

PRESENTS

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

Directed by
Peter Garino

The Importance of Being Earnest

February 16-17, 2008
The Newberry Library
The Wilmette Public Library
The Highland Park Public Library



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of professional actors and stage managers.

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About The Shakespeare Project of Chicago

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago was founded by actress and director, Mara Polster, in May of 1995 to address the lack of opportunities for students, seniors and the less affluent to experience -- and the local theater community to perform -- the timeless works of William Shakespeare and other great dramatists. We resolved to develop a theatrical reading format that would challenge classically-trained actors to emphasize textual work, and that could eventually be utilized as a way to successfully reach the people of the Chicago area -- regardless of income, waning eyesight, or other factors that had precluded one from benefiting from these works. Today, our mission strives to attain three goals: (1) To provide to our community, free or easily affordable professional performances of the works of William Shakespeare and other great dramatists; (2) To create the opportunity for professional actors to explore this great literature; and (3) To provide exceptional theatre experiences for audiences and artists by maintaining an artistic emphasis on the language of the plays and skill of the actors, all of whom are members of Actors' Equity Association.

We made our public debut with *Macbeth* in 1995, and within four years produced the entirety of Shakespeare's canon. Our 1997 Season (*The History of the English Kings*) traversed the breadth of the great Elizabethan history plays in chronological order: *King John*, *Edward II* (by Christopher Marlowe), *Edward III* (authorship uncertain), *Richard II*, both parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, all three parts of *Henry VI*, and ending with *Richard III*. To date we have performed nearly 70 plays by Shakespeare, Goethe, Marlowe, Moliere, Ibsen, Wilde, Dickens and Maugham.

In 1999, we presented our first fully-realized production, *Hamlet*, and our first original adaptation, *My Name Is Will* (a musical celebration of William Shakespeare's sonnets and songs by Peter Garino, with music by Christopher Walz - both Founding Members). Garino's adaptation of Shakespeare's dark narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, was performed in 2001 and *50 Minute Hamlet* (adapted and directed by Jeff Christian, who was appointed Artistic Director in August of 2002) debuted in spring of 2002. Christian has since adapted and directed *The Cricket on the Hearth* (Dickens), *Ghosts* (Ibsen), *The Parvenu* (from Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) and *Faust* (from Marlowe and Goethe). *50 Minute Hamlet*, which became a fully-realized production in 2003, tours Chicago area schools and is the cornerstone of our educational outreach program. This year we add *My Name Is Will*, and our newest adaptation, *50 Minute Macbeth* to our list of school offerings.

We are thrilled to continue our fantastic partnerships with The Newberry Library, The Wilmette Public Library and The Highland Park Public Library -- and have forged long-term relationships with them all. Please visit our website at www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org for further information.



Barbara Zahora (Lady Bracknell) is very happy to be working with The Shakespeare Project on this iconic play. She has previously performed in several other readings, including the recent adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays and W. Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife*. Most recently she performed in ShawChicago's production of *The Cassilis Engagement*. Other credits include *Getting Married* (ShawChicago); *Marionette Macbeth* (Chicago Shakespeare at New Victory Theater, NYC); *The 50-Minute Midsummer Night's Dream* (First Folio Shakespeare); *Joe! The Musical* (Equity Library Theatre); *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Northlight Theatre); *The Moliere Comedies, The Taming of the Shrew, Richard II, The School for Scandal, and All's Well That Ends Well* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *A Christmas Carol, Wit* (Goodman Theatre); *Misalliance* (Writers' Theatre), and *Hard Times* (Lookingglass Theatre). Regional credits include *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Barbara has also performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, where she was chosen to be part of the International Artistic Residency in 2004. She holds an M.F.A. in Theatre Performance from Roosevelt University and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.



Peter Garino (Director) Peter is a founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago and has contributed to over 40 TSP theatrical readings as an actor and director since 1995. In 2005, he directed Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* for TSP and is delighted to have the opportunity to direct this stellar cast in Wilde's most loved play. Most recently for TSP he appeared as Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Mortimer in *The Constant Wife* and in multiple roles in *Henry V*. Additionally for TSP, Peter has directed readings of Pericles, *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 Shakespeare's narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*. Peter is a member of Actors' Equity Association, AFTRA and the Screen Actors Guild. Thank you, Helene and Glen Thomas for your love and support.

Jeff Christian (Artistic Director) leads the company into his sixth season, having adapted and directed *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 Labour's Lost* and Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife* for the company. Other directing credits include *A Whistle in the Dark* (Seanachai Theatre Company), *Proof and Driving Miss Daisy* (New American Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Lakeside Shakespeare), the national touring production of the interactive comedy *Sister Bernice's Bingo Bash*, both parts of *Angels in America* (The Joumeymen: co-director and actor, sharing in three Jeff Awards and an After Dark Award) and James Krag's touring one-man show, *According to Mark*. He writes and directs live action and animated sequences for the Emmy Award winning Digital Kitchen, serves as a creative consultant to Tessera Publishing and teaches at The Artistic Home (on whose Advisory Board he serves). Recent film work includes *Batman Begins, Witches' Night, The Poker House, The Express and Pickman's Muse*.

