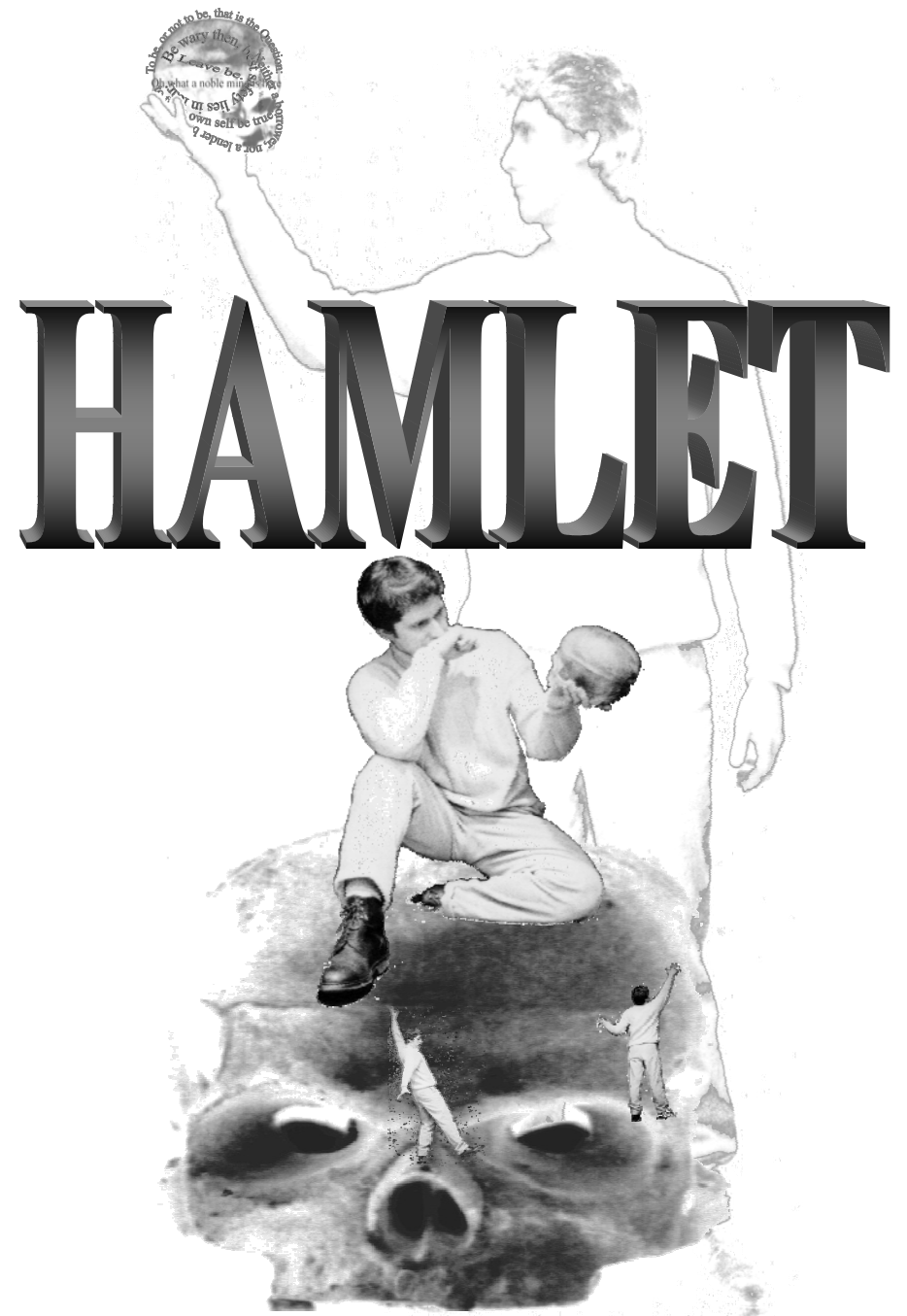


# *The Shakespeare Project* of Chicago



## *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*

Mara Polster, Artistic Director  
presents

### ***HAMLET***

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(continued)

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This production is an Equity Approved Showcase. *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* is partially supported by the Illinois Arts Council, a Stage Agency; by a CityArts 1 grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Chicago Park District; Chicago Public Library/Harold Washington Center and the voluntary contributions of our audiences.

