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Advice To The Players wins General Excellence at the New Hampshire Theatre Awards

Sandwich & Manchester – It was all sequins and glitter in Manchester last Friday night when forty-six theatre companies from around the state gathered at The Palace Theatre for the Annual New Hampshire Theatre Awards, and where Advice To The Players garnered the award for General Excellence. This was a thrilling moment for the Sandwich Shakespeare troupe, which had already wowed the assembled theatre folk with a broadsword fight sequence of the battle of Agincourt from last year's production of *Henry V*.

“Being recognized with the annual award for General Excellence acknowledges our company's willingness to take risks, even in such an uncertain economic climate.” says Acting Artistic Director Mark Woollett. “It is an honor that our little company richly deserves and we accept it with pride.”

It was a successful year for Advice To The Players, who arrived at the awards ceremony with six nominations from two Shakespeare productions, *Henry V* and *The Winter's Tale*. Three of those nominees, Sound Designer Patrick Hornig, and actresses Heather Hamilton and Lisa Thompson finished in the top three. “By presenting these plays our Director Caroline Nesbitt took some big risks,” continued Woollett. “These two dynamic shows are not performed as often as some of Shakespeare's other plays and that can scare off potential audience members.”

Advice To The Players is back on the boards in March with its production of *Hamlet*, which will be at the Inter-Lakes HS Auditorium in Meredith on March 18 & 19 and at The Salyards Center for the Arts in Conway on March 20 & 21. The production features recent Plymouth State University graduate Andrew Codispoti as the Danish prince. “*Hamlet* is an audience favorite”, remarked Managing Director Rebecca Boyden, “especially with the schools. I'm anticipating a lot of interest in this show.” Boyden is in charge of fundraising for Advice To The Players and recently announced a Matching Grant opportunity for those interested in ‘Doubling their Dollars for Drama’. “We are thrilled that an anonymous donor has offered us a \$2,500 match. Between now and April 1st all donations to the company will go toward meeting that match.”

This year Advice To The Players is offering two weeks of student focused rehearsal for the youth participants in *Hamlet*. Held after school from 3:30 – 5:30 they provide the young actors with voice and movement training and a deeper understanding of the text. The rehearsals start on February 15 and any area student age 13 and up is welcome to come and participate. Mark Woollett is directing the production, and invites interested students to come to the first rehearsal at the Sandwich Town Hall at 3:30 pm on Monday, February 15. If you want to participate but can't come on Monday, you can call Mark at 413-822-9064 or send an e-mail to atp@cyberpine.net. Additional information about Advice To The Players can be found at www.advicetotheplayers.org.

Photo Captions:

Sianna, Alex, Mark_NHTA8.jpg: Student actors Sianna Streeter and Alex Butcher-Nesbitt celebrate with Advice To The Players' Acting Artistic Director Mark Woollett at the New Hampshire Theatre Awards. Advice To The Players won the award for General Excellence.

Andrew&Angela_NHTA8.jpg: Actors Andrew Codispoti and Angela Smith at the NH Theatre Awards. Codispoti is playing the title role and Smith is Ophelia in Advice To The Players' upcoming production of *Hamlet*.

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