Cuarto

The Magazine of the Shakespeare Theatre Association Spring / Summer 2024

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A Letter from the STA President

Dear STA Family and Friends,

In 1991, the Shakespeare Theatre Association was founded to provide companies engaged in the production of Shakespeare's works with the counsel and good practices of their peers. In the words of Sidney Berger, "we needed to find better ways, more efficient ways, deeper ways of trying to do these works again so that they were not regarded as masterpieces, so that they were regarded as plays that were written a week ago or a year ago, so that they spoke to their audiences in terms of what their lives are."

In the thirty-three years that have passed since then, STA has grown from a group of American companies to an association that reaches around the world. In that time, too, producers of Shakespeare have leaned into the principle of making Shakespeare's works fresh to contemporary audiences, something that we can see again and again in STA conferences when we share the practices that we use to do this.

In Atlanta, we heard about the various ways in which practitioners and companies are making Shakespeare's works fresh to their respective audiences. When STA was founded, Shakespeare and Shakespeare's works were still seen very much as a pinnacle of white, male, European culture, and as such was imbued with many under-examined assumptions about what it should look like and whom it should serve; we heard some of the ways in which STA members are tackling this legacy and carried on our own conversations about it, both in our practice and in our association's principles. We heard of projects like 50/50 Shakespeare, aimed at gender equality for Shakespearean actors, while grappling with questions of representation and access for people of all backgrounds.

What does the future of Shakespeare practice look like? How will STA engage with that future? These are the questions that stay with me as I enter my second year as STA president. Over the next several months, I hope we will move closer to finding out.



Nicolette Bethel
President, Shakespeare Theatre Association
President and Co-Founder, Shakespeare in Paradise



Front Cover: Simon Elias as Hamlet in Bremer Shakespeare's 2023 production in Germany in partnership with Prague Shakespeare. Photo by Marianne Menke.

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A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear STA Members and Friends of STA,

As Executive Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA), I am pleased to announce (along with Mark Edelman, Founder and President of Theater League, Inc.), that Theater League will be gifting thirty-three (33) Shakespeare theatres across the United States and internationally a grant of \$255,000 in general operating support. This marks the second year that these non-restricted gifts of either \$5,000 or \$10,000 (based on budget size) will be awarded to STA-member Shakespeare-producing theatres. This year awards will be given to eligible theatres with budgets between \$150,000 and \$2,750,000. An award of \$5,000 was also made to the Shakespeare Theatre Association itself.

Says Edelman, "Our 2023 partnership with STA and ongoing support of the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival in Kansas City made the extension of this grant program for 2024 a natural for us. Hundreds of thousands of patrons-- many of them attending free of charge in festival-like settings-- will take advantage of our grants and the great work for which STA member organizations are renowned. I'd like to think the Bard would be delighted."

STA is always looking for new ways to assist our membership, whether it be in the form of support to attend our annual conference, or by seeking out financial assistance for our hard-working member theatres. Support for Shakespeare and the classics in the communities we serve is such an important issue and STA and all our member recipients are grateful to Theater League for their support.

Kansas City-based Theater League is a not-for-profit performing arts organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the communities it serves with the thrill of live theatre. Founded in 1976, the group supports theatre companies in its hometown and across the country, including subsidizing tickets for student groups through its Theater ROcKs (Reach Out to Kids) program.

"What appealed to us is the far-flung nature of the organizations we'll be supporting with this grant program," continued Edelman. "Shakespeare companies in twenty-five states plus the Czech Republic will get a little help from Theater League."

I am personally so grateful to Mr. Edelman and Theater League for this incredible gift, made even more incredible as this is the second year some STA member theatres have benefitted from the generosity of Theater League and its amazing Board of Directors in supporting Shakespeare producers and STA.

All the best,

Patrick Flick

Potrik Zlis

Executive Director, Shakespeare Theatre Association



The Shakespeare Theatre Association is sponsored by:



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Feeling Lonely at the Top?

When it comes to board of trustee and staff communications and relations, it's easy to become isolated and feel overwhelmed with the myriad responsibilities and duties facing artistic and managing directors. Consider these questions an opportunity for an "executive tune-up" to add perspective and clarity to your executive leadership basics:

- 1. Do you have a written contract that covers all the pertinent aspects of your employment, including your compensation and specific responsibilities related to your annual evaluation?
- 2. Have you thanked your board members individually for their volunteer work and special contributions to your institution in the past six months?
- 3. Have you written your board, individually or collectively, in the last thirty days to detail your most recent institutional, financial, artistic, and community successes, plans, projects, and concerns?
- 4. Have you ever heard these words in a board meeting: "Why didn't I know about that?" "When did that happen?" "We're doing what?" "We have a deficit?" "We need money?"
- 5. Do you have a plan to address these questions?
- 6. Have you failed to balance your budget in the last five years? Is there a plan in place to remedy this imbalance?
- 7. Do you share credit with other members of your institution in formal board meetings? Do you introduce your company members to your board?
- 8. Do you have an up-to-date strategic plan in place for your institution?
- 9. Does your board enjoy board meetings? Do you enjoy board meetings?
- 10. Do your board meetings start on time? Is there a clear agenda for every meeting? Does the board follow the agenda?
- 11. Do your board members feel you are accessible to them? Do your staff members feel you are accessible to them? Are you accessible?
- 12. Are you buried in emails/faxes/telephone calls/meetings?
- 13. Do you eat well and exercise to ameliorate stress?
- 14. If I called your office at 10 a.m. on a weekday, could I find a way to talk to a live human being within one minute?
- 15. Do you deliver bad news in writing, in person, or on the phone?
- 16. Is your office a disorganized mess, an organized mess, or a perfect example of organizational efficiency?
- 17. Do you compile an annual report for your board of trustees?
- 18. Do you treat your employees with respect and dignity?
- 19. Do you feel appreciated for your contributions to your institution?
- 20. Is it lonely at the top?

Quarto Editor Jim Volz is an international arts consultant and Professor of Theatre at California State University, Fullerton.



