

PRESENTS

My Name Is Will

*A Dramatic Adaptation of Shakespeare's
Sonnets and Songs*

Adapted and directed by
Peter Garino

Original Music by Chris Walz

17th Season

November 5, 2011

A Benefit for The Shakespeare Project of Chicago



All actors with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org

P.O. Box 25126, Chicago, Illinois 60625

Still to come this season!

The Duchess of Malfi (John Webster)

January 21-22, 2012

Directed by Stephen Spencer

The Taming of the Shrew

February 25-26, 2012

Directed by Jeff Christian

Troilus and Cressida

April 21-22, 2012

Directed by Barbara Zahora

Performances:

Saturdays at 10:00am – The Newberry Library, Chicago

Saturdays at 2:00pm – The Wilmette Public Library

Sundays at 2:00pm – The Highland Park Public Library

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Artist Biographies



Jeff Chrisitan led the company for eight seasons, having adapted and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry VIII*, the gender-swapped *The Comedy of Errors*, *In Medea Res* (from Euripides' *Medea*), *Henry VI* (from Shakespeare's trilogy), *Faust* (from Marlowe and Goethe), *The Parvenu* (from Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*), Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Dickens's *The Cricket on the Hearth*, the outreach program *50 Minute Hamlet*, as well as having staged *King Lear*, *Love's Labours Lost*, *As You Like It*, Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, Sheridan's *The Rivals*, Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife* and Regina M. Schwartz's adaptation of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Other directing credits include *Mojo*

Mickybo, *A Whistle in the Dark* and *Our Father* (Seanachai Theatre Company), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (The Artistic Home), *Proof* and *Driving Miss Daisy* (New American Theater), *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labours Lost* (Lakeside Shakespeare; Michigan), the short film *Still Live*, both parts of *Angels in America* (The Journeyman; co-director and actor, sharing in three Jeff Awards and an After Dark Award), and James Krag's one-man show *According to Mark*. Acting credits with The Project include Richard III, Brutus, Proteus, Mercutio, Caliban, Oberson/Bottom/Theseus, Enobarbus, Bassanio, Hortensio, Buckingham, Oliver, Amiens, Antonio (*Twelfth Night*), Richard (*Henry VI*), Leicester (*Mary Stuart*), Aegeus (*In Medea Res*), Hamlet in *50 Minute Hamlet*, Satan (*Paradise Lost*) and one of the four actor/singers in *My Name is Will*. Other acting credits include work with The Goodman, Syracuse Stage, Indiana Rep, Writers' Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare, Milwaukee Rep, Madison Rep, The Women's Project of New York, Chicago Dramatists, Lakeside Shakespeare, New American Theater, Artists' Ensemble Theater, Illinois Theatre Center, Oak Park Festival, Artistic Home, Bernie Sahlins' production of *Murder in the Cathedral* and Tennessee Williams' recently discovered *The Day on Which a Man Dies* (in Chicago, East Hampton and Cape Cod). He is a member of the Seanachai ensemble, co-fronts the rock band Ingenious Whittler, teaches directing in Columbia College's Department of Film & Video, is a creative consultant for Tessera Publishing, and writes and directs live action and animated sequences for the Emmy Award winning Digital Kitchen. Film work includes *Batman Begins*, *Witches' Night*, *The Express*, *The Poker House*, *Pickman's Muse*, *Helix*, *Cyrus* and *Good People*. Jeff thanks you for your continued support of The Project.



Patrick Gagnon recently appeared in The Project's opening play of the 2011-2012 season *Richard II*. He appeared last year in The Project's performance of *My Name Is Will* at the opening of the Midwest Modern Language Association's annual meeting. Patrick recently appeared as Featured Ensemble in Drury Lane's critically-acclaimed *Sweeney Todd*, The Ziegfeld Tenor in *Funny Girl*, Baby John in *West Side Story* and Eugene (the geek) in *Grease*. Other credits include: *Show Boat, 1776, Honk!, Bye Bye Birdie, Miss Saigon, Evita* (Marriott Theatre); *The Good War* (Northlight Theatre – world premier), *Forever Plaid* (Royal George Theatre); *Strike Up the Band, One Touch of Venus*, and *Babes in Arms* (Auditorium Theatre – *Ovation!* series). Patrick is a graduate of Northwestern University and a member of Actors Equity Association. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

