

# THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO

September 2017

*the world in words*

## Comedy and Tragedy Highlight 23rd Season



The Shakespeare Project's 23<sup>rd</sup> theatrical reading season kicks off the weekend of October 20-25 with the presentation of Shakespeare's beloved comedy, "As You Like It." J.R. Sullivan, who directed last season's "Henry V" returns to the helm. Highland Park patrons please note that the Sunday performance normally held at the Highland Park Public Library will be presented on Wednesday, October 25 at 6:30pm. Associate artistic director Barbara Zahora will direct Shakespeare's dark Roman tragedy "Coriolanus" Jan. 12-16, 2018. It is only the second time that The Shakespeare Project has presented this play. Michelle Shupe (see Actor Profile herein) and Kelly Lynn Hogan will present Thomas Middleton's "Women Beware Women" Feb. 23-27, 2018. The season will conclude the weekend of May 4-8 when artistic director Peter Garino leads a cast of Shakespeare Project favorites through "Much Ado About Nothing." If you would like to receive email reminders to all of our free public performances, visit our homepage and complete your request at the bottom of the page. Regular performances are held on Friday evenings at 7:00PM at the Niles-Maine District Library; Saturday mornings at 10:00AM at the Newberry Library, Chicago; Saturday afternoons at 2:00PM at the Wilmette Public Library; Sunday afternoons at 2:00PM at the Highland Park Public Library; Monday evenings at 6:30PM at the Vernon Area Public Library in Lincolnshire; and, Tuesday evenings at 7:15PM at the Mount Prospect Public Library. Pre-registration is required for performances in Niles, Lincolnshire and Mount Prospect. [www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org](http://www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org). Be sure to visit our Facebook page as well and "like" us: [facebook.com/shakespeareprojectchicago](https://facebook.com/shakespeareprojectchicago)

## "Shakeshafte" - Sept. 15-16 (see page 7)

## **“50-Minute Hamlet” Contest Winners**

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The Shakespeare Project awarded free performances of its long-running education outreach production "50-Minute Hamlet" to four schools that participated in a letter-writing contest. Students were invited to write letters to The Shakespeare Project explaining why they wanted a performance of the show at their school. Performances were given at Clemente High School (Chicago), St. Benedict's Prep (Chicago), Maine South High School



Kayla Carter and Shane Kenyon in “50-Minute Hamlet”

(Park Ridge) and Indian Hills Home School Co-Op (Ingleside). The production, adapted and directed by former artistic director Jeff Christian, featured actors Shane Kenyon as Guy (Hamlet) and Kayla Carter as Gal (all other roles).

## **Company Portraits from the 2016-2017 Season**



**HENRY V**



**KING JOHN**



**THE CHANGELING**



**LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST**

# A Dream of Avon

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It is Christmas eve 1615 at the Windmill Inn, Shakespeare's favourite pub in Stratford Upon Avon. Will enjoys a seasonal drink in the company of Dwight, the barkeep. Through the door enters a series of visitors who will make this night unlike any other. The Shakespeare Project is proud to present the world premiere of John Kishline's "A Dream of Avon" his new play inspired, in part, by an actual performance of The Shakespeare Project. Performances will be given Friday, December 15, 2017 at the Niles-Maine District Library (7pm) and Saturday, December 16, 2017 at the Newberry Library (10am). Pre-registration is required for the Niles performance.



John Kishline

## "Seabury vs. Hamilton" Presented at Summer Benefit

Shakespeare Project patrons enjoyed a delightful evening under the stars on August 5, 2017 when The Shakespeare Project presented its 2017 summer benefit. The evening featured a performance of "Seabury vs. Hamilton," a town hall-style debate developed by The Shakespeare Project for the Newberry Library's Hamilton exhibition last fall. Actors Michael Joseph Mitchell and Chris Landis portrayed the English loyalist Samuel Seabury and a young student Alexander Hamilton. Many thanks to Jacqueline and John Thompson for hosting the event and helping The Project raise much-needed funds for its coming season.