The Shakespeare Theatre Association Conference is sponsored by:



National Endowment for the Arts

Carving Out Space for Curiosity, Creativity and Community

By Karen Ann Daniels

Director of Programming and Performance - Folger Shakespeare Library - Artistic Director, Folger Theatre

It's 2024, y'all, and we're still figuring out what life means on this side of the pandemic. Yes, I said pandemic. Isn't that over, you ask? Not for artists, producers, and artisans. The industry we knew when we retreated into our homes in March 2020, while hugely flawed and challenging, has barely survived. Barely. Many of us have returned to our organizations, and the field of independent artists we rely upon have been forced to decide if they will be able to build a life again in this industry. Will they be seen and welcomed, or harmed, pigeonholed, underpaid, and overworked? Then there is the next generation: will they, can they, even imagine an industry that will allow them to innovate and imagine freely? And what about the organizations who promised to grow, to become more anti-racist and equitable? Have they grown weary of even trying? Every



Pictured above is Karen Ann Daniels and the cast of *Our Verse in Time to Come*, an original play by Karen Ann Daniels and Malik Work, Folger Shakespeare Library 2023. Photo by Peggy Ryan.

day, I step into this work wondering if I am helping to keep a dinosaur alive or investing in the radical reimagining of theatre. It's hard out here in these theatrical streets.

I joined the Folger Shakespeare Library in October of 2021. The world was in the grips of social and political climate-change, and the Folger was undergoing an extensive renovation. I thought I was walking into a world of possibility. How many institutions have frozen their operations to make such a significant physical and cultural shift in the name of accessibility?

As I got to know this long-standing institution, a lot of questions came up for me. Many of these questions echoed debates within the organization. Should the scope of our work be limited to Shakespeare? After all, it is our middle name. And yet, the institution, its collections, library, education and artistic output reveal a unique combination that makes Folger a special unicorn of a cultural institution. I decided for myself that Shakespeare would not define the boundaries of our work. Instead, he would be the catalyst to expand it and welcome more people to the Folger.

Simultaneously, from the outside looking in, I've found that folks like to ask "Why Shakespeare?" or "Why not Shakespeare?" And to what end? To defend our cultural obsession with him? Or so we can address how his work has historically been used as a tool of oppression? Can we fall back in love with Shakespeare without an agenda, and detangle the work from such a complicated history? How can we reimagine his relevance to the people we are, here and now?

Shakespearean performance has a long history and dedicated audience that, for multiple generations, has established a performance tradition that retells his stories in the "correct" way. As the dominant culture makers have aged, there is a generational gap that has been exposed. While the audiences haven't diversified, the aging white audience base has become the "reliable" supporters, and the theatres have continued to shape and focus their work around the preferences of those audiences.

But the culture-makers and leaders no longer look like or think like those audiences. Their work reflects a world that is globally

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Carving Out Space for Curiosity, Creativity and Community

linked, and is interested in the intersections of identity, addressing historical harm, and empowering narrative perspectives that have been sidelined for far too long. These artists are interested in iteration, adaptation, inclusion, even instruction in an effort to remake the world in their image – the same way their older white counterparts did for generations. They engage with Shakespeare's work as inspiration for new stories, which is a different way of loving and relating to his work.

I strive for empathy on both sides of this conversation. As a human being, I love the things I love. I just do. You'll never be able to convince me that *Grease* is a musical worthy of my time. It's misogyny, it's anti-feminist, it's anti-black. And every time I hear a song from the show, something inside me cringes and blocks it out. AND I also know that I can grow to love things that on the initial onset I thought I wouldn't find anything to connect myself to or to find enjoyment in. Things that seem to be contrary to my culture, experience, and understanding of life. It's through this lens that I understand that Shakespeare can give us the opportunity to experience this kind of iterative growth in our own unique ways.



Pictured above are members of the cast of *Our Verse in Time to Come*, an original play by Karen Ann Daniels and Malik Work, Folger Shakespeare Library 2023. Photo by Peggy Ryan

I came to the Folger to invite folks on a journey of discovering what else they love about our beloved Bard, to embrace inquiry, connection and learning as the consistent and most important value of engaging with an institution that centers on Shakespeare. I call this Shakespeare as a starting point.

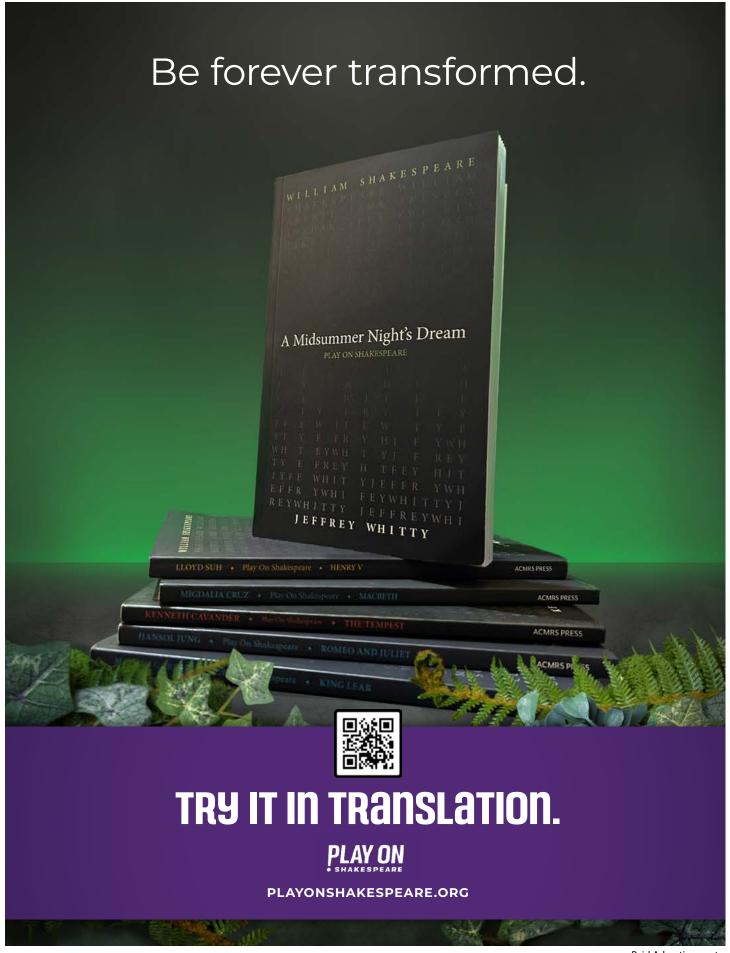
Meeting people where they are and sharing Shakespeare in a way that the community can see themselves in it is our path forward. To this end, we created the "Searching for Shakespeare" initiative, in partnership with the DC Public Library. This festival included a city-wide scavenger hunt, community workshops and panel discussions, and an exhibition of the *First Folio* at the MLK Library. The Folger also commissioned a play in honor of the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's *First Folio*. *Our Verse In Time to Come*, a contemporary play blending hip-hop and Shakespeare, a play I co-authored with the talented Malik Work, played in library branches in every ward of DC. This festival opened us up to the possibilities I envisioned when I first interviewed for this position back in 2021. We met so many people. Our community members could join a community workshop, see and learn about a *First Folio* first-hand and experience a new play that enabled the Folger to make personal connections to people they had never spoken to directly or consistently before. Through this festival, we got to show our city that Folger is not just a building or a collection of things or even a place to recreate Shakespearean plays. We showed them (and ourselves) that the Folger is a dynamic place of curiosity, connection, creativity and community.