Self-blame can co-exist with snideness. Ask yourselves what the speaker in each poem is responding to. What has just happened, or what has just been said? Ask yourselves what response the speaker is trying to evoke in his listener. And you might even wonder what the listener, as we see him created in the poems, will indeed say in response. In Shakespeare's sequence, the beloved person never speaks. In what you'll be seeing, there will always be two responses----one as a listener and then one as a speaker. Shakespeare the dramatist is at work here, creating both inner and external tensions. Our sympathy may not always be completely with the speaker. The poet may be viewing the speaker at an ironic distance on occasion. We never get inside the listener's head. How might he (or she) respond to some of the speaker's arguments?

The sequence doesn't provide a true narrative, but it presents meaningful scenes from that narrative--scenes that give us half the dialogue. It presents the complexity of human relationships. We'd be mistaken if we looked for general or objective meditations on love or anything else in these poems. What we should look for, and what we find, is high drama. Don't try to follow a plot in what you'll be seeing. The idea is to enjoy the moments for what each one of them gives us.

The wonderful music that you'll be hearing is also important to the overall effect of the show. Some of these are settings of famous songs from the plays; some are settings of less well-known songs. Together, they present a wide range of attitudes toward love—or moods of love-- ranging from the lyrical and tender to the extremely harsh and bitter--even the obscene. We hope you'll enjoy them, both for themselves and for the ways in which they enrich the experience of the sonnets.

Form can be very revealing in the "drama" of the sonnets. It's not always an easy thing to hear, but when the form or structure of the sonnet breaks down, it's possible that the speaker's feelings aren't under tight control. Not every sonnet follows the "pure" form of Sonnet 73. Everything in these poems makes its contribution to the dramatic inner struggle within the speaker and to the struggle between speaker and listener. Listen, watch, and enjoy.

Peter Christensen (Professor Emeritus, Literature and Drama, Columbia College) received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and has regularly taught courses in Shakespeare, The Bible as Literature, Romantic Poets, Women Romantic Poets, British Literature, and Irish Literature. He has co-authored (with noted actor Yassen Peyankov) recently published and forthcoming new translations of plays by Chekhov and Bulgakov. Peter has also performed in productions of early English drama and served as dramaturg on many productions of both classic and modern plays in Chicago and London.

Shakespeare's Sonnets as Dialogue

By Dr. Peter Christensen

An Introduction to The Shakespeare Project of Chicago's Performance of "My Name is Will"

When the performance begins, you'll be watching something which will probably be new and different—a dramatic presentation which uses Shakespeare's sonnets as its dialogue. This idea may strike you as strange, since most people go to a poetry reading in order to hear and not to watch, but, if we read the sonnets with care, one of the first things we might notice about them is just how dramatic they really are.

What you'll be seeing isn't a casual attempt to be different, but an effort to take advantage of what the sonnets have to offer. Their dramatic quality is something that we can overlook if we attend a conventional reading of these poems. There is a sense of immediacy about them, and the emotion expressed in them strikes us as real. They often reply to something that has been said, and they may often end on a note of waiting for a reply. Sonnet 109, for instance, begins with the words "O, never say that I was false of heart." It's clearly a response to someone who has accused the speaker of being untrue. There are some who have regarded the poems as letters, and although the idea seems unreasonable when applied to certain poems, we can see where the thought might have come from. We can say that many of the sonnets represent half of a conversation.

The performance that you'll be seeing will present the sonnets as dramatic exchanges. For most part, there will be a speaker and someone who is listening (and there's one very interesting "duet"). It's astonishing to see just howactable these poems are—and each person, the speaker and the listener, will be acting. Each will deserve your attention. Listening to the poems is essential, but it's equally important to watch both the speaker and the listener, as these lyric poems get transformed into truly dramatic speech and are presented as a theatrical work.