Michael Joseph Mitchell as Samuel Seabury and Chris Landis as Alexander Hamilton in "Seabury vs. Hamilton."

## Shakespeare Alive! At the Newberry Library

Actors from The Shakespeare Project will once again this year hold a Shakespeare acting workshop for high school teens on Saturday, December 2, 2017 from 11:00AM – 2:00PM in Ruggles Hall at the Newberry Library, Chicago. The workshop is a joint effort by The Shakespeare Project, Newberry and English Speaking Union. Registration is available at

<https://www.newberry.org/2017-shakespeare-alive>



Students rehearse a scene from "Hamlet" at the Shakespeare Alive! Workshop at the Newberry Library on October 22, 2016.



# Thank You to our 2016-2017 Benefactors

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The Shakespeare Project gratefully acknowledges all of the generous contributions made by its valued patrons over the past 22 years.

With heartfelt thanks, we recognize contributors to our 2016-2017 season: Judith A. Alexander, Catherine Altera, Anonymous, Judy Blue, Mark & Padora Brewer, Robert Bray, Karin Catania, Mary Christel, Janet & Jack Christian, Carol P. Colby, John T. Costello, Jr., Cecilia Cygnar, Ronald Denham, Tony Dobrowolski, Diane Dorsey & Danny Goldring, Anne Eagleton, John Elson, James & Martha Fritts, Ruth Ganchiff & James Ballowe, In Loving Memory of Margaret D. Garino, Virginia Gibbons, Joan Golder, Scott Gordon & Amy Cuthbert, Susan Gosdick, John & Carole Hayes, Suzanne & Christopher Henn, Jack & Victoria Hickey, Stacie Hobson, De Virile Huston, Hugh Iglarsh, Annette Jacobson, Marcia Kazurinsky, James & Paula Kiefer, Linda Kimbrough, Neil J. King, Kathryn Klawans, Carol Knoerzer, Marcie Levy, Carol Lewis, Donald & Sharen Linder, Rhita Lippitz, Theodore & Maureen Lucore, Dianne & Philip Luhmann, Sheila Macmanus, George & Gerry Messenger, Annie Moldafsky, Margaret Moses, Edward Muir, Laurence Nakrin, Stephen Nelson & Suzanne Engle, Dawn & John Palmer, Daniel Pinkert & Freddi Greenberg, Elizabeth Pollace, Robert Murphy, Cynthia Rademacher, Catherine Regalado, Elizabeth Ringstad, Mary Ringstad, Matthew Rooney & Diane Kaplan, Laurie Carter Rose, MaryAnn Rouse, Jay & Lou Ann Schachner, Regina Schwartz & William Davis, Brian & Melissa Sherman in memory of John Field Sherman, Richard Silver, David Skidmore, Felicity Skidmore, John Slywka, Ljiljana Brkic Tasic, John W. & Jacqueline Thompson, Kathy Verta, Bronna Wasserman, George Zahora, Karen Zych.

The Illinois Arts Council, Swedish Covenant Hospital, Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, Niles Public Library, The Newberry Library, Wilmette Public Library, Highland Park Public Library, Vernon Area Public Library, Mount Prospect Public Library Foundation, Kraft Foods, William Wrigley, Jr. Company Foundation, McMaster-Carr Supply Company, Season of Change Foundation.

# National Shakespeare Competition

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Left to right: Peter Garino, Courtney Pitt (ESU President), Martin Whaley (Deput Consul General, United Kingdom), Wes Schultz (teacher), Ann Urbanski (student), Jackie Thompson (ESU), Gary Houston, Melanie Keller, Linda Kimbrough (finalist judges), Tim Kazurinsky (guest speaker).