As we ramp up for our opening in June, it feels like Folger is on the precipice of revival and ready to commit to engaging with a different mindset than before. We're going to keep up what we started on the road and in the community. Since we began this work, Folger has consistently seen around 45% new-to-us audiences. It turns out, our neighbors have been ready and waiting to connect with Folger. Before long, I believe we'll be filling this marble block with art, food, culture, history, music, dancing and an ever-evolving Shakespeare, becoming a meaningful part of the community in truly authentic ways. The trick now is to remain committed to introducing ourselves where people are even as we invite them to come into our expanded facility.

Periodically, the editorial staff of Quarto requests that STA Artistic, Management and Educational leaders share intimate thoughts on their work, the field, or the future. Submissions for future consideration can be sent to the Quarto Editor.

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Oregon Shakespeare Searches for Executive Director

Tim Bond became the seventh Artistic Director of OSF in September 2023 and Oregon Shakespeare Festival is now searching for a new Executive Director. According to the search firm, Arts Consulting Group, OSF has a 21-member board of directors and there are approximately 184 full-time and 147 part-time employees, 29 full-time seasonal workers, and an extensive network of dedicated volunteers.

According to the search bulletin, "OSF is a destination theatre where eighty percent of its audience members travel more than 125 miles to attend performances. Prior to the pandemic, OSF's annual estimated economic impact on the State of Oregon was over \$120 million. For the fiscal year ending October 31, 2024, OSF has an operating budget of \$35 million with a third of revenues from earned income and the remainder supported by contributed income and interest from its approximate \$28 million endowment. It is anticipated that the fiscal year 2024 will result in a 33% increase in ticket sales with a return to a 10-production season, its largest increase since the pandemic closures shuttered theatre venues across the nation."

According to the announcement, "OSF provides a competitive and equitable compensation package in the range of \$275,000 to \$325,000 with benefits that include paid time off and holidays; health insurance (medical, dental, vision); long-term disability and life insurances; and an employer contributed 403(b) retirement plan." For more information click HERE.



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By Lily Narbonne

Co-Founding Artistic Director/Actor, Lanes Coven Theater Company, Gloucester, Massachusetts, Director of A Midsummer Night's Dream 2024

As Lanes Coven enters into our fourth season, I'm humbled. Navigating roles as a "Founding Artistic Director" is a constant balance, but my confidence in our work remains strong. My husband and I are actors by training, and "abundance mindset," a la Deepak Chopra, is a value with which we run Lanes Coven. Scarcity complex was something we'd witnessed cause so much suffering in artists so when we formed in 2020, we were determined to counter that. Abundance helps us trust that if we're responsible, intentional and clear, we will have enough to create the theatre we want. I've always been brave in my acting, so I suppose that has influenced my leadership style with Lanes Coven. As an arts organization, we're unapologetic; we make exceptional Shakespeare productions that defy expectations. The "actor-driven" element of our mission allows us to infuse our craft into all aspects of the business, thus assuring that our values are at the core of our governance instead of capitalist "growth."



Lily Narbonne, Co-Founding Artistic Director of Lanes Coven Theater Company. Photo by David Goddard.

Reflecting on 2023, we produced *The Importance of Being Earnest*—which culminated with a surprise drag show—and with *Romeo & Juliet*, we put our stake in the ground for Queer/Trans allyship, body positivity and shame resilience. We created a supportive ensemble, where hierarchy gives way to collaboration. December came, and I read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer which made me question the implications of our work. I've realized, it's spiritual, our Shakespeare performances on outdoor lands. I'm working with our newly formed board to clarify to the community why we choose to perform outdoors.



Lily Narbonne (Juliet) and Phoebe Potts (Nurse) in Lanes Coven Theater Company's 2023 production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Photo by Jason Grow.

Where else do we have the opportunity to actionably play the Shakespeare text to its fullest? To meet the actual midsummer forest with the poetry? As Artistic Directors, we've always done a land acknowledgment to the Pawtucket and indigenous peoples in our curtain speeches. Come to think of it, last summer, when production stress was high, I inadvertently developed a meditation/embodiment exercise for the group warm-up to come down to earth (literally). Could we allow ourselves to be as grounded on the stage as the trees on the property? The stage deck supported by the earth, supported by the root systems, all coming up to carry us, as the trees do, on the land. So with humility, presence and deep respect for the nature around us, Lanes Coven aims to strengthen the actors' craft and bring the text to life for an audience. And as a Director, I'm asking, how can I help audiences get out of their own heads and, via Shakespeare, walk away wanting to take action for their community and the land around them?

