

DATE: March 13, 2008

FOR RELEASE: Immediately

SUBJECT: Monson Arts Council Spring Production

CONTACT: Rebecca Drake, (413)267-5827, home; (413)452-0636, work

Rehearsals underway for spring production of ‘I Hate Hamlet’

MONSON – Those who suffered through – or savored – high school Shakespeare class will find kindred spirits in Monson Arts Council’s spring production of “I Hate Hamlet,” a clever comedy by Paul Rudnick.

The two-act play will be performed on April 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 and 20 in Monson’s Memorial Hall. Friday and Saturday night shows begin at 8 p.m. and Sunday afternoon matinees are at 2 p.m.

Directed by Waldo Goodermote, of Chicopee, “I Hate Hamlet” is a contemporary tale about the trials of a young television actor, Andrew Rally, played by Sean Landers of Blandford. The character of Andrew has come to New York, rather reluctantly, to play the role of Hamlet in Central Park. He has rented a large apartment that was once occupied by the famous 20th-century actor (and womanizer) John Barrymore, played by Brent Northup, of Monson.

As Andrew agonizes about playing the morose Shakespearean character, the ghost of Barrymore is summoned during a séance conducted by the flamboyant, flaky real estate agent, Felicia Dantine, portrayed by Rae Banigan, of Palmer. Also present at the séance is Andrew’s chain-smoking agent, Lillian Troy, in the person of Susan Trudeau, of Ware, who once had a romantic fling with Barrymore in this very apartment.

Adding to Andrew’s angst, is his director friend, Gary Peter Lefkowitz, enthusiastically brought to life by Forris Day Jr. of Palmer, who advises against performing in a Shakespeare play, which he calls “algebra on stage.” Even worse, according to Gary, is doing a play outdoors: “It’s Shakespeare for squirrels!”

While Gary tries to entice Andrew to return to Los Angeles for a television series, Andrew’s pious, romantic girlfriend, Deirdre McDavey, played by Christine Henry, of Palmer, provides enticement of a different kind: She is determined to remain celibate until she is married.

Providing constant commentary and advice, usually unwanted, to Andrew, is the ever-present ghost of Barrymore, who is seen by some characters but invisible to others, resulting in many humorous misunderstandings and “deadly” one-liners. When Andrew challenges the ghost to demonstrate his supernatural powers, Barrymore quips, “I just rose from the dead – and how was your morning, Andrew?”

The verbal duel between the garrulous ghost and the anxious actor inevitably leads to a literal sword fight, which will be choreographed by Monson

resident Reed Coles, who is a fencing expert. But “all’s well that ends well” for the actors and the audience at the surprising conclusion of “I Hate Hamlet.”

Tickets for the delightfully enlightening comedy are \$14 for general admission and \$12 for students and seniors. Patrons who dine at three local restaurants, Mustang Sally’s, Beth and Deb’s and Tenth Planet Pizza, will receive a coupon worth \$2 off on their play tickets.

For individuals, organizations and companies wishing to advertise in the play’s program, the cost is \$25 for a quarter-page (business card size) ad; \$50 for a half-page ad; \$100 for a full-page ad; and \$125 for a back page ad. The deadline for purchasing ads is March 28.

For further information, contact the play’s producer, Barbara Keffer, at 267-4286.