As individual poems, the sonnets work in the way that human speech does. We watch a mind at work within each one. Like most good poems, they do not always end where they begin. There is a process of thought within each one. A given poem need not be consistent within itself. A poem may be overtly abject or full of praise, and yet reveal opposing attitudes at the same time. There is an inner drama within most of the sonnets. For instance, one may notice as Sonnet 87 is read to a listener that something very interesting is going on. What's the real tone of the poem, and how does the dramatic situation help to bring it out? Very few people can give up a beloved person happily or with full acceptance, and you might detect an undertone of sadness and even anger in the poem. It's important to listen not just for sense, but for the ways the mind and the feelings are working. As a given poem progresses, we can get a sense of a spontaneous opening up of things.

Listen for mixed feelings, confusions, developments, and varied tones. Conscious intention may conflict with any number of other things. For example, self-abasement may run up against genuine resentment, as in Sonnet 87. Masochism can be mixed with aggressive nastiness.



Mary Ringstad arranged music for last season's reading of *The Tempest*. Previously, she appeared as Octavia and Diomedes in *Antony and Cleopatra*. She has directed *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Love's Labor's Lost* for The Project, and assistant directed *King Lear*. Previous appearances include *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It*, *A Women of No Importance*, *Ghosts*, *My Name Is Will*, the title role in *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Titus Andronicus*, *As You Like It*, *Richard III*, *Henry VI Part I*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Edward II*, *Macbeth*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry IV part II* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Mary, who has an MFA in Acting from Ohio

University, is an adjunct faculty member at Oakton Community College. Mary also serves on The Project's Board of Directors.



Barbara Zahora is The Project's current Associate Artistic Director and has been performing with them since 2005. Most recently she worked with artistic director Peter Garino and Michelle Shupe on adapting a new piece for our educational programming, *50-Minute Romeo and Juliet*. Favorite roles for The Project include Queen Elizabeth in *Mary Stuart*, Margaret in Jeff Christian's adaptation of *Henry VI Parts I, 2, and 3* and Constance Middleton in *The Constant Wife*. Other Chicago credits include Writers' Theatre, ShawChicago, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, First Folio Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Illinois Theatre Center, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and Lookingglass Theatre. She has also performed at a variety of places regionally and internationally, such as the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Barbara is an adjunct faculty member in Roosevelt University's Theatre Conservatory, a voiceover artist, a dialect coach, and a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.



Peter Garino (Adaptor, Director) is a founding member and the Artistic Director of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Peter has contributed to over 50 theatrical readings as an actor and director since 1995. He is co-adaptor with Barbara Zahora and Michelle Shupe of The Project's newest education outreach production, *50-Minute Romeo and Juliet* which had its premier at The Newberry Library in September. Most recently, he directed and appeared in *Richard II* to open The Project's 17th season. This past season, he directed *The Tempest*, *Measure For Measure* and appeared as Sir Amias Paulet in *Mary Stuart* and George Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Previously

for The Project, he appeared in *Paradise Lost*, *The Rivals* and played Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*. On behalf of The Shakespeare Project, he has facilitated his *Sonnet Workshop* and *Page to the Stage Macbeth* for local public and private schools and colleges. Other roles includes Lord Stanley in *Richard III*, Creon in Jeff Christian's adaptation, *In Medea Res*, Duke Senior and Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*, Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Mortimer in *The Constant Wife*, Rev. Manders in *Ghosts*, multiple roles in *Henry V*, Boyet in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the title role in Jeff Christian's adaptation of *Faust*, Leontes in *A Winter's Tale* and Duncan in *Macbeth*. Peter has worked with the Steppenwolf and Organic Theatre companies, the Body Politic, Pegasus Players and with the Oak Park Festival Theatre and Illinois Shakespeare Festival (three seasons). His directing credits for The Shakespeare Project include *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *Pericles* (1996 and 2008), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *2 Henry IV*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and his own adaptations of Shakespeare's sonnets and songs, *My Name Is Will*, and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Peter attended the National Shakespeare Conservatory and holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting from Illinois State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts from Hofstra University, New York. He is a member of Actors' Equity Association, AFTRA and the Screen Actors Guild. Thanks to Helene and Glen.