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Seasons of Shakespeare

Advice To The Players is celebrating 25 years in 2024 with performances in Quimby Park, Castle in the Clouds, local schools and Moon Island in the Lakes and White Mountains region around Center Sandwich, New Hampshire. The season opens in August with War of the Roses Part II: Curses & Queens, the second part of Executive Director Jessie Chapman's adaptation of Shakespeare's histories. The Tempest, touring to public and school audiences, follows in September and a 25th Anniversary Gala Performance will be on Moon Island on Squam Lake. The season closes in December with Twelfth Night. Learn More

The American Globe Center (AGC) in

Connecticut is producing its first show, Shakespeare's Villains & Clowns @ the Globe. According to Founding Artistic Director Jim Warren, the show is "a two-actor mix tape of scenes, songs and improv that playfully showcases how Shakespeare's staging conditions fuel the AGC style. This one-hour event will turn you into a true believer in the AGC as the company is in the process of booking performances along the east coast of Connecticut." The company is looking for stakeholders to "get in on the ground floor of the grand plan to build the world's only timber-frame re-creation of Shakespeare's 1614 Globe theatre along with a state-of-the-art performing arts and education center." Learn More

American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin celebrates its 45th anniversary season this summer, June 8-November 10 in rotating repertory. For this milestone, APT will present a season reflective of its roots and its future. The season in the 1075-seat outdoor Hill Theatre includes Much Ado About Nothing and King Lear. On the Hill is Ring Round the Moon by Jean Anouilh, adapted by Christopher Fry; August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa. This season in the 200-seat, indoor Touchstone Theatre: the world premiere of Michael Hollinger's The Virgin Queen Entertains Her Fool; Marisela Treviño Orta's Wolf at the Door; Nick Payne's Constellations; and in the fall, Nat Turner in Jerusalem by Nathan Alan Davis. Learn More

Bard on the Beach's 35th annual season runs June 11–September 21, 2024 with four productions across two stages, playing in repertory. A whimsical carnival-inspired Twelfth Night (adapted and directed by Diana Donnelly) with original music by Veda Hille contrasts a modern *Hamlet* (adapted and directed by Stephen Drover) on the BMO Mainstage, while the Howard Family Stage features a Grecian-flavored The Comedy of Errors (adapted by Rebecca Northan with Bruce Horak, directed by Rebecca Northan) and an irreverent, footloose *Measure for* Measure (adapted and directed by Jivesh Parasram) that leans into the absurd. Learn More

Germany's **Bremer Shakespeare**

Company is producing Much Ado About Nothing this Spring, directed by Maja Delinic, and The World Between the Breaking News, a premiere production where radio host Gerlach prescribes books to depressed callers, including Shakespeare's Sonnets. When a Dark Lady emerges "from beyond," she joins four listeners who are calling in to talk about aging, broken relationships and life's uncertainties. The play is directed by Judith Kuckart. Learn More

Cal Shakes didn't produce in 2023 but is reportedly set to run a summer conservatory in 2024 and produce a "50th Anniversary" production of *As You Like It*, directed by Elizabeth Carter, September 12-29 after operating as a rental house in recent years. Learn More

Commonwealth Shakespeare Com-

pany returns for its 28th annual Free Shakespeare on the Common production of *The Winter's Tale*, directed by CSC Associate Artistic Director Bryn Boice. The show is to be presented at the Parkman Bandstand in July-August 2024 in partnership with the City of Boston, Mayor Michelle Wu, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Ryan Woods, and Boston Chief of Arts and Culture Kara Elliott-Ortega. To round out the summer, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's Apprentice Rep Company (ARC) will present two plays in repertory, Two Noble Kinsmen, directed by Regine Vital, and Richard II, directed by Victoria Townsend. Each play is free to the public and features actors from CSC's Apprentice Program for actor training.



Nadeem Umar-Khitab as Hamlet for Bard on the Beach's 2024 *Hamlet*, directed by Stephen Drover in Vancouver. Photo and design by Emily Cooper.

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Pictured above is Faran Tahir as *Macbeth* in Commonwealth Shakespeare's 2023 production directed by Steven Maler in Boston. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

ARC Performances will be presented at the Modern Theatre in Downtown Boston as part of its ongoing partnership with Suffolk University. Learn More

Connecticut's **Elm Shakespeare Company** has announced a \$250,000 contribution from renowned philanthropist Alexander Clark, marking a new era of growth and innovation for the organization. "It's more than just financial generosity; it's a shared vision of community, connection and the transformative power of the arts," said the Producing Artistic Director, Rebecca Goodheart. Learn More

The Detroit Globe, the producer for the Container Globe in Detroit, Michigan announced that it is reaching the final stages of the engineering, planning

and approval process to complete the next stage of the Globe's construction. Director of the Detroit Globe Angus Vail notes that "The goal is for the Globe to be ready in a two-story configuration for the 2024 season. The next step will be to add a third level in 2025 or 2026 so that the Container Globe will more closely resemble the performance space of Shakespeare's original Globe." Learn More

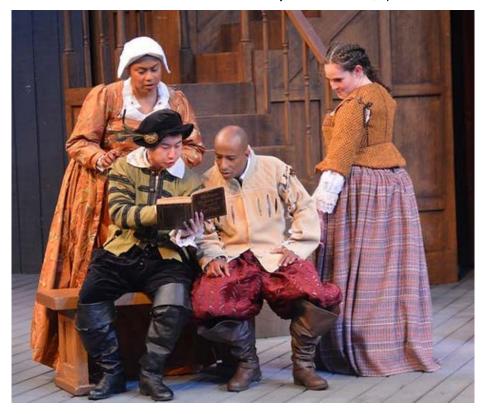
Canada's **Greater Victoria Shakespeare Festival's** 2024 season will be *Much Ado About Nothing*, June 27-July 13. Set in pre-Crash 1929, the production is directed by Willis Taylor, who has also composed the swing-inspired music. Performances are in the gardens of the Horticultural Society of the Pacific, as well as at Gorge Park in the Township of Esquimalt. Learn More

Harrisburg Shakespeare Company

(HSC) has been providing a unique cultural resource to the Central Pennsylvania community since 1994 and is best known for Free Shakespeare in the Park. HSC produces shows at Gamut Theatre's Select Medical Mainstage and tours a Shakespeare work annually to high schools, middle-schools and colleges. 2024 offerings include *The Jackson Rooming House: Music's Resting Place* produced in partnership with Sankofa African American Theatre Company and Gamut Theatre, *Romeo and Juliet, Pride and Prejudice, Cinderella*, and six children's theatre productions. Learn More

The Illinois Shakespeare Festival

announces its 47th repertory season on the grounds of the Ewing Cultural Center in Bloomington. *Twelfth Night*, directed by Robert Quinlan, opens the 2024



Olivia D. Dawson (Elizabeth Condell), Jimmy Nguyen (Ralph Crane), Geoffrey Warren Barnes II (John Heminges), and Isa Condo-Olvera (Alice) in *The Book of Will* at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in 2023. Directed by Lori Adams. Photo by Peter Guither.

