Romeo and Juliet Wake Up in 2009!

BY MELANIE CRAWFORD

Shakespeare is never the same after Prof. Melissa Hillman has given it her magical touch.

That’s because Hillman’s outlook on Shakespeare is different from most Shakespeare enthusiasts. “I focus more on the narrative than on the poetry—although the poetry is beautiful, too, ” she said. “It’s important to see the character of Shakespeare as real people in real life. We have to remember that we can buy a ticket and sit in the audience, you’re saying, “Tell me a story.” So I work hard at making each story clear and understandable to the audience.”

Hillman takes each Shakespeare play and “edit it for clarity.”

For “Romeo and Juliet,” she cut the play’s length and trimmed the 5,788 lines completely.

Instead, she has kept the actors present, putting more emphasis on the poetry. Ironically, Hillman earned her Master’s degree in contemporary theatre, and wanted to attend a two-year program at New York Film Academy in Los Angeles, upon graduating from CSUEB in spring 2010. He hopes to work in TV and movies, and would like to both act and be a news reporter.

“A story is a group of people, because there are so many different characters and events that you have to be able to keep track of each one,” said Hillman.

She went on to say that as a founding member of Impact Theatre, Shakespeare is “a lot of fun on the stage, and we would love to see more people enjoying it.”

Shakespeare helps me work on my pronunciation when I perform,” he said, acknowledging that this is a common challenge for contemporary audiences. Shakespeare can be a difficult language for many people to understand and enjoy.

He also said that acting is a release from the stress of his other classes.

If you have never been a fan of Shakespeare, this is your opportunity to sample it painlessly. “Romeo and Juliet” will be performed in the University Theatre on August 7, 8, 14, 15 and 16. The best part is the cost: only $5 for CSUEB East Bay students!