**Bryan D. Cory** (Stage Manager) has acted as a stage manager or production manager for countless productions in the last fifteen years. Bryan is equally at home managing a stage production as he is producing a special event. In addition to managing national tours of “Forever Plaid” and “Phantom of the Opera”, Bryan has managed shows and events for clients such as DePaul University, the City of Chicago, Navy Pier, The City of Toledo, and the Illinois Department of Tourism. Bryan is thrilled to be working again with many of his old friends.

**Christopher P. Wilson** (Set Design) is proud to be a part of *Hamlet* and is grateful to have this opportunity to work with some old friends once again. He is also happy to finally add the South Side of Chicago to his list of places he has worked in the theatre, which includes every state in the lower 48, Canada, Mexico, and thirteen other countries or territories in Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. Usually occupying the position of Head Carpenter, Chris’s technical credits include such diverse projects as *The 1996 Democratic National Convention*, and *The Tonight Show* in Chicago (twice). In 1991, Chris was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Special Visual Effects for his work as Pyrotechnician for *The Magic of David Copperfield XIII: Mystery on the Orient Express*. Chris now resides in Chicago, where he lives with his wife and best friend, Mara Polster. They are expecting their first child in early August.

**Drew Trusk** (Lighting Designer) is pleased to be poking his head out of the metal shop at The Lyric Opera, where he is the head, to create this lighting design for *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*’s premier full production. Drew has been working in theatre for most of his life and has filled positions around the country and the world working as teacher, electrician, carpenter, technical director and general know all, for companies such as The Lyric Opera, Sound and Stagecraft, Chicago Scenic Studios, The University of Illinois, and The Magic of David Copperfield.

**Cheri Cory** (Costume Designer) has designed numerous shows for stage, dance, film, television, and industrial theatre. Cheri has won two regional America College Theatre Festival costume design awards and her designs were Jeff nominated for “A Christmas Twist” by the Illegitimate Players. Cheri is happy to be designing again after a six year hiatus in which she traveled with national tours of “Forever Plaid” and “Phantom of the Opera. “ Cheri holds an MFA in Theatrical Design from Northwestern University and has taught costume design and construction at the University of Toledo in her home state of Ohio. When not designing or touring, Cheri can be found at the Mayor’s Office of Special Events planning operations and logistics for City of Chicago sponsored special events.

**Matthais Minde** (Associate Sound Designer) is pleased to be working the *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* again after having remounted this original music from seven year prior for their 1998 production of *As You Like It*. His sound design and occasional original music have been heard in productions by Talisman, CityLit, Blue Star, Bailiwick, Strawdog, Zebra Crossing and Defiant Theatre companies in Chicago, at the Village Theater in Palatine, and at a few other independent productions. Matt would like to thank Mark Hardiman and Mary Hatch for getting him into this kind of work, and Kerry Riffle for Keeping him there.

**Michelle Sterling** (Production Assistant) Received her MFA in Directing from Tulane University and her BA in Theatre from Temple University. For *TSP* she directed *Measure for Measure* and *Titus Andronicus* and has been on the directing team for several other productions including *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Lear* and *Henry V*. In Chicago, she has worked for The Goodman, The Wisdom Bridge, The Organic Theatre, Galileo Theatre Company and Powertap Productions. In addition to her pursuits, Michelle is also Director of the Muffy VanderBear Club for the North American Bear Company. Michelle also serves as President of the Board of Directors for *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*.