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Hannah Ockenden as Helen in All's Well That Ends Well, Greater Victoria Shakespeare Festival 2023, directed by Jemma Alix Levy. Photo by Lara Eichhorn.

season on June 27. The world premiere of Sense and Sensibility, written and directed by Quetta Carpenter and based on Jane Austen's novel, opens June 29. Macbeth, directed by Corey Allen, completes the repertory line up July 13. The season closes on August 4 with a fundraiser performance of the "Bard Bash," a variety show presented by the acting company on the Ewing stage. A full schedule and information about free performances of Campfire Macbeth written by Nancy Steele Brokaw, a free theatre for young audiences show, can be found on the website. Learn More

Island Shakespeare Festival on Whidbey Island, Washington opens its summer 2024 season (July 19-September 9) with *King Lear* directed by Terri McMahon.

British actor Jonathan Cullen plays Lear.

The season also includes ISF's second partnership production with "Expand the Canon," featuring Aphra Behn's *The Lucky Chance*, directed by Julie Beckman. This 17th century comedy features headstrong heroines and aging Romeos in a raunchy Restoration Comedy about sex, marriage and consent. Learn More

Kentucky Shakespeare is preparing to tour A Midsummer Night's Dream to 38+ parks with the annual Shakespeare in the Parks tour. The 2024 tour production is directed by Crystian Wiltshire. This summer, KSF celebrates their 64th season of free Kentucky Shakespeare Festival in Central Park with Romeo and Juliet, directed by Producing Artistic Director Matt Wallace, The Comedy of Errors, directed by Associate Artistic Director Amy Attaway, and The Tempest, directed by

Wallace. The season features late-night productions of "Late Night Shakes" from the Louisville Improvisors and GLOBE Arm Wrestling from the Louisville Fringe Festival. The festival concludes with a week of the company's Globe Players professional training program for high school students presenting *Julius Caesar* and Louisville Ballet's *Shakespeare in Dance: Lady Lear*. The season features 60 food trucks rotating throughout the summer, Will's Tavern, TARC to the Park free bus pass program, and nightly community group pre-show performances. Learn More

Marin Shakespeare Company's 2024 summer season will be its first at both the Forest Meadows Amphitheater and its new indoor home in downtown San Rafael, California, It will also be the first

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Janice Robinson as Marcella and Jacq Babb as Minette in Island Shakespeare Festival's 2023 production of *A Bold Stroke for a Husband,* directed by Emily Lyon. Photo by Michael Stadler.

season under the artistic directorship of Jon Tracy. The season kicks off outdoors with *Much Ado About Nothing* directed by Bay Area actor/director Domenique Lozano. It continues indoors with Jon Tracy's *The Untime*, a contemporary reimagining of *Macbeth*, also directed by Tracy. Rounding out the season outdoors will be an all-female *Comedy of Errors* directed by San Francisco Mime Troupe Artistic Director Michael Gene Sullivan. Learn More

Merced Shakespearefest's summer "Shakespeare FREE in the Park," is *Twelfth Night*, and the season will end with Calderon's *Life is a Dream or La Vida es Sueno* in October in a bilingual collaboration between Merced Shakes and the University of California/Merced. "Our mid-sized town in the California Central Valley has a large Latino population, which is

definitely underserved," explains Heike Hambley, founder and artistic director of Merced Shakespearefest. <u>Learn More</u>

In 2024, **The Nashville Shakespeare Festival** mounted a staged reading of
Carlyle Brown's *The African Company Presents Richard III*. The reading, directed
by Dr. Lawrence James, featured a cast of
both local and national actors performing the play with script in hand. "The play
depicts an actual event in early American
history, 1821: it celebrates self-expression
by minorities—a desperation of Black
voices to be heard on the stage," notes
Dr. James. "The play evokes the dichotomy of Black Americans' experiences
throughout history." Learn More

In 2024, New Swan Shakespeare
Festival returns to rotating repertory
under the stars in a 15-ton, portable,
mini-Elizabethan theatre on the University of California, Irvine campus. Twelfth
Night or What You Will will be directed
by founding artistic director Eli Simon
and Measure for Measure will be directed
by associate artistic director Beth Lopes.
This summer, supported by the Center's
outreach and educational initiatives,
New Swan is inaugurating an Actor Apprenticeship Program. Learn More

The Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival

returns this summer with As You Like It (directed by Sara Holdren) from the Professional Company and "ShakeScenes" and "Shakespeare After Hours" from the Community Company. Actors From The London Stage tours colleges and universities in fall 2024 with Twelfth Night and planning is underway to commemorate



Merced Shakespearefest's David Hambley as Romeo and Charlene West as Juliet, directed by Heike Hambley. Photo by Shawn Overton.

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Neill Robertson as Hecate in Kentucky Shakespeare's 2023 Macbeth, directed by Amy Attaway. Photo by Bill Brymer.

two significant upcoming milestones in 2025: the 25th anniversary of the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival and the 50th season of Actors From The London Stage. Learn More

The Old Globe in San Diego's popular annual event *Thinking Shakespeare Live!*, directed by the Globe's Erna Finci Viterbi Artistic Director Barry Edelstein, will be held on Saturday, June 8. This program is part of a milestone celebration in Globe history surrounding a once-in-a-generation event, as The Old Globe becomes the 11th theatre company nationwide to complete Shakespeare's canon with *Hen-*

ry 6, a new two-play adaptation of Henry VI, Parts I, II, and III, directed and adapted by Edelstein, as part of the Globe's 2024 Summer Shakespeare Festival. The 2024 season includes The Age of Innocence, King James, Ride, Stir, Fat Ham, Henry 6 One: Flowers and France, Dual Reality, Henry Two: Riot and Reckoning, Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson-Apt. 2B, Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express and more. Learn More

Oregon Shakespeare's 2024 season includes *Coriolanus, Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing, Behfarmaheen (If You Please), Born with Teeth, Lizard Boy, Smote*

This, A Comedy About God and Other Serious \$H*T and Lisa Wolpe's Shakespeare and the Alchemy of Gender. Learn More
This spring, Orlando Shakespeare is presenting David Ives' Venus in Fur, Debra Ann Byrd's Becoming Othello: A Black Girl's Journey and Ain't Misbehavin' as conceived by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby, Jr. Learn More

Aligning with its mission to enrich and engage the widest audience, **Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival (PSF)** is expanding its programming this summer through various outreach initiatives.