Chris Walz (Composer, Musician) is an accomplished vocalist, guitar player and actor. He holds a degree in theatre from Syracuse University and has lived in Chicago since 1988 and worked both as a musician and an actor. He played the lead role in Woody Guthrie in the national tour of *Woody Guthrie's American Song* and is a founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Chris has taught in the US and Europe, including at the Sorrento Guitar Camp in Canada. He toured the world with the bluegrass band Special Consensus as a lead singer and guitarist, contributing three original songs to the repertoire. Since returning home, Chris has continued to

work as a musician, teacher, composer and lyricist. He has taught at the Old Town School of Music since 1996.

Performance History of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago

1995 - The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream

1996 - The Comedy of Errors, Julius Caesar, Romeo & Juliet, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew, Coriolanus, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Pericles, Measure For Measure, Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing, The Winter's Tale

1997 - King John, Edward II (Marlowe), Richard II, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV, Henry V, 1 Henry VI, 2 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI, Richard III, Twelfth Night

1998 - King Lear, Love's Labour's Lost, Antony & Cleopatra, As You Like It, Cymbeline, Troilus & Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, Titus Andronicus, The Tempest, Othello, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Hamlet

1999 - The Comedy of Errors, Henry VIII, My Name Is Will, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Richard III, Hamlet (full production)

2000 - My Name Is Will (full production), A Midsummer Night's Dream, Richard III, Timon of Athens

2001 - Othello, The Taming of the Shrew, The Rape of Lucrece, Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night

2002 - Romeo & Juliet, 50-Minute Hamlet

2003 - All's Well That Ends Well, King Lear, 50-Minute Hamlet (full production), The Merchant of Venice, The Cricket on the Hearth (Dickens)

2004 - The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Ghosts (Ibsen), Macbeth, The Parvenu (Moliere)

2005 - The Winter's Tale, A Woman of No Importance (Wilde), Henry IV, Faust

2006 - Love's Labour's Lost, My Name Is Will, 50-Minute Hamlet, Henry V

2007 - The Constant Wife (Maugham), Much Ado About Nothing, 50-Minute Macbeth, Henry VI

2008 - The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde), As You Like It, Pericles, In Medea Res (Euripides)

2009 - The Comedy of Errors, Richard III, Henry VIII

2010 - A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Rivals (Sheridan), Antony & Cleopatra, Paradise Lost (Milton), Measure For Measure

2011 - Mary Stuart (Schiller), The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Tempest, 50-Minute Romeo and Juliet, Richard II

THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO

“My Name Is Will”

A Dramatic Adaptation of Shakespeare’s Sonnet and Songs

Adaptation and Direction by Peter Garino

Original Music Composed and Performed by Chris Walz

My first experience with Shakespeare’s Sonnets came in my freshman year of college as a drama major at Hofstra University in 1973. We were assigned Sonnet 12 (“When I do count the clock that tells the time”) to perform in our Speech Class. I found the sonnets to be exquisite little morsels that were very accessible to someone just cutting their teeth on Shakespeare: Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter that expressed an idea, turned it over, and came to a realization. I would sometimes employ a sonnet as an audition piece alongside a monologue from one of the plays when faced with the constraint of presenting two contrasting selections from Shakespeare in under three minutes.

For me, the sonnets have always been more than just 154 short poems tucked at the back of the Complete Works of Shakespeare. The landscape of the sonnets is a jagged one where the author has revealed for us some of his most deeply private emotions. If conflict is the essence of drama, in my mind, the sonnets qualify as drama in the truest sense of the word. Like the plays, they possess a kind of potential energy sitting there on the page awaiting realization through the actor’s imagination and instrument. Unlike a play, the sonnets are non-linear in their sequencing. Stripped of any consideration to plot or convention, what’s left is the pure emotional thought of the speaker without artifice. I found that very liberating. My task as an adaptor of this material was similar to a film director and film editor poring over hours and hours of shot footage and deciding what scenes would end up in the final cut that ultimately would tell my story. If I haven’t included your favorite sonnet, I apologize. I did not set out to create “Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits” (Sonnets). If I did, Sonnet 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”) most certainly would have made the cut among others.

