illustration capturing Supreme Court justices in the buff.

Jokes aside, "America" includes its share of spot-on commentary concerning our country. In his introduction, "T.J." argues, concerning the Constitution, "We created a blueprint for a system that would endure ... And we expect our descendents to work as hard as we did on keeping what we think is a profoundly excellent form of government supple, evolving and relevant."

Like its cable news counterpart, the written incarnation of "Daily Show" comedy generates insight as well as laughs. "America" pokes fun at democracy's short-comings yet inevitably brings those who would never think of cracking a history book into the politically aware fold.

The freedom to laugh at ourselves and our often convoluted system of government is arguably inherent in our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. "America: (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction" is a celebration of that freedom and the system that serves to protect it, blemishes and all.