Mara Polster (Founding Director) is proud to have adapted and directed *50 Minute Macbeth*, the newest outreach program for The Shakespeare Project's educational arm *50 Minute Shakespeare* -- now scheduling performances in its fifth school year. Mara started The Shakespeare Project of Chicago in May of 1995 and during her tenure as Artistic Director, guided The Project through the entirety of William Shakespeare's canon within the first four years, and over 50 productions. She has directed numerous plays for the project. Favorites include *King Lear, Hamlet, As You Like It, Richard III, Timon of Athens, Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar* and of course, *Macbeth*. She has played some of the great Shakespearean women, like Emilia, Tamora, Margaret, Paulina, Isabella, Katherina and Lady Macbeth for the project and has acted on many of the other stages here in Chicago and across the country. She is a graduate of The Webster University Conservatory of Theatre Arts and Dance in St. Louis, Missouri. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago began as the grateful commemoration of Samuel E. LaMacchia and it continues in memory of Michael Alan Wilson and Board Member, Chuck Lippitz.

The Players

in Order of Appearance

Lane (Manservant)	Will Clinger
Algernon Moncrieff	Sean Cooper
John Worthing, J.P.	David Skidmore
Hon. Gwendolyn Fairfax	Gail Rastorfer
Lady Bracknell	Barbara Zahora
Cecily Cardew	Melissa Carlson
Miss Prism (Governess)	Corliss Preston
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.	Fred Stone
Merriman (Butler)	Will Clinger

Scenes:

Act 1 – Algernon Moncrieff's flat in Half Moon Street, W.

Act 2 – The garden at the Manor House, Woolton.

Act 3 – Drawing room at the Manor House, Woolton.

Time: 1895

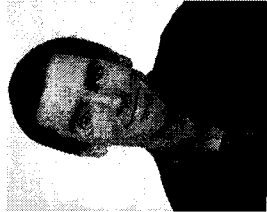
There will be a brief musical interlude at the conclusion of Act 1. We request that audience members remain seated during this time if possible. There will be a 10-minute intermission at the conclusion of Act 2.

All Actors with *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* are members of Actors' Equity Association.

This Month's Artists



Melissa Carlson (Cecily Cardew) Melissa gladly rejoins The Shakespeare Project of Chicago where she has also played Joan of Arc and Lady Grey in *Henry VI*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Katharine in *Love's Labours Lost* and Helen of Troy and Covetousness in *Faust*. Her credits include: Ursula in *Berlin '45*, Rebecca in *Pyretown*, and Kate in *The Action Against Sol Schumann* (Victory Gardens) the title role in *Antigone* (First Folio), Li'l Bit in *How I Learned to Drive* and Ann in *All My Sons* (Illinois Theatre Center), Meg in *Dylan* (Seanachai Theatre), Isabelle in *Edward II* (Red Hen), and Lady Anne in *Richard III*, Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*, and Lady Montague in *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare on the Green). She has also worked with Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's *Summer on Stage!* and *Team Shakespeare* series, as well as Court Theatre, The Lyric Opera, Famous Door, Lifeline, Raven Theatre, CollaborAction, Shakespeare's Motley Crew, and Trap Door. Television credits include numerous commercials and the CBS series *Early Edition*.



Will Clinger (Merriman, Lane) This is Will's sixth appearance with the Shakespeare Project. He's been acting on Chicago stages since 1982, most recently in *The Siddartha Project* at Collaboraction Theater and *Two for the Show* at Theater Wit. Prior to that he was Jake in *Stones in His Pockets* at Apple Tree Theatre, Elbow in Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's *Measure for Measure* and Leopold Bloom in Irish Repertory's world premiere of *A Dublin Bloom*, a stage adaptation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Other Chicago credits include *Eric LaRue* at A Red Orchid Theater, *Fuddy Meers* at Apple Tree Theatre, *How I Learned to Drive* at the Illinois Theater Center, *Hamlet! The Musical* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater and the world premiere of John Guare's *Moon Under Miami* at Remains Theater. Will has spent two summers with the Peninsula Players in Door County, Wisconsin, where he appeared in six shows. He is an alumnus of The Second City National Touring Company and one third of The Famous Brothers bluegrass band (www.famousbrothers.com).