**David Skidmore** (Hamlet) grew up in Madison, Wisconsin; received his BA from Brandeis University in Boston and MFA in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, and studied acting and improvisation for five years at the Piven Theatre Workshop. Most recently seen in Chicago as The Hunchback in NOWtheatre’s *Signal to Noise* at Victory Gardens, he has appeared professionally in such diverse roles as Hally in *MASTER HAROLD...and the boys*, C.K. Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, and Jesus in *The Medieval Mystery Cycle*. He recently played two leads in three shows at The Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; Philoctetes in Seamus Heaney’s *The Cure at Troy* and Sidney in *Smash*; an adaptation of one of G.B. Shaw’s novels in MCT’s annual Shaw Festival. A *Shakespeare Project* veteran, the many roles he has played for them include Iago, Troilus, Dogberry, Hotspur, Henry VI, Romeo and Hamlet. David has recorded drama for Wisconsin Public Radio, performed in mock courtroom trials, has been hired to read testimony in actual trials, and in addition, has a business running focus groups for market research. He also speaks Spanish and currently reads a Spanish language weekly, *El Extra*, on CRIS Radio in Chicago. He thanks Kori for her support.



**Maureen Gallagher** (Gertrude) has appeared with *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* as Mistress Page in last month’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Queen in *Cymbeline*, Goneril in *King Lear*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Duchess of Gloucester in *2-Henry VI*, Constance in *King John*, Thaisa in *Pericles*, Lady Macduff and a Witch in *Macbeth*, and Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*. She has performed at The Goodman Theatre, The Body Politic Theatre, Next Theatre, Remains Theatre, Victory Gardens Theatre, Wisdom Bridge Theatre, Shakespeare Repertory, Court Theatre and Shaw Chicago. She will be appearing in May in Northlight Theatre’s production of *The Cripple of Inishmaan*.



**Gary Houston** (Claudius) last fall played Saul Alinsky in Terrapin’s *The Love Song of Saul Alinsky*, the first production to have a run in this theatre. Since then he played Redfern in *Look Back in Anger* (Writers’ Theatre Chicago), Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* (Holiday Productions) and Jimmy Jack in *Translations* (Seanachai).



**Robert J. Miller** (Ghost, Player King, English Ambassador) has appeared in two *TSP* productions; Suffolk in *Henry VI, part 1* and Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*. Bob has performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Professor Thickstick in *Spring Awakening* and Sam Sampson in *Oklahoma Riggs* an original work by David Mcfaddin (creator of *Home Improvement*). Recently Bob was a guest artist at the Round Barn Theater at Amish Acres where he played Zorba in *Zorba*. In Chicago Bob has worked at the now defunct Candlelight Dinner Theatre: Mr. Lundie/*Brigadoon*, Bob Cratchet/*Christmas Carol*; Drury Lane Oakbrook: Horrace Vandergelder/*Hello Dolly* among others. Bob has done the independent films *Baggage* and *Jumpin’ Jacks*, and videos for the Catholic Church and MTV. He has performed live in Industrials from Orlando, Florida to Dallas, Texas, to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin from Zenaca Pharmaceuticals, Anderson Windows and as a Spokesman for AT&T, Miles Laboratories and others. Bob was nominated for an Irene Ryan Award for best actors as Sweeny Todd in *Sweeny Todd*. LTMAA.



**Todd Hissong** (Polonius) For TSP: Belarius in *Cymbeline* Lefeu in *Alls Well*, Aeneas in *Troilus and Cressida*, Titus in *Titus Andronicus*, Lodovico in *Othello*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and the Duke in *The Comedy of Errors*. Todd has had a prolific theatrical career in his native Detroit where he appeared as Sir Toby in the Attic Theatre’s acclaimed production of *Twelfth Night* (directed by Antoni Cimolino - General Manager of the Stratford Festival). He also worked extensively in local television, earning three Emmy’s from the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. He is most proud of his independent production *Death On The Inland Seas*, a documentary about shipwrecks in the Great Lakes which aired on PBS across the country. Todd’s voice can be heard nationally on several commercials and this year his profile will be included in Who’s Who In Entertainment.