Among these is the 2nd annual "Play

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Nashville Shakespeare's Pierre Johnson, Denice Hicks, Jack E. Chambers, Kamal Bolden, Gerold Oliver, Maya Antoinette Riley, Brian Webb Russell and Persephone Felder-Fentress. Photo by Kamal Bolden.

On!" Community Tour, presenting free performances of *The Comedy of Errors* in libraries, parks, and community centers. Additionally, PSF's Community Day—a celebration of the arts and local organizations—will feature family-friendly activities and live performances, including the children's theatre production of Winnie-the-Pooh & Friends, alongside performances of The Merry Wives of Windsor. Additionally, a new initiative will see the Festival's Shakespeare for Kids show touring on the road, offering free performances to local public libraries. "The theme this summer is 'Persistence of Love,' and I love how theatre connects people and encourages us to see the world a bit differently. Our community efforts are invitations to bring us all together with love this summer," says Jason King Jones Artistic Director. <u>Learn</u> More

After performances at **Portland Center Stage (PCS)**, Sean San José's *Coriolanus* will move to Oregon Shakespeare
Festival on July 23 in partnership with
PCS and upstart crow collective. This
movement-focused production, directed by OSF's Associate Artistic Director
Rosa Joshi, features a cast of female and
non-binary actors. Also this summer, the
Great Lakes Theater and the Idaho Shakespeare Festival are partnering for a touring production of Jeff Whitty's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which begins August

9 in Boise, Idaho, and closes November 2 in Cleveland, Ohio. In San Francisco, The Magic Theatre will produce Naomi lizuka's *Richard II* from August 21-September 8. Culminating the fall/winter season, the United Kingdom's 1623 Theatre Company will produce Tracy Young's *The Winter's Tale*. The "Play On Shakespeare" translations are available for purchase at ACMRS Press or listen to the podcasts at "Play On Podcasts." More Information can be found HERE.

Prague Shakespeare's spring season includes a revival of *The 39 Steps* and the 2024 Summer Shakespeare Intensives season includes *Titus Andronicus* directed by Kevin Hopkins and Claire

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Seasons of Shakespeare

Nicholls; Troilus and Cressida directed by Brendon Fox: Romeo and Juliet directed by Dmitry Troyanovsky; Twelfth Night directed by Dani Bedau; The Two Noble Kinsmen directed by Lisa Wolpe; Macbeth directed by Dawn Stern and Stephan Wolfert; Hamlet directed by Guy Roberts (also Italy tour); The Merchant of Venice directed by Guy Roberts (also Italy tour); The Tempest directed by Kiara Pipino (also Italy tour); *Measure for Measure* directed by Alasdair Hunter; The Comedy of Errors directed by Jennifer King; The Taming of the Shrew directed by Christine Schmidle; Arden of Faversham directed by Matthew Davies; and All's Well That Ends Well directed by Laura Cole. Learn More

In 2024, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's "Free Shakespeare in the Park" production will feature The Tempest, which was also the Free Shakespeare in the Park debut show in 1983. The production will be directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka, whose directing credits include the world premieres of The Red Shades: A Trans Superhero Rock Opera (Z Space) and VS. (TheatreFIRST), Seeing Red: The Radio Play (San Francisco Mime Troupe), Ben Okri's The Secret Source (Word for Word) and Wole Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists (Cutting Ball). As an actor, Rotimi most recently played Oberon and Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Folger Theatre, Washington D.C. <u>Learn More</u>

Santa Cruz Shakespeare's 2024 "Season of Generations" includes the summer festival's As You Like It, directed by longtime American theatre leader, Carey Perloff. Second up is The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde, directed by Paul Mullins. The final show of the summer repertory is Hamlet, directed by Susan Dalian, and starring Charles Pasternak



Sophia Metcalf as the Fool, Junior Nyong'o as Edgar, Paul Whitworth as Lear and Patty Gallagher as Kent in Santa Cruz Shakespeare's 2023 production of *King Lear*, directed by Paul Mullins). Photo by Kevin Lohman.

as Hamlet and Mike Ryan as Claudius. Producing in the festival Grove for the first time in the fall, SCS will then present *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams, running through September. Finally, *A Christmas Carol* will premiere at the Veterans Memorial Hall in downtown Santa Cruz, running from late-November through Christmas Eve. Summer/Fall performances run July 13 to September 29 and the Winter shows run November 23 to December 24. Learn More

Shakespeare & Company's 2024 season includes two world premieres, The Islanders by Carey Crim and Three Tall Persian Women by Awni Abdi-Bahri; a regional premiere, The Flight of the Monarch by Jim Frangione, and the comic thriller A Body of Water by Lee Blessing. These shows join Comedy of Errors and The Winter's Tale, each staged outdoors at the Arthur S. Waldstein Amphitheatre, and a musical spin on the Bard's words with the Shake it Up Shakespeare Cabaret.

Learn More

Shakespeare in Yosemite is producing A Midsummer Yosemite's Dream in April 2024 in Yosemite National Park. This year's show takes as its starting point the archival discovery that director Max Reinhardt declined an invitation to stage Dream in front of Yosemite falls in 1934. Ninety years later, the company's musical adaptation "imagines a collision of 1930s fairies with 2024 Ranger Mechanicals and lover-tourists and is full of humor, heart, and calls to live in ecological balance with our home planet," explains Dr. Katherine Steele Brokaw, Artistic Director. A film of the show will appear on the company's YouTube channel, and updates can be found on Instagram and Tik-Tok (@yosemiteshakes for all), and HERE

This spring, Livermore, California's **SPARC Theater's** Science@Play program, part of the "Get Out of the House! Reading Series," is presenting *Marjorie Prime* by Jordan Harrison and the newly commissioned *Running the Light* by Prince Gomolvilas. These are script-in-hand, semi-staged readings in an intimate setting. "Being in a community with two

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Shakespeare & Company's Jacob Ming-Trent and Sheila Bandyopadhyay in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2023. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

national labs makes plays with science themes a natural pairing," says Science@ Play director Michael Wayne Rice, who will lead the cast through an intensive short week of rehearsals and discussions. Lisa A Tromovitch is the Producing Artistic Director. Previous plays commissioned by SPARC Theater explored COVID and climate change. Learn More