Our purpose today is to allow you to experience a selection of the sonnets (35 to be exact) through the art of theatre. Also included you will hear songs from eight of Shakespeare’s plays that comment on or provide counterpoint to the themes expressed in the sonnets. There is an intentional edginess to many of the sonnets I’ve included whose themes include passion, separation (both physical and emotional), betrayal, adultery, and mortality. At the same time, these darker themes are simultaneously balanced by other sonnets and songs from the plays whose expressions of hope, optimism, patience, understanding and fidelity provide a more positive perspective on the many aspects of love. Love can sometimes be a drag, but it can be fun, too.

My collaborators include the four accomplished actors who have generously lent their considerable talents to this effort and, in particular, Chris Walz, whose fresh original music for this piece continues to find new admirers 11 years later.

Countless volumes have been written examining these little “contraptions” as noted scholar Helen Vendler refers to the sonnets in their native art form. Some have speculated on whether or not Shakespeare wrote the sonnets (I believe he did), the respective identities of the Dark Lady, the Rival Poet, the Young Man, whether they were autobiographical, etc. That’s not why we’re here today. Our goal is to breathe life into this work and to allow you, our audience, to experience the reverberations of this work in a singular way.

Special thanks to Dr. Peter Christensen for his insights into the sonnets and his support.

For Helene, with love.

- Peter Garino

MY NAME IS WILL

Song: “Where is Fancy Bred” from *The Merchant of Venice*The Company
Sonnet 87 “Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing” Barbara
Sonnet 149 ... “Canst thou, O cruel! Say I love thee not” Jeff
Sonnet 151 ... “Love is too young to know what conscience is” Mary
Sonnet 152 ... “In loving thee thou know’st I am forsworn” Jeff
Song: “Fie on Sinful Fantasy” from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Barbara
Sonnet 129 ... “The expense of spirit in a waste of shame” Patrick and Barbara
Sonnet 57 “Being you slave what should I do but tend” Barbara
Song: “Lover and His Lass” from *As You Like It* Jeff and Patrick
Sonnet 138 ... “When my love swears that she is made of truth” Patrick
Sonnet 130 ... “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun” Jeff
Sonnet 42 “That thou has her is not all my grief” Patrick
Sonnet 27 “Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed” Mary
Sonnet 43 “When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see” Jeff
Sonnet 61 “Is it thy will, thy image should keep open” Mary
Sonnet 34 “Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day” Barbara
Sonnet 142 ... “Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate” Jeff
Song: “Love’s Bow Blues” from *Troilus and Cressida* Mary
Sonnet 140 ... “Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press” Barbara
Sonnet 60 “Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore” Patrick
Sonnet 12 “When I do count the clock that tells the time” Barbara
Sonnet 15 “When I consider every thing that grows” Patrick
Song: “O Mistress Mine” from *Twelfth Night* Jeff
Sonnet 50 “How heavy do I journey on the way” Mary
Sonnet 44 “If the dull substance of my flesh were thought” Jeff
Sonnet 56 “Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said” Mary
Sonnet 120 ... “That you were once unkind befriends me now” Barbara
Sonnet 143 ... “Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch” Jeff
Sonnet 119 ... “What potions have I drunk of Siren tears” Patrick
Sonnet 116 ... “Let me not to the marriage of true minds” Mary
Sonnet 49 “Against that time, if ever that time come” Patrick
Song: “Take O Take Those Lips Away” from *Measure for Measure* Mary
Sonnet 64 “When I have seen by Time’s fell hand defac’d” Jeff
Sonnet 123 ... “No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change” Barbara
Sonnet 71 “No longer mourn for me when I am dead” Jeff
Song: “Come Away Death” from *Twelfth Night* Jeff
Song: “The Willow Song” from *Othello* Barbara
Sonnet 93 “So shall I live, supposing thou art true” Patrick
Sonnet 90 “Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now” Mary
Song: “Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind” from *As You Like It* Mary
Sonnet 29 “When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes” Jeff
Sonnet 30 “When to the sessions of sweet silent thought” Barbara
Sonnet 147 ... “My love is as a fever longing still” Mary
Sonnet 136 ... “If thy soul check thee that I come so near” Patrick
Song: “Fear No More the Heat of the Sun” from *Cymbeline* The Company
Song: “Wind and the Rain Rag” from *Twelfth Night* The Company