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*The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*

*Presents*

# HAMLET

*By*

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

*Directed by*  
**MARA POLSTER**

*Stage Manager*  
**BRYAN D. CORY**

*Set Design by*  
**CHRISTOPHER P. WILSON**

*Lighting and Effects Design by*  
**DREW TRUSK**

*Costume Design by*  
**CHERI CORY**

*Sound Design by*  
**MATTHAIS MINDE & MARA POLSTER**

*Fight Choreography and Weapons Specialist*  
**TODD HISSONG**

*Program Photography by*  
**TOBY LANDESMAN**

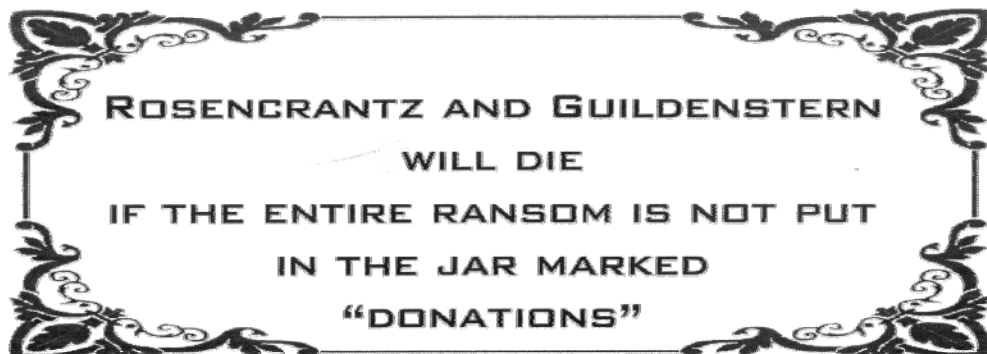
# The Players

in order of appearance

Francisco.....	Members of the Kings Guard	.....	Hugh Fitzgerald*
Barnardo...		.....	John Kooi*
Marcellus.....		..	Andrew Powdermaker**
Horatio, friend to Hamlet.....			Michael Behrens*
Ghost of the late King, Hamlet's Father.....			Robert J. Miller*
Claudius, King of Denmark.....			Gary Houston **
Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, and Mother of Hamlet...			Maureen Gallagher**
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.....			David Skidmore**
Polonius, councillor of State.....			Todd Hissong**
Laertes, son to Polonius.....			Scott Olson**
Ophelia, daughter to Polonius.....			Lindley Curry Traynor**
Voltemand, the King's Ambassador to Norway.....			Hugh Fitzgerald*
Guildenstern, a Nobleman and old Friend of Hamlet...			Andrew Powdermaker**
Rosencrantz, A Nobleman and old Friend of Hamlet.....			John Kooi*
Gertrude's Servant (Iris).....			Laura Sollman St.John*
First Player/Player King.....			Robert J. Miller*
Second Player/Prologue/Lucianus .....			Hugh Fitzgerald*
Boy/Player Queen.....			Laura Sollman St.John*
A Messenger from Hamlet (a Sailor).....			Hugh Fitzgerald*
Gravedigger.....			John Kooi*
2 <sup>nd</sup> Gravedigger.....			Hugh Fitzgerald*
A Priest.....			Todd Hissong**
Osric, a Courtier.....			Andrew Powdermaker**
Fortinbras, Prince of Norway .....			Hugh Fitzgerald*
English Ambassador.....			Robert J. Miller*

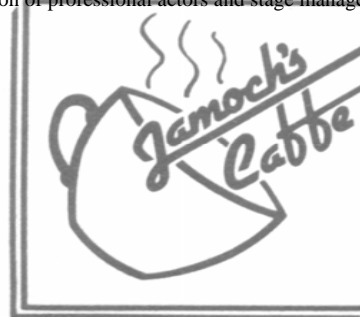
Scene: *Denmark*

There will be TWO 10 minute intermissions



\* Denotes Members of Actors' Equity Association.  
the Union of professional actors and stage managers.

\*\* Denotes *TSP Chicago* Core Company Members.



