

## Shakespeare in the Park delivers a lively *As You Like It* straight outta Hooverville

As We Liked It

By MARTIN BRADY

ARTS AND CULTURE » THEATER

August 21, 2014

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When Shakespeare in the Park is concerned, this summer's extravaganza, *As You Like It*, ranks up there with the folk-friendliest of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's annual efforts. With the addition of a musical score written mostly by Music City favorite son David Olney, whose career stretches some 40 years, the show takes on the flavor of the Bard meets *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, with a lively cast energetically conveying the spirit of director Denice Hicks' reimagined 1930s setting.

Olney's tunes, performed under the guidance of musical director Stan Lawrence, include a few co-writes with the Bard himself, and they are generally colorful Americana-style ditties that serve to link scenes or evoke the times. (For more on Olney, [see this week's cover story.](#))

Morgan Matens' set design offers a notable interpretation of Hooverville — that is to say, more smartly warm than realistically depressing. June Kingsbury's costumes have an appealing hand-me-down look.

The main cast, featuring some of Nashville's better-known professional players, offer a lot of earnest work that sustains the poetry and its lighthearted story. Emily Landham and Amanda Card do most of the heavy lifting as lovestruck cousins using false identities to rope in their beaus, played by Houston Mahoney and Santiago Sosa. The one constant here is Landham, who, as the beloved Rosalind, yet again provides a veritable clinic on how to declaim Shakespeare and make it intelligible in real time.

*As You Like It* continues in Centennial Park through Sept. 14.

Email [arts@nashvillescene.com](mailto:arts@nashvillescene.com).

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