We use cookies to ensure that we deliver the best user experience of our website. If you would like to, you can change your cookie settings at any time. Continue

Darling Buds of May actress turned Shakespeare expert offers creative approach to study

Posted on Monday 18th March 2013

Actress Abigail Rokison, who played Primrose in the top-rating TV show The Darling Buds of May, has taken on a new leading role in the performing arts.

The on-screen star and respected Shakespeare expert is to co-convene a new post-graduate programme in Shakespeare and Creativity at The University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute.

The groundbreaking new course aims to combine theoretical Shakespearean study with experience of professional theatre and performance.

Dr Rokison will lead the creative modules of the course to enable students to gain various performance related skills and use these to produce original pieces of theatre. Additional support from the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) will provide expert tuition in other key areas.

Collaborations with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the new Library of Birmingham will provide unrivalled resources at the world-capital of the Shakespeare industry in Stratford upon Avon.

Exploring the traditional theoretical and practical study of Shakespeare's life and work, the course aims to fuel students' Shakespearean creativity as well as their scholarly acumen. Two qualifications are available (MA and PhD) with a flexible structure to allow students to tailor the course to their specific interests.

Dr Rokison said: "I am thrilled to be a part of this innovative course. I hope that the Ensemble nature of the programme will attract students with a range of skills and expertise – acting, directing, writing and designing, and look forward to working with them on developing truly original work with a potential life outside the academy. I am also delighted to be co-convening the course with Professor Ewan Fernie, whose own research so brilliantly complements the modules of 'Shakespeare in Society' and 'Shakespearience'"

Professor Michael Dobson, Director of the Shakespeare Institute, said: "The Institute exists to further the world's understanding of someone who was at once a playwright, an actor and a poet. I am delighted that students here will now have the opportunity to learn about Shakespeare not only by engaging in the rigorous academic study and analysis of his texts but by becoming Shakespeare's co-creators, producing new work across a whole range of theatrical, literary and visual media."

The new courses opening up at the Shakespeare Institute and the collaborative partnerships developing across many fronts reflects the University's major role in the global celebrations that will mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016.

Leading academics from the Institute have joined the national push to persuade the European parliament to adopt Shakespeare as its European Laureate. Plans are being drawn up currently to reaffirm Shakespeare as a truly international figure with academics upholding Shakespeare as an intimately important force in European culture, not just as somebody or something for Stratford.

Notes to editors

A launch event for prospective students will be held at the Shakespeare Institute on Wednesday 20 March

For media enquiries please contact Samantha Williams, University of Birmingham Press Office, 0121 414 6029, s.k.williams@bham.ac.uk

© University of Birmingham 2014