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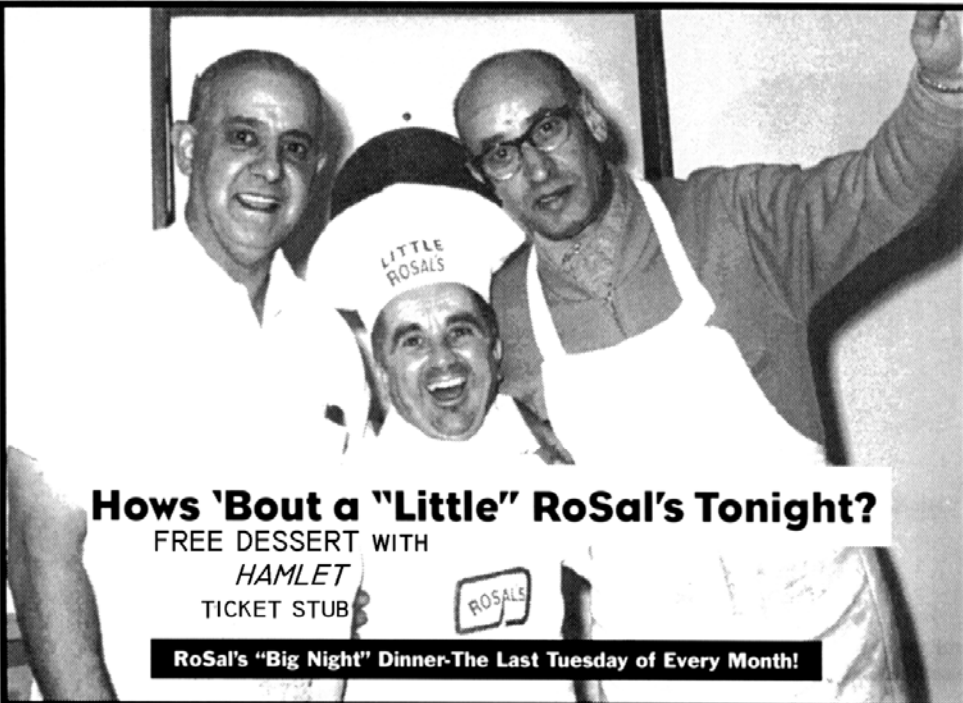
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## *The Where and When*

### ACT ONE:

- Scene One: Midnight on the King's Guard Platform outside of Elsinore Castle.
- Scene Two: The next morning; a Hall inside Elsinore.
- Scene Three: That afternoon; in front of the Castle.
- Scene Four: Midnight on the King's Guard Platform outside of Elsinore Castle.
- Scene Five: Minutes later; a more removed ground.
- Scene Six: Early the following morning; Polonius' quarters inside Elsinore Castle.
- Scene Seven: Some days later; a Hall inside Elsinore Castle.

*TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION*

### ACT TWO:

- Scene One: The next day; another Hall inside Elsinore Castle.
- Scene Two: Early that evening in the Royal Performance Hall.
- Scene Three: Later that night; The Royal Chapel.
- Scene Four: Later that night, after Midnight; The Queens Closet.
- Scene Five: The following morning; the "lobby" in Elsinore.
- Scene Six: Later that day; the Kings Chamber.
- Scene Seven: Early that evening; a hill on the outskirts of Elsinore.

*TEN MINUTE INTERMISSION*





**Lindley Curry Travnor** (Ophelia) most recently appeared in *Perfect Wedding* at Drury Lane Evergreen Park. Other Chicago credits include *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Tempest (TSP)*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare Repertory), *Emma's Child* (Victory Gardens), *The Nerd and Charley's Aunt* (Candlelight's Forum Theatre), and *Bobby Gould in Hell* (Center Theatre Ensemble), for which she was recommended for a Joseph Jefferson Citation. Lindley spent a season with the Orlando Shakespeare Festival, three seasons with the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, toured with KSF's educational outreach program, and was an original member of Boom Chicago, the Amsterdam-based improv troupe. Lindley is a member of SAG, AFTRA, and AEA, and is represented by the Geddes Agency.



**Scott Olson** (Laertes) is happy to be back onstage with *TSP* after directing last fall's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Previous *TSP* roles include Fool in *King Lear*, the title role in *Henry V*, Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, Lavache in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Dromio of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, and numerous clowns and princes over the last two years. In Chicago, Scott has been seen in *Shear Madness* and worked with Bailiwick, Zebra Crossing, Chicago Dramatists Workshop and numerous other theatres. Regionally has worked with Denver Center Theatre Company, Florida Studio Theatre, and Commonweal Theatre. Scott is represented by Big Mouth Talent and can currently be seen as the Oven Mitt Man in TV spots for the Wisconsin Instant Lottery.