Actors from The Shakespeare Project adjudicated the Chicago regionals and finalist competition for the National Shakespeare Competition, sponsored by the English Speaking Union. Judy Blue, Michael Joseph Mitchell and Kendall Zwillman served as judges at the regional competition held at Roosevelt University on February 13, 2017. From that event, seven students were selected to move on to the Chicago finals which were held at the Newberry Library on the evening of February 22, 2017. Actors Gary Houston, Melanie Keller and Linda Kimbrough served as finalist judges. Actor Tim Kazurinsky provided opening remarks to the student finalists at the Newberry. The Project's artistic director Peter Garino served as facilitator for both events, assisted by Jacqueline Thompson, co-chair of the ESU's Shakespeare Committee. Congratulations to Ann Urbanski from Brookfield Academy, who won the Chicago competition and placed as a semi-finalist at the national finals held at New York's Lincoln Center.

The Chicago regional competition for the 2018 National Shakespeare Competition will be held on Monday, February 19, 2018 in Ganz Hall at Roosevelt University. High schools are encouraged to hold a school competition and send a representative to the regional competition. For more information on participation in the competition please contact Victoria Arnold of the English Speaking Union at [Chicago@esuus.org](mailto:Chicago@esuus.org).

The Chicago finals of the competition will be held on Wednesday evening, February 28, 2018 at 6:00pm at the Newberry Library, Chicago.

## Actor Profile: Michelle Shupe

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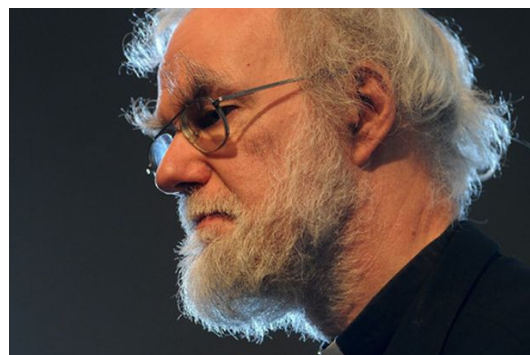


Michelle Shupe debuted with The Project as an actor in 2010 in "Antony and Cleopatra" as The Soothsayer/Pompey and subsequently appeared in "50-Minute Hamlet," and in the theatrical readings of "The Duchess of Malfi" (Duchess), "The Hollow Crown", Macbeth" (Lady MacDuff), "King Lear" (Goneril) "The Revenger's Tragedy" (Duchess), and "King John" (Constance). Active in other roles throughout The Project as well, Michelle served as dramaturg for The Project for several years which entailed researching the plays, delivering curtain speeches and being involved in the post-show discussions. She helped to adapt "50-Minute Romeo and Juliet" and also adapted and directed "Reflections from a Shakespearean Garden," which was presented at the Shakespeare Project summer benefit in 2014. She served as assistant director on several productions since 2010, including Tom Stoppard's "Darkside." Her directing credits for The Project include Shaw's "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets," and "The Merchant of Venice." She is

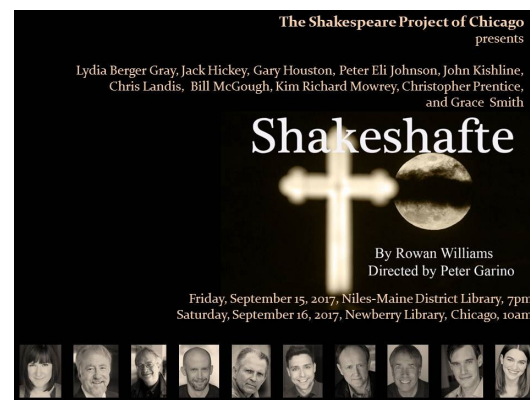
very much looking forward to co-directing "Women Beware Women" by Thomas Middleton in February 2018 with colleague Kelly Lynn Hogan. A native Coloradan, Michelle graduated from the University of Northern Colorado, where she flirted with music for a while, but ultimately majored in both Theater and Journalism. Her first Shakespearean role, however, was in High School, when she played Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and had to miss several performances (much to her director's dismay) because she had the chicken pox. Following college, Michelle moved to Washington, D.C. where she lived for approximately 15 years, pursuing her craft as an actor. She has worked at many DC area theaters, was a company member of The Washington Shakespeare Company (no, not the big one) but has also worked at The Shakespeare Theater Company at the Lansburgh (Michael Kahn directing). She has been nominated for Helen Hayes awards for best actress twice. She served as assistant director on "Anastasia in the Court of Women" for Venus theater, and returned to D.C. in 2013 to direct "What You Will" for the Tafety Punk Theater Company. Michelle finally made her way to Chicago via New York in a production of "Pericles," directed by Mary Zimmerman. Since then, she has been grateful to appear in Broadway in Chicago's "Love, Loss, and What I Wore" and with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in "Richard III", "Scapin", and "Midsummer Night's Dream". Michelle is grateful for the many opportunities The Project has given her to grow - not only as an actor but as an assistant director/ director/adaptor and dramaturge. This is a special group of people who share a singular passion – bringing Shakespeare's words to life.

