

## News

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### Lanai selected as setting for 'The Tempest'

Mirren to star in gender-adjusted lead

By RICK CHATENEVER, Entertainment Editor

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WAILUKU - The "brave new world" William Shakespeare imagined in his play "The Tempest" will look like Lanai and the Big Island in a major motion picture adaptation of the masterwork, set to begin filming in the islands in November.

Academy Award winner Helen Mirren will star in this fresh adaptation of the fantastical tale of a sorcerer exiled with his daughter to a remote magical island.

Award-winning writer-director Julie Taymor, best known for creating "The Lion King" on Broadway and directing the Oscar-winning "Frida" and "Across the Universe" on screen, has changed the gender of Shakespeare's central character, from Prospero to Prospera for Mirren's performance.

Fellow Oscar-winner Jeremy Irons will co-star, along with Djimon Hounsou, Russell Brand, Alfred Molina Ben Wishaw and Felicity Jones. Oscar-winner Geoffrey Rush and Christopher Eccleston were also in negotiations for roles in the production.

News of the production was confirmed earlier this week by Maui Film Commissioner Benita Brazier and officially announced Thursday by Honolulu-based TalkStory Productions, a production company that will team up with Chartoff Productions and Artemis films on this project, slated for distribution by Miramax Films.

"I'm thrilled to have actors of this stature experience our island home, said Brazier on Thursday. "While filming in the state has produced many box-office hits, the County of Maui and the island of Lanai have never welcomed so many Oscar-winning talents before."

Three weeks of filming on Lanai are set for November, followed by two weeks on the Big Island, according to Brazier. She estimated that the project would bring more than \$10 million into the state economy.

The announcement followed months of negotiations and location scouting on Lanai and the Big Island.

"I've been working with the producer and director for over a year to bring this project to Maui County and the island of Lanai," Brazier said. "For a production of this size and budget, all the stars have to align in perfect order, and hopefully the stars are now aligned."

In accommodating the needs of the production, she added, "I have been working with the cultural practitioners on Lanai to identify locations appropriate for the project."

Although Taymor has taken the bold step of changing the gender of Shakespeare's protagonist, the new version is still set in the 16th century. The comedy is regarded as the last of the Bard's works for the stage, and the movie will be guided by his original vision.

"It's Shakespeare's script that Julie has adapted," Brazier said.

"We're very excited to bring a production of this extraordinary caliber and talent to Hawaii," said TalkStory Executive Producer Jason Lau in a release. "Mirren, Irons and Rush are Oscar winners as well as producer Robert Chartoff, composer Elliot Goldenthal, costume designer Sandy Powell and film editor Francoise Bonnot."

Powell is another Oscar winner while Goldenthal and Bonnot last collaborated with director Taymor on "Across the Universe," an original musical based on songs by the Beatles.

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#### Article Photos



Julie Taymor is shown on the set directing "Across the Universe." The award-winning writer-director will helm a new major production of William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," which will film on Lanai and the Big Island in November and December.

Revolution Studios photo

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