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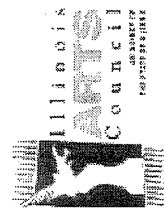
Christopher Wilson

James P. Wilson

Nita Lee Wilson

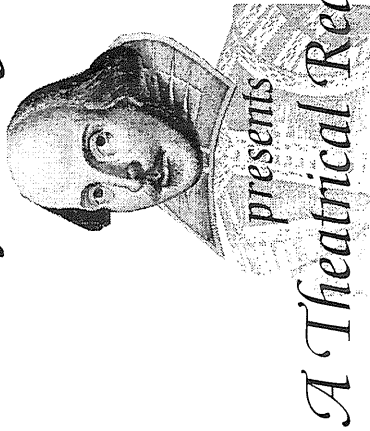


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# The Shakespeare Project of Chicago



presents

## A Theatrical Reading of

# My Name Is Will

The New Expanded Adaptation of  
 Selected Sonnets and Songs

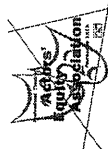
By

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Adapted and Directed by  
 PETER GARINO

Original Music by  
 CHRISTOPHER WALZ

Performances: April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2000



All Actors with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago are members of Actors' Equity Association the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

## Notes from the Director:

It can be argued that Shakespeare's sonnets are his most personal writings. Unlike his plays, which were meant to be performed, the sonnets were never intended to be published. However, they first appeared in print in 1609 (seven years prior to his death). The sonnets present historians with a number of intriguing questions: What was their motivation? Were they indeed autobiographical or simply literary exercises – ruminations on popular themes of poets in his time?

I prefer to believe that the sonnets are more than Elizabethan crossword puzzles. Could someone have written with the clarity and depths of emotion exhibited here and not have felt those emotions? Would Mozart have written a piano concerto simply to enjoy the arrangement of his score on paper without any consideration for the effect of his music on the listener? These questions reach to the very motivations of art itself.

For those who believe the sonnets to be reflections of Shakespeare's experiences, the sonnets can be grouped into two principle divisions. The first 126 appear to be directed to a young man, perhaps Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton. Over the course of the first group, Shakespeare expresses his friendship to the young man and encourages him to seek a mate in life and father children. Over time, his feelings grow deeper for his friend and he is distraught by being away from him for lengthy periods. A rival poet enters the scene (thought by some to be Christopher Marlowe) and Shakespeare's feelings of jealousy and insecurity are brought to the surface. Sonnets 127-154 add a new character to the proceedings, a woman, who has come to be known as Shakespeare's "Dark Lady." She is thought to be his mistress and someone who was also intimate with the young man, his patron. All of this makes for a star-crossed love triangle filled with lust, jealousy, betrayal, self-loathing and regret.

So why put them on the stage? That's a question I first asked myself a number of years ago when I first considered this project and I'm still coming up with lots of good reasons. Placing the sonnets in a theatrical context gives us the opportunity to *hear* the words aloud. I won't argue that *reading* the sonnets allows one to ponder and reflect at one's leisure at their intricate construct. However, giving *voice* to them brings to life their deeply personal language and attendant emotions and hopefully unlocks clues to their very motivation. From the actor's perspective, the sonnets represent tiny monologues rich in imagery and inherent conflict.

Chris Walz is a man of many talents. I had the good fortune of first working with him as a fellow actor several years ago and immediately became aware of his immense musical talent as well. When I asked him to write some original music for this piece and specified that I was more concerned with him finding his own truth with the material than having the songs sound Elizabethan he seemed to know exactly what I was talking about. I'm sure you'll agree with me that he has brought his own mark and a fresh interpretation to the songs included here.

I have many people to thank for their assistance in my journey on this project: Mara Polster, for encouraging my development of the piece; Rick Carter, Nancy Nickel and Maureen Gallagher, who lent their talents to early readings of the script; today's cast whose singular talents first brought my vision to reality last year and have returned again to work their collective magic. Special thanks to my wife Helene and my son Glen Thomas, who have always welcomed me home with open arms and love even after spending countless hours with the Shakespeare Project. I'd also like to say a special "thank you" to my Mom, who has always supported and encouraged my work in the theatre.

**-Peter Garino**

## This Month's Artists



**Peter Garino** (Director, Adaptor) has worked with *TSP* since 1995 and has appeared in over 20 *TSP* Theatrical Readings. He has also directed presentations of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *2 Henry IV*, and *Pericles*. Other credits include work with Steppenwolf Theatre, Organic Theatre, Body Politic Ensemble, Oak Park Festival Theatre and Illinois Shakespeare Festival. A native of Wayne, New Jersey, Peter trained at Hofstra University (New York), the National Shakespeare Company Conservatory, and received his M.F.A. in Acting at Illinois State University.



**Christopher Walz** (Composer) is a long time member of *The Shakespeare Project* and was last seen as the Dolphin in *Henry V*. Chris provided the sound design for *Twelfth Night*, the canned applause for *Richard III* and the long and violent storm for *King Lear*. He is currently touring the United States with his bluegrass band, Special Consensus. In addition to his notoriety around Chicago as a sound designer and teacher of guitar and voice, Chris has acted on the stages of the National Jewish Theatre, The Goodman, Marriott Lincolnshire, The Briar Street Theatre, Shakespeare Repertory, Northlight, The Court Theatre, The Absolute Theatre Company and was a founding member and Artistic Director of Terrapin Theatre and recently completed a run at The Goodman in *As You Like It*.

**Tom Hagglund** (Stage Manager) is pleased to work on this, his fourth *The Shakespeare Project* production, having previously stage-managed *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Tempest* and *Othello*. Tom most recently appeared in *Carmen* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

**Mara Polster** (Artistic Director) is delighted to have been a part of the development of this production and to have watched in awe the creative triumphs of her friends Peter Garino and Chris Walz in its creation. Mara and her husband Chris have recently been blessed with the birth of their beautiful son, Michael Aaron Wilson. Since May of 1995 she has led *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* through the entirety of William Shakespeare's dramatic works. Mara has acted on many of the stages here in Chicago and many others across the country. She played Agnes in *I Do, I Do* at the Evergreen Theatre, Vonnie in *The Roads To Home* at the Eclipse, and Edna/Ma'am White in *Freedom Bound* at the Indiana Repertory Theatre. Other favorite roles include Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*, Amiens in *As You Like It*, Emily in *Our Town* and many musicals including *Candide*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Evita*, *A Little Night Music*, *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Best Little Whorehouse*, *The King and I*, *Zorba*, and so on. With *TSP*, Mara has played many of the great Shakespearean women including Emilia in *Othello*, Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, Margaret in *3-Henry VI*, Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lady Macbeth and has provided similar opportunities to other actors in Chicago. She has directed *Titus Andronicus*, *Henry VIII*, *Comedy of Errors* (twice), *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Julius Caesar*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Othello*, *Loves Labours Lost*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* (three times), *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Coriolanus*, *Edward II*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*, which was mounted as *TSP*'s premier production last March/April. *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* is the grateful commemoration of two

fiercely strong souls, Samuel E. LaMaccchia and Michael Alan Wilson.