



ENTERTAINMENT

An Interview with Zuzanna Szadkowski

Written by ANNA BLAINE | STAFF WRITER



Zuzanna Szadkowski is making her debut at Two River Theater in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* this month. The professionally trained theater and television actress talks about her love of acting, the experience of performing on stage and what is most endearing about Shakespeare.

Questions:

What do you love the most about being an actor?

I love that, as an actor, my job is to connect to an audience and to move people. We explore how life feels and tell stories. It's sometimes simple, sometimes complicated, often impossible. Actors play and surprise themselves, each other and the audience. It's my heaven.

I had the pleasure of reading your television credits. *Gossip Girl* and *The Knick* were both great tv shows. Do you prefer doing television and film over theater or vice versa?

I love working in both mediums. Acting on screen is pretending like no one is watching - the people in the room aren't supposed to be there, and the audience watches an archive of the event. You don't really have to work to share your performance. That's very freeing. Conversely, theater can't exist in a vacuum - it

lives and breathes based on the exchange between actor and audience. That's very invigorating.

You will be playing several different characters in the upcoming production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at Two River Theater. I imagine learning all those lines must be challenging; do you have any techniques for learning all your lines?

Learning lines is a headache. It helps to think of it as learning the play. Getting really deep into the language, really figuring out what you're saying, and how the story works goes hand in hand with memorizing. Also, I am a big fan of pneumonic devices when I get stuck on a particular line.

I know *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is still in rehearsals, but do you have a favorite character that you love playing the most so far?

The three of us play a multitude of roles and juggle many personalities. I don't have a favorite yet. I think once we work in front of an audience I'll begin to feel partial to certain moments.

How will this production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* be different? Will it have its own unique spin?

We are working very hard, three actors almost becoming a single organism, to tell a very complicated story in our unique way. We want to make ourselves as vulnerable as possible to be truthful and funny. We hope this will be entirely unlike any other production of *Merry Wives*.

Do you think Shakespeare plays can appeal to this younger generation today who seem more interested in social media as their to-go-to entertainment?

I think great theater can appeal to everyone. Shakespeare, in many ways the greatest, has tremendous power to effect young people. The emotions expressed and themes examined are at full throttle in Shakespeare and can suck a person in and make a person feel unlike anything else. I think young people really get into the drama of inter-personal experience.

If you could go back in time to meet William Shakespeare, what would you say to him?

I would ask him to write a Romeo and Juliet featuring middle-aged lovers. I always wanted to be Juliet and never got my chance. I've been playing the nurse and characters like her since I was fifteen years old.

Performances for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* start Saturday, Feb. 25 – Sunday, Mar. 26 at Two River Theater in Red Bank. For tickets call 732.345.1400 or visit tworivertheater.org.

Image taken from www.alchetron.com