

JOHN MILTON and *Paradise Lost*

John Milton was not only England's finest epic poet, he was also a major statesman, and regarded as one of the most important political and religious thinkers of his time. Living during the tumultuous period of the English Civil War, John Milton devoted his life (1608-1674) and his work to liberty in three spheres: the church, the family, and the state. As the Latin Secretary for the Council of State to Oliver Cromwell during the English Commonwealth (1649-1660), he was in charge of all foreign correspondence; there and in his political pamphlets, he expressed the values of republicanism. Milton's prose writings include many tracts that focus on liberty: from church authority, from the tyranny of custom, from the tyranny of monarchy. He defends freedom of conscience, freedom of speech (in the influential *Areopagitica*), and he crafts passionate defenses of political freedom, including defending the execution of Charles I. Living not only during England's 17th-century experiment with republicanism, but also during the English Reformation, Milton's Puritanism included radical stances on the key religious controversies of the day, including questions of religious authority, toleration, and doctrine. While Milton aspired to be a poet in his youth, and wrote the early masterpieces "Ode: On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" and "Lycidas," it was only after the Commonwealth project collapsed, the monarchy was restored, and he was exiled from his deep engagement with England's politics-- after he had lost his sight while writing on behalf of English liberty (his blindness was complete by 1652), and after his life was threatened and he was imprisoned (in 1659, and his books were burned under orders in the same year)-- that he wrote his major poetic works, in blindness and defeat. After his hopes for a better England had been dashed, he addressed the story of a lost Paradise. *Paradise Lost* (1667) was soon followed by *Paradise Regained*, the story of Christ's temptations in the wilderness, and *Samson Agonistes*, modeled on classical tragedy and focusing on Samson's last days among his enemies, the Philistines (1671). These show not only his impressive biblical and classical learning, but also an imaginative vision that has led many critics to describe his voice as prophetic. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton "adapts" the story of the Garden of Eden from Genesis, 45 verses, to an epic of ultimately twelve books and 10,656 lines. He asks questions the Bible does not, presses on contradictions in the story, and throughout addresses the problem of human suffering. His "grand style" is an English indebted to Latin; his meter is "blank verse," (unrhymed iambic pentameter); and in his epic, Milton is not only engaged in an adaptation of the Biblical story, but also of classical epic, taking conventions from Homer and Virgil—huge battles, noble speeches, lengthy debates, elaborate descriptions, invocations to the Muse—and adapting them to his biblical subject. Many other works have been inspired by *Paradise Lost*, among them, Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" and "Milton: A Poem," Wordsworth's "The Prelude," Keats' "Endymion," Byron's "The Vision of Judgment," Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Joseph Haydn's oratorio "The Creation," Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" and "The Dunciad," and J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." And adaptations continue, most recently, John Eaton's new opera, "Losing Paradise." Marathon readings of the epic take almost 15 hours. Interestingly, Milton's first plans for the story of Adam and Eve were for a drama—several drafts of an outline, dramatis personae and even a first speech survive, and it was about sixteen years before he turned to the epic instead. Still, as the critic Alastair Fowler noted, "it is possible to regard the loss of Paradise as the tragedy *par excellence*, the tragedy underlying all tragedies..." Still, as an epic, it holds the hope of creation and redemption to counterbalance this tragic vision.

--Regina M. Schwartz

THE
SHAKESPEARE
PROJECT OF CHICAGO

the world in words

PRESENTS

Act 2: *Paradise Lost*

By John Milton

Adapted by
Regina M. Schwartz

Directed by
Peter Garino

22nd Season

March 30, 2017



Actors are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org

P.O. Box 25126

Chicago, Illinois 60625

773-710-2718

facebook.com/shakespeareprojectchicago.

THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO

presents

Act 2 from *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, adapted by Regina M. Schwartz

Directed by Peter Garino

Satan Matt Penn*

Eve Theo Allyn*

Adam Jordan Brodess*

Voice of God Peter Garino*+

*member Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors

+ founding member, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago



Theo Allyn (Eve) is an actor, writer and improviser. Theo made her debut with The Shakespeare Project last month in Thomas Middleton & William Rowley's *The Changeling*. In Chicago, her work has been seen most recently at the Goodman Theatre and the Second City Training Center. Regionally Ms. Allyn has worked with City Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, and Bricolage. As a teaching artist-in-residence at the University of Pittsburgh, she toured with "Lovers and Fighters" as part of Shakespeare in the

Schools. Recent film credits include *Progression*, written and directed by Sam Turich and Gab Cody. Recent television appearances include *Chicago Fire*.



Jordan Brodess (Adam) made his debut with The Shakespeare Project last month in *The Changeling*. Chicago credits include: *Never the Sinner* (Victory Gardens), *Feathers and Teeth* (Goodman Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Drury Lane Theatre), *American Myth* (American Blues Theater). Regional: *Red* (Dallas Theater Center), *Eat Your Heart Out* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Home of the Brave* (Merrimack Repertory), *Black Tie* (WaterTower Theatre). Television: *Chicago Fire* (NBC), *Crisis* (NBC). Film: *The Art of Kissing* (NewSchool Productions), *The Killer Inside Me* (IFC/Revolution).

Jordan trained at The Shaw Festival (Ontario), with The Professional Training Company at Actors Theatre of Louisville and has a BFA from The University of Oklahoma.



Peter Garino (Voice of God/Director) is a founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago and has served as Artistic Director since June 2010. He appeared in *Henry V* and as Tackleton in Charles Dickens' *The Cricket on the Hearth* in the current season. He directed direct *King John* in January 2017 for The Project. This past season, he directed *Cardenio*, and played The Bard in *Cymbeline*, Camillo in *The Winter's Tale* and the title role in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. He also directed the Chicago premier of Tom Stoppard's *Darkside* (Incorporating The Dark Side of the Moon by Pink Floyd).

Recent appearances for The Project include Lord LaFew in *All's Well That Ends Well* and Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*. Other directing credits for The Shakespeare Project include: *The Revenger's Tragedy*, *King Lear*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, *The Reign of King Edward III*, *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *Richard II*, *Measure For Measure*, *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*. On-stage appearances with The Project include Friar Laurence/Lord Capulet in *50-Minute Romeo and Juliet*, Agamemnon in *Troilus & Cressida*, George Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lord Stanley in *Richard III*, Duke Senior and Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*, and many others. 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). 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 proud member of Actors' Equity Association, and SAG/AFTRA. Peter serves as co-chair for the English Speaking Union's Shakespeare Committee in Chicago.



Matt Penn (Satan) recently performed with The Shakespeare Project in *The Changeling* as DeFlores and in *King John* as Salisbury. He has worked as an actor around the world, the Suburu Company in Tokyo, Boarshead Players in London, Stratford Festival and Vancouver Shakespeare Companies in Canada as well as theatres in New York City and Chicago. He has performed many seasons with the ShawChicago company. Favorite roles at various theatres included, Oberon, Leartes, Iago, Prospero, Jacques, Tybalt, Macbeth, Antigonus (yes, chased by a bear!), Don Jon, a spicy Mustardseed,

Cyrano de Bergerac, all the "Ghosts" and Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, and Matamore in *The Illusion*. Many years ago, too many to count, he had the pleasure of working with The Shakespeare Project and is glad in returning.