Sean Cooper (Algermon Moncrief) recently appeared in *Wedding Play* (About Face), *Honus and Me*, *Dandelion Wine* (Chicago Children's Theatre), *Cradle of Man* (Victory Gardens), *Red Herring* (Northlight Theatre), *Mojo* (Mary-Arrchie) *Eurydice*, *Melancholy Play*, *Mad Forest*, *Book of Days* (Piven Theatre), *Merchant of Venice* (Strawdog Theatre), *A Lesson Before Dying* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Lysistrata* (Running With Scissors), *H2O*, and *K*. (The Neo-Futurists). Other companies he has worked with include Terrapin Theatre, Raven Theatre, and Pegasus Players among others.



Corliss Preston (Miss Prism) returns to TSP, having played Chorus in *Henry V* and Martha Culver in *The Constant Wife* last season. NY Credits: *A Piece of My Heart* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *Cherry Orchard* (York Theatre Company) *Erotica Project* (Public Theatre), and *The Hired Man* (47th Street Theatre). Regional credits include: The Goodman, The Alley (Houston), Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Denver Center, Yale Repertory, ATC, Missouri Repertory, Baltimore Center Stage, Studio Arena, Cincinnati Playhouse, and the Utah, Alabama, Santa Fe and Oregon Shakespeare festivals. She trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in England and Indiana University. She will be appearing this summer in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's productions of *Othello* as Emilia and *Fiddler On The Roof* as Fruma Sarah.

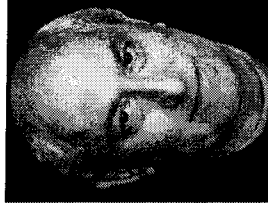
This Month's Artists



Gail Rastorfer (Gwendolyn) This marks Gail's eleventh production with TSP. Other TSP credits include *Henry V*, *My Name Is Will*, *Love's Labours Lost*, *Faust*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The Parvenu*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*. Other regional and Chicago credits include: *Comedy of Errors* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Lend Me A Tenor* (Theatre at the Center), *As You Like It* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), *Shear Madness* (Chicago Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (First Folio Shakespeare Festival), *The Rose Tattoo* (Goodman Theatre), and *The Gamester* (Northlight Theatre). Gail has been living in Chicago for over 10 years with fellow actor and husband, Dan Rodden.



David Skidmore (John Worthing) was last seen with TSP in *Henry VI* and can be seen regularly as Hamlet in Chicago area schools. David has appeared in such diverse roles as *Hally in Master Harold and the Boys*, C.K Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, Jesus in *The Medieval Mystery Cycle*, Philoctetes in Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* and Sidney in *Smash*; an adaptation of one of G.B. Shaw's novels in Milwaukee Chamber Theater's annual Shaw Festival. In addition to serving as TSP's Board President, David is a Founding Member and has been involved in nearly every production, performing such roles as Lear's Fool, Puck, Iago, Cassio, Petruchio, Troilus, Dogberry, Hotspur, Henry VI, Romeo and Hamlet in TSP's premier production in 1999; and directing *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. David received his BA from Brandeis University and MFA in Acting from Temple University, and studied acting and improvisation at the Piven Theatre Workshop. David is a senior consultant for Interbrand Wood Healthcare, a branding consultancy for the healthcare industry.



Fredric Stone (Dr. Chasuble) is pleased to return to The Shakespeare Project (of which he is a Founding Member). He was last seen at TSP as Don John in *All's Well That Ends Well* as well as featured roles in *Love's Labours Lost*, *Faust*, *Ghosts*, and *The Cricket on the Hearth*. He recently finished playing Boxer in *Getting Married* for ShawChicago, *Transference* at The Mercury Theatre and *Moonlight and Magnolias* at Arkansas Repertory Theatre. He performed in *The Chosen* at Steppenwolf Theatre and as Agamemnon in Mary Zimmerman's acclaimed production of *Trojan Women* at the Goodman Theatre. He has also spent much time at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in productions of *Love's Labor's Lost* (Boyet), *The Tempest* (Alonso), *Richard II* (Northumberland), *Henry IV parts 1 and 2* (Northumberland, Francis, Vernon, and Silence); *Henry V* (multiple roles), *The Winter's Tale* (Camillo), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Gremio). Other Chicago credits include *Fires in the Mirror* (Northlight), *Beau Jest* (Victory Gardens), *Isn't it Romantic* (Ivanhoe), and work at the Court Theatre, Drury Lane Evergreen Park, and Illinois Theatre Center. Regional credits at New American Theatre, BoarsHead Theatre, Madison Repertory and First Stage Milwaukee. Broadway and Off B way credits include *All Over Town* and *Awake and Sing* and tours include *A Funny Thing Happened...Forum* with Zero Mostel. Film and Television credits include *Thief*, *The Untouchables*, *Crime Story*, and *Missing Persons*. Mr. Stone also created and performs a one-person Shakespeare show, *Will and Testament (a life after death comedy)* that he tours. He teaches a "Performing Shakespeare" class at Victory Gardens Theatre.