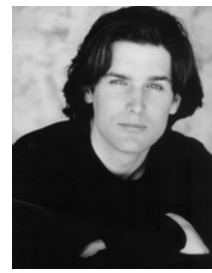
**Michael Behrens** (Horatio) has guest starred on *Hightide* and *Nowhere Man* on Television. He has also appeared in Industrials for Microsoft. Regionally, Michael has appeared in productions of *Sleuth*, *A View From The Bridge* and *True West* at the Idaho Repertory Theatre; *Mousetrap*, *Comedy of Errors* at Sacramento Theatre Company; *You Can't Take It With You*, *White Devil*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Hamlet* at San Diego Repertory Theatre; *Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline*, and *Henry IV, part 2* at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Mike is a graduate of the University of Idaho, is represented by Linda Jack Talent and is a member of Actors' Equity Association and the Screen Actors Guild.



**Andrew Powdermaker** (Marcellus, Guildenstern, Osric) A regular on *The Shakespeare Project* stage Andrew was last seen as Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other roles for TSP include: Roderigo in *Othello*, Lucius in *Titus Andronicus*, Paris in *Troilus and Cressida* and Cloten in *Cymbeline*. With the Equity Library Theatre, Andrew has played Lieutenant Osborne in *Journey's End*. Originally from Philadelphia, Andrew earned a BA from Temple University. Favorite Philly roles include: Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Chestnut Hill Shakespeare in the Park, and Warren in *Moon Over the Brewery* in the Walnut Street Theatre's showcase studio. Andrew can also be seen in the short film *Last Call*. Andy would like to thank his wife Flo for her support and their son Aaron for his inspiration.



**John Kooi** (Rosencrantz, Barnardo, 1<sup>st</sup> Gravedigger) is making his fifth appearance with *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* having worked on several of their recent productions. New York credits include *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Butterfingers Angel...*, and *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* (by Czechoslovakian playwright Vaclav Havel). John just returned from St. Louis where he appeared as Napoleon in *A Thousand Kisses*; *The Love Story of Josephine and Napoleon* with the Historyonics Theatre Company. Other Regional credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (The Cleveland Orchestra with Leonard Slatkin conducting), *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Immigrant* and *I Hate Hamlet* (Shadowland Theatre), *As You Like It* and *Betrayal* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre), *Awake and Sing!* (Rainbow Theatre) and *Cantorial* (The Jewish Theatre of New England). John holds an M.F.A. in Acting from Brandeis U. in Massachusetts and a B.A. from St. John's U. in Minnesota.



**Hugh Fitzgerald** (Fortinbras, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gravedigger, Francisco, Voltemand, 2<sup>nd</sup> Player/ Lucianus) is happy to be making his Chicago debut with *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*. Most recent credits are: Theatre Ten Tens: *King Lear*, Elm Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and The Ensemble Studio Theatre's production of *Strippers, Snakes and Elvis*. Many thanks to the wonderful cast and crew of *Hamlet*.



**Laura Sollman St. John** (The Boy/Player Queen, Gertrude's Servant) New to *The Shakespeare Project*, Laura has performed as an ensemble member of Streetsigns – notably as Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist* and Taffeta in their hit late night comedy *Night of the Mime*. She has done a number of on-camera spots and voice overs for Bix Pix Entertainment and has toured the country in the one woman show *Through the Cracks*, based on the book she co-wrote, published in 1992. Laura currently serves as Project Coordinator and performer with the Illinois Labor History Society's touring production of *Come Along and Join*. She also works in several Chicago Public Schools as a resident artist. Laura recently finished shooting her second independent feature film prior to becoming a mother to the lovely, four month old Abigail Rose.



