

ROMEO AND JULIET OPENS AT THE ARK

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With springtime love in the air, the Ark Creative Arts Center will present Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" next week.

The story of Romeo and Juliet is one that anyone can identify with, KayC DeMaranville, creative arts coordinator with the Ark Regional Services, said.

"This show, no matter who you are or where you are in your life, at some level, you identify with falling in love and either that love is not reciprocated or something prevents that love from following through," she said. "That's why it is such a universal show."

The show opens Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. and runs through May 2 at the Creative Arts Center, 1174 N. Fourth. Tickets are free but must be reserved in advance by calling 742-6641 or e-mailing tickets@arkregionalservices.org, and half of the tickets are still available.

Over the past decade, Ark Regional Services in Laramie has developed a program to foster means of



Members of the Capulets and Montagues, from left, John Williams, Mike Hornig, Mary Anne McCarthy and Chris Lallatin, rehearse a fight scene from Romeo and Juliet.

Andy Carpenan/Boomerang photographer

expression through classes in visual arts, theater, dance, music, yoga and expressive body movement called Nia for people with developmental disabilities. And each season, the clients

at the Ark put on a theater production with the help of local artists and invite the community to the show.

To make "Romeo and Juliet" their own, DeMaranville said local

artist Lisa Martin wrote three original songs specifically for their production.

"Everybody knows 'Romeo and Juliet' as the love story, and everyone

also knows that it ends tragically. However, we really needed to handle that in a comfortable way for us and in a good way for our audience," DeMaranville said. Martin's music, she said, helped the performers do that.

Ark client Ted Dawson, who plays Romeo, said he has been acting his whole life.

"I'm practicing every day, and I do have a job. ... It is kind of hard, but I like it," Dawson said, before explaining that he uses his own life experiences to portray his character.

"The show kind of reflects my life," Dawson said. "When I do have a girlfriend, it reflects that. ... I am a people (person)."

The cast includes 18 clients of the Ark, and several more work lighting, sound and set development, DeMaranville said, with the help of local artists like Casey Kearns. Some actors have even trained in stage combat and fight choreography with University of Wyoming graduate Cheyenne Christian.

And the show will include plenty of music and

dancing, DeMaranville said.

"All plays, Shakespeare especially, are about passion and emotion. As an actor, you get to do that in a variety of ways. Most actors do that that with words and gestures. A comfortable way for us to (show) that is with music and dance and self-expression. It is quite beautiful," DeMaranville said.

Juliet, played by Jennifer Kendall, will have several dance numbers.

"I dance ... I like the body movement," Kendall said, gracefully moving her arms across her chest. She smiled when she said her family planned to attend the show and see her in her lovely costume — a light green dress.

Dawson said he hopes that people will be inspired by the show. He said he thinks people should believe in themselves and know that they can do anything.

"I think we might be role models," he said, smiling.

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