

## 'All's Well' in Carlson Park

**All's Well That Ends Well**  
Sat. & Sun., 2 p.m. — Free  
Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park  
Motor Avenue & Braddock Drive,  
Culver City

By Mary Templeton

Should a critic mention only a play and its production elements? Or should a review encompass the whole event, including ambiance and details of the venue? Assuming the latter, there can't be a better theatrical experience than sitting outside in a park under a tree, with a gentle breeze blowing, watching a professional troupe of actors perform classic theatre.

The Culver City Public Theatre opened its season last Saturday with a skillful production of "All's Well That Ends Well." This dark comedy is considered one of Shakespeare's most difficult and challenging to produce. Yet the non-profit, non-equity professional theatre company based in Culver City, in residence at Dr. Paul Carlson Memorial Park, mounted an enjoyable production of this rarely produced play.

Helena is in love with Bertram and, of course, he not with her. She follows him to Paris and cures the dying King of France with medical knowledge learned from her late father. The King, out of gratitude, decrees that Helena can marry any man she wishes. She chooses Bertram. Reluctantly, he marries her. Instead of consummating the marriage, Bertram runs off to Italy. Helena again follows, and the rest of the play chronicles Helena's attempts to meet the challenge Bertram has given her.

Andrea Westby is wonderful as Helena. It is difficult to convey just the right balance

of strength and weakness, confidence and desperation, assurance and vulnerability, to portray Helena well, and Ms. Westby does it effectively.

Tyler Lindsay is the spoiled, snobbish Bertram. The only question is why the beautiful and bright Helena is in love with this arrogant, womanizing man. But Mr. Lindsay's Bertram makes the premise believable.

All of the members of the cast carry off their roles well. Laura Neufeld's Countess of Rousillon, Stacie Wengryn's Diana, and John Duncan's clown Lavache deserve special mention.

Kyle Nudo is Parolles, Bertram's lying friend. He plays his character broader in comparison to the more subdued performances of the rest of the cast. But an argument can be made that the role calls for it. This version of "All's Well that Ends Well" is set "sometime in the late 1800s," and the costumes by RoseMarie Fabiano work well. They are appropriately old-fashioned enough to depict the right tone, and not so heavy as to be distracting in the summer heat.

Shakespeare can be ponderous, yet "modern" versions are often disconcertingly incongruous. This production, under Gregg W. Bervoort's direction, is just right, especially with the sometimes difficult conditions imposed by the outdoor setting.

But there is plenty of shade for the blankets and lawn chairs of the audience, and always a breeze in Carlson Park. Seeing the actors fend off a couple of butterflies, and having the dialogue drowned out by a helicopter only once, is a small price to pay for experiencing a superb production of Shakespeare in the park.