In 2024, Canada's **Stratford Festival** is producing *Twelfth Night, Something Rotten, Cymbeline, Hedda Gabler, La Cage aux Folles, Romeo and Juliet, Wendy and Peter Pan, The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?, Get That Hope, London Assurance, Salesman in China* and *The Diviners*, based on a novel by Margaret Laurence. The festival is also organizing the 2024 Meighen Forum, bringing together artists, thought leaders and subject matter experts for a wide range of special events in 2024, many reflecting on the theme of "A World Elsewhere." A number of events are of-

fered through a series of themed weeks, focusing on Pride, a Season Deep Dive, Global Theatre, Readers and Writers, and Scholars and Experts. Comedy, concerts and special performances are offered throughout the season, as are Rarely Played and Song and Dance workshops, Lobby Talks, tours, Peer into the Playbill and Forum Academy events. Event listings can be found here. Learn More

Maine's **Theatre at Monmouth** opens its 55th anniversary season celebrating and lampooning Shakespeare with bickering middle-aged and awkward young lovers in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Anne Hathaway's ode to her life in *Shakespeare's Will*. The season also includes two buffoonish brothers wrangling over how best to bring up their wards in Moliere's *The School for Husbands* and Stephen Temperley's *Souvenir*, the musical story of Florence Foster Jenkins and her long time accompanist who took the opera world by storm ("but not always in a sensitive way," says the company).

Learn More



AJ Baldwin as Duke Frieda and Christopher Blonski as Oliver in Theatre at Monmouth's 2023 *As You Like It,* directed by Producing Artistic Director Dawn McAndrews. Photo by Kat Moraros.

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Thomas Bradac - STA Founding Member and former STA President. RiP, dear friend.

Thomas Galbraith Bradac, former Shakespeare Theatre Association President and Founding Member of STA, passed away on March 13, 2024. Tom will be remembered for nurturing STA's beginnings and for 50 years as a theatre professional, including serving as the Founding Artistic Director of Shakespeare Orange County and Garden Grove Shakespeare and inspiring students at Chapman University in California. A "Celebration of Life" for Tom will take place at the Garden Grove Amphitheatre, 12762 Main Street, Garden Grove, CA on April 23, 2024 at 1:30 PM. Please RSVP to alyssa.bradac@gmail.com. Dress code: Colorful.

The 2024 **Prague Shakespeare** Summer Shakespeare Intensives are expanding to include performance and training opportunities in Stratford-upon-Avon, London, Prague, Genoa and Venice.

The intensives take place in Prague, Czech Republic in June and July, the UK in June and Italy in July and August. Learn More

In news from **Notre Dame**, Debra Gasper has been promoted as the Ryan Family Producing Director. She is a longtime Shakespeare at Notre Dame employee and her new position grants executive-level oversight of all of Shakespeare at Notre Dame's many programs, including the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, Actors From The London Stage, the Shakespeare in Prisons Network, and special events. In related news, Scott Jackson has been named the Mary Irene Ryan Executive Artistic Director of Shakespeare at Notre Dame. Since joining the program in 2007, he has been instrumental in building Shakespeare at Notre Dame into an internationally recognized leader in multiple fields of Shakespeare scholarship and performance. Scott

currently serves as the vice president and president-elect for the Shakespeare Theatre Association, where he also served as treasurer from 2013-2017. Also, Cate Cappelmann is Shakespeare at Notre Dame's new General Manager. She is a recent graduate of the University of Notre Dame. Learn More

Shakespeare & Company of Lenox, Massachusetts has created the "Tina Packer Women of Will Directing Fellowship," designed to further the development of early-career directors who identify as women and have a passion for Shakespeare. Created in Packer's honor, the fellowship was conceived and funded by actor and Shakespeare & Company training alumnus John Douglas Thompson, with matching funds from an anonymous donor. Additional gifts were also made by a group of women directors whom Packer mentored at Shakespeare & Company. Learn More

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Shakespearean Snippets

Bruce C. Lee, a longtime employee of Utah Shakespeare Festival and key contributor to the Shakespeare Theatre Association's *Quarto* over many years, passed away on December 3, 2023. Mr. Lee was the former Publications Manager at the Utah Shakespeare Festival and retired in 2022 after a thirty-one year career at the Festival. www.bard.org

The Public Theatre's Free Shakespeare in the Park (in New York's Central Park) is slimming down and hitting the road this summer during major renovations of The Delacorte Theatre. The Comedy of Errors is heading out to parks and other venues around the city between Memorial Day and the end of June, followed by outdoor screenings of a filmed production of

Much Ado About Nothing in July, August and early September. <u>Learn More</u>

The Rustic Mechanicals, West Virginia's only professional Shakespeare troupe, is partnering with the WV Thespian Society to host the inaugural WV Branch Competition for the English Speaking Union's National Shakespeare Competition. "The Battle of the Bard 2024," took place in March at the WV State Thespian Festival at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

The national competition, in NYC on April 13-15, will be accepting winners from West Virginia in this monologue performance and sonnet declamation competition. Learn More

Rick Dildine is moving on from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival where he has served as artistic director for the past six years, effective June 30. Dildine will become artistic director at Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Learn More

Band of Brothers Shakespeare Company's 2023 season featured a *Peaky MacBeth*, "created with the combination of *Peaky Blinders* and the Scottish play," produced in an abandoned St. Columba Irish Catholic Church in the Laurel Mountains of Pennsylvania. Learn More



Shakespeare & Company's Tina Packer in Massachusetts. Photo by Shannon DeCelle.

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Weird William

From Spiderman in the movies to Romeo in an upcoming West End production of *Romeo and Juliet*, actor Tom Holland is set for a May 11-August 3 run in London's Duke of York's Theatre, directed by Jamie Lloyd. <u>Learn More</u>

Even Shakespeare's house needs repairs! The BBC reported that Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon was closed for part of January as "items which date back to the 1400s required a lot of care and attention." Around 400,000 of Stratford-upon-Avon's 2.5 million annual tourists visit the birthplace. Historians note that 1000-2500 people lived in the town when Shakespeare was born and the most recent census reports that 30,495 people currently reside in the city. Learn More

In an article titled "NOT TO BE: Florida Schools are Slashing Shakespeare to comply with DeSantis Agenda," Rolling Stone magazine reports that "Ron DeSantis is cracking down on education in Florida, and now some schools are cutting back on Shakespeare to comply with the governor's expansive slate of restrictions." Learn More



Band of Brothers Shakespeare Company's Kieran Cullen as Orlando, Larissa West as Celia and Miranda Reynolds as Rosalind in the 2023 *As You Like It*, directed by Laura Gordon. Photo by Douglas Meagher.



