

Both Alike in Dignity

Dartmouth professor helps Bosnian youth mend fences through theater

Dartmouth Professor of Education [Andrew Garrod](#) is interested in the impact of the Bosnian Civil War and in helping to heal some of the rifts that persist in the multiethnic country more than 10 years after the violence ended. This August, Garrod, a veteran director of more than 40 high school and community theater productions, produced a multiethnic, multilingual production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The play was put on using students from 10 segregated high schools in the city of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a heavily segregated town still rife with ethnic tensions.

Aiding Garrod in the Mostar production were several Dartmouth alumni and a current student, including assistant director Caz Liske '04, costume, lighting, and set designer Sabrina Peric '03, production manager Lucy Whidden '07, and David Yorio MALS '04, who is making a documentary film about the project.

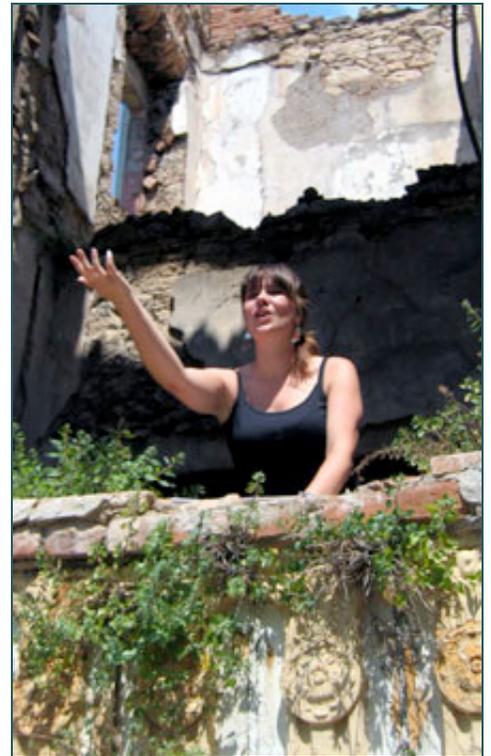
The production, which ran for four evenings, was staged in the ruins of the University of Mostar Library, serving as a reminder of the devastating wartime violence between the city's three ethnic groups-Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs. Although the 1566 bridge after which the city is named was rebuilt from rubble and reopened in 2004, symbolically rejoining the city's different communities, ethnic tensions have persisted. Even so, the crosscultural exploration and mutual understanding that developed among the ethnically diverse cast of *Romeo and Juliet* was encouraging to Garrod and his crew.

According to Liske, who is currently attending the [Moscow Theater Arts School](#), "The leadership shown by our cast is very encouraging. These teenagers make me hopeful for Mostar's future."

Whidden agrees, adding, "We're helping our cast create a play, but we're also helping them create a sense of community."

Garrod cites the tangible results of the crosscultural collaboration. "We were concerned when an actor was late for rehearsal one day, until we found out that one of his new friends from the cast had taken him to visit 'her' side of the bridge for the first time in his life."

The interethnic cooperation was perhaps most transformative for the student players themselves. Klara Markic, 18, who played Juliet, is a Croat. She explains, "We have a problem in our city between different cultures, but I am glad that Romeo is a Muslim and I am a Christian. It is good to show the



Klara Markic as Juliet in an August production of *Romeo and Juliet*, staged in the ethnically divided city of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Professor of Education Andrew Garrod directed the play. (Photo courtesy Andrew Harrod)

city that different people can work together for this play."

Mostarian Majla Custo, a recent high school graduate who served as the play's production manager, agrees. "On the first day of rehearsal, the actors got into a fight about whether to call the local language Bosnian or Croatian. Now they all just say 'our language.' It's amazing. I never thought I would hear that."

By LUCY WHIDDEN '07

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