# Rowan Williams' "Shakeshafte" - Sept. 15-16

The Shakespeare Project is honored to present the United States premiere of Dr. Rowan Williams' play "Shakeshafte," which features young William Shakespeare and the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion. The play, written by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, was produced in England last year, and is being presented here by The Project as a theatrical reading. Performances will be given on Friday, Sept. 15, 2017 at the Niles-Maine District Library (7pm) and Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017 at the Newberry Library (10am). The Newberry performance is part of the library's symposium *The Politics of Conversion*, and is funded by McGill University (Montreal). Artistic director Peter Garino directs a cast which includes Lydia Berger Gray, Jack Hickey, Gary Houston, Peter Eli Johnson, John Kishline, Chris Landis, Bill McGough, Kim Richard Mowrey, Christopher Prentice and Grace Smith. Music and sound design by George Zahora. Assistant director is Brynne Barnard. Pre-registration is required for the Niles performance.



Dr. Rowan Williams



## Making Young Students' First Experience With Shakespeare Positive

Actors Chris Landis and Gail Rastorfer conducted workshops over a two-day period for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at LaSalle Language Academy (Chicago). The custom-designed workshop, "Exploring Shakespeare's Language," introduced Shakespeare to the young learners through a series of group exercises and games that unlocked the meaning and emotion in Shakespeare's language. Beginning with a look at Shakespeare's coined phrases (many of which the students were unknowingly already familiar with) to taking turns acting some of Shakespeare's most famous lines, the students, under the guidance of the Shakespeare Project actors, had fun while getting acquainted with the Bard for the first time.



Chris Landis and Gail Rastorfer



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The Shakespeare Project  
of Chicago is a 501c(3) not-  
for-profit organization.

Since 1995, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago has dedicated itself to presenting free theatrical readings of William Shakespeare and other classic dramatists to Chicago area audiences. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago also offers education outreach workshops and productions to local schools. The company draws its talent from the extraordinary pool of local professional actors, all members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors. Actors share their talents with The Shakespeare Project because they support The Project's mission of making the Shakespeare experience accessible to all.

## Becoming Will

Last year we marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death. Numerous festivals, celebrations and events were held to commemorate the milestone. The good news is that interest in Shakespeare has not abated after the anniversary celebrations ended. This year there has been a renewed interest in the life of young William Shakespeare – focusing on the time between his departure from Stratford Upon Avon and his arrival in London and early playwriting career. How did Shakespeare become Shakespeare? Stephen Greenblatt explored this question to great depth several years ago in his excellent book *Will in the World*. The Oscar-winning film, *Shakespeare in Love* was recently adapted for the stage and presented at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. TNT is currently premiering *Will*, a punk-inspired mini-series on cable that imagines the young Bard's early life in London. Here at The Shakespeare Project of Chicago we are honored to be presenting the US premiere of Dr. Rowan Williams' provocative play *Shakeshafte* which depicts a meeting between young Will and the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion. In *Campion*, Shakespeare finds a man who has unequivocally found his voice and purpose in life, while he searches for his own. While *Shakespeare in Love*, *Will*, and *Shakeshafte* are all works of fiction (some based more or less on historical underpinnings) they are important because they imagine Will as a *real* person, thereby humanizing him and connecting him with us. That's a good thing because the more we are connected with him, the more his work will remain relevant to us. - Peter Garino, Artistic Director