Orlando Shakes' Lorena Cohea as Joan of Arc in the company's "Bare Bard" production of *Henry VI*, *Part 1: Joan of Arc*, produced with less than 40 hours of rehearsal time without a director or designers. Photo by Tony Firriolo.

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Emilia and the "Noble" Kinsmen By Christine Schmidle

Director of Vision and Text, Interim Executive Director and Director of The Two Noble Kinsmen, Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival

In 2023, I directed Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival's seldom produced *The Two Noble Kinsmen* by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher. What started out as a marketing challenge turned out to be an audience favorite! The company even had audience members come to see the production specifically to complete watching the canon.

Prepping the script for rehearsals, I noticed how ambivalent both Shakespeare and Fletcher were in their writing of this play. Fletcher more so than Shakespeare, but even Shakespeare kept his own opinion out of the text quite often. Discovering this opened up a lot more ways of understanding and seeing the play than I had originally thought. Emilia grew from an unidentified character to a young Amazonian who very much knew what she wanted throughout the rehearsal process. Surprisingly, Shakespeare and Fletcher's words supported that.



The Two Noble Kinsmen produced by Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival, directed by Christine Schmidle in 2023 featuring Audrey Young, Marcus Winn, Anthony Veneziano, and Julie Chavez-Harrington. Photo by G's Photos.

I had the immense fortune to work as Text Associate on the Shakespeare's Globe production of The Two Noble Kinsmen in 2018, directed by Barrie Rutter. This meant going into the FlagShakes production was possibly easier for me than many other directors discovering and directing this play. And yet, working on the play in Flagstaff opened up a whole new level of understanding. FlagShakes prides itself on being an actor led company and I think we discovered more in the rehearsal room because of this model. I don't think I could have envisioned the feisty but

firm interpretation of Emilia that our amazingly talented actor Audrey Young took on in this role. It's a role that is almost impossible to read, and yet, put her on stage, give her some sass, and you have an Amazonian warrior breaking through the predetermined notions of the male-centric world of Athens.

While prepping for the production, I was determined to highlight the transcendence of the ages in *Kinsmen*. Costume designer Rin Hanovich created different worlds colliding and navigating on stage. I featured Chaucer in a newly added prologue, who appropriately was kept in Medieval costumes, followed by the steampunk nature of Athens. This collided with both the Rocker Babes of the Amazonians and the Adidas-wearing billionaires of Dubai, or rather, Thebes. The last group grounded the whole design: the tragic world of the working class of Athens--the Jailer and, in our case, her entourage - was in more traditional Renaissance costumes. What I liked about Rin's interpretation was the visualization of the mind sets of these characters. Audiences could tell that both Arcite and Palamon were more interested in the Amazonians because both groups had modern dress, rather than the Jailer's Daughter in her

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Renaissance garb. Audiences could also see the struggles of 'steam punk' Theseus having to negotiate with his new 'biker' bride Hippolyta, and his desire to get that knot tied before she might decide on a new lover.

I thought long and hard about how I wanted to portray Arcite and Palamon. Are these cousins possibly more to each other, lovers even? Besides the incestuous, I actually thought that taking that position would almost make this relationship easier to understand. I went for the harder decision and decided to keep them related and really good friends. But what does this mean, today, in our society? How do you portray a very close friendship between two young men, or rather boys, who have fought with each other countless times, are very comfortable with each other physically, and yet are not lovers? I was glad for the four weeks of rehearsal to establish this bond, and both Marcus Winn (Arcite) and Anthony Veneziano (Palamon) did an excellent job of showing that comfort level of closeness. What they also portrayed well was their constant competitiveness, climaxed in the scene where they are finally both in Emilia's presence and get to confess their supposed love. 'Forget I love her?' says Palamon, and Arcite answers: 'Though I think / I never shall enjoy her...' (3.6) Although Emilia is right there in the scene, probably even in front of them, neither Arcite nor Palamon address her directly but are focused on their own competitiveness rather than impressing Emilia herself. What a wonderful and smart detail in this play; thanks Fletcher!

Audrey Young as Emilia gives a detailed view into her perspective of the character: "While Emilia's opinion and sometimes actual presence, is overlooked by the male characters around her, she still stands strong in her thoughts and opinions. I believe this is best demonstrated in the scene mentioned above, when Arcite and Palamon battle for her hand in marriage. Alone on stage she makes it clear to the audience that she cannot decide between the two men and a little later, in the presence of Theseus, her opinion is still the same. She cannot be swayed by Theseus or her sister when it comes to taking a life simply because two men want her."

In the rehearsal room, we came across this over and over again: Emilia's words count. We found that Emilia's line at the very beginning of the play: 'If you grant not / my sister her petition ... from henceforth I'll not dare / to ask you anything, nor be so hard / ever to take a husband. (1.1) resonated through the play. There was a precedent set, something she had set herself and she was bound by her own word. It was those gems that we discovered together that made this play lift off of the page and the audience found joy and relevance in it. The production is "streamable" HERE.



The Two Noble Kinsmen produced by Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival, directed by Christine Schmidle in 2023 featuring Marcus Winn and Anthony Veneziano. Photo by G's Photos.

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The Container Globe, Detroit, Michigan, 2022. Photo by Ron Castellano.

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DEADLINES FOR QUARTO ARE OCTOBER 1 AND MARCH 1. Send Shakespeare News and Photographs to:

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Questions about photo size? Please contact Patrick Flick at patrick@stahome.org.

QUARTO is published for the international Shakespeare community and for Shakespeare Theatre Association Member Organizations. For membership information, contact Patrick Flick, Executive Director, at Patrick@stahome.org

This STA publication is produced in partnership with: California State University, Fullerton and the Shakespeare Theatre Association.

STA MISSION

The Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA) was established to provide a forum for the artistic, managerial, and education leadership for theatres primarily involved with the production of the works of William Shakespeare; to discuss issues and methods of work, resources, and information; and to act as an advocate for Shakespearean productions and training.

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www.stahome.org

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