**Katherine Marie Loague** (Gertrude Understudy) recently moved to Chicago for NYC. Kate performed with Classic Stage Company (CSC) - directed by Christopher Martin (when it was a rotating repertory company). At various theatres she enjoyed a diverse body of work; for the Greeks to Chekhov, to originating roles in plays by Constance Congdon and Edwin Sanchez. She had the good fortune to be directed by Marshall Mason in *Hot L Baltimore* and *Summer and Smoke*. Kate had a 3-year commitment to Performing Arts for Crisis Training (PACT) as an Actor/Trainer. She has joined SAG's Book Pal program with Chicago grade schools. She is delighted to be working in Chicago with *The Shakespeare Project*.



**Mara Polster** (Director) is thrilled to say that as Artistic Director of *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*, she has now led the company through the entirety of William Shakespeare's dramatic works since May of 1995. 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 Emilia in *Othello*, Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, Charmian in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Margaret in *3-Henry VI*, Chorus in *Henry V*, Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*, Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Dionyza in *Pericles*, Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lucetta in *Two Gents*, Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. Also during this time, 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 now, the pinnacle - *Hamlet*. Currently Mara is gestating her first child and looking forward to some time off before kicking off the fall Theatrical Reading series with baby boy in tow in the fall of 1999. *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* is the grateful commemoration of two fiercely strong souls, Samuel E. LaMacchia and Michael A. Wilson.

## ACT THREE:

---

### INTERLUDE: A PREMONITION

(poem by e.e. cumming)

love is more thicker than forget  
more thinner than recall  
more seldom than a wave is wet  
more frequent than to fail

it is most mad and moonly  
and less is shall unbe  
than all the sea which only  
is deeper than the sea

love is always less than to win  
less never than alive  
less bigger than the least begin  
less littler than forgive

it is most sane and sunly  
and more it cannot die  
than all the sky which only  
is higher than the sky

Scene One: Some mornings later; the Royal Chamber.

Scene Two: That same day; outside the castle.

Scene Three: Some time later; The Royal Chamber.

Scene Four: Some days later; a graveyard.

Scene Five: A short time later; a Hall inside Elsinore Castle.



### Notes from the Director:

When it became apparent that my life might center around the theater, my Uncle Sam - a brilliant Mathematician, Poet, Musician, Scholar, Teacher and true cherisher of the exciting potential of youth - took to pulling me aside at every opportunity and saying, "Whatever you do, don't forget about Shakespeare." With a promise, I began exploring the plays and from then on, taking part in many prized conversations with my uncle, most often beginning with "Oh, Uncle Sam, I read *blank* this week." To which he would say, "didn't you love the part where..." sometimes pulling a copy off the shelf and reading chosen passages. These conversations always ended with him saying "well, don't forget about *Hamlet*." To which I most commonly replied, "Yeah, yeah, sure sure."

As I became an adult, despite his struggles with depression and later lung cancer, he remained adamant about my study of the Bard, ever encouraging me to "remember *Hamlet*!" As conversation became more difficult for him and I watched him have to let go of the things that he enjoyed, I wished that I could read the plays to him. Upon returning to Chicago following his funeral, I began to wonder if there would be any value in a group of actors creating a format for Shakespeare's plays that would allow people who might no longer be able to read them a new opportunity to hear them. ***The Shakespeare Project*** began its exploration of the plays in May of 1995, two months following my uncle's death. With our Theatrical Reading of *Hamlet* in December of 1998, we marked the completion of the canon (beginning again with our 1999 Season). This performance can not be other than dedicated to the man who sowed the first seed of ***The Shakespeare Projects***'s continuing harvest and to his wife, our benefactress, Carolyn LaMacchia.

About the play? I fear it has all been said and that I could not possibly have anything of value to add to the abundant commentary of scholars for over four hundred years. My interpretation of the play is quite humble. It seems to me that Hamlet, having lost a father to a mysterious sudden death and a mother to an overhasty second marriage, begins his journey much like many of his "Generation X" counterparts. The pain of coming of age, coupled with increasingly traumatic events and realizations, sends him headlong down the path of suicidal ambition, isolation, vengeful agitation and depressive paralysis on his road to acquiescence. Although there was no "psychology", no diagnosis for Depression at the time, Shakespeare seems to have had his mind wrapped around the exact symptoms of the illness when he created the character of Hamlet, most notably exemplified in Act II, scene 2 when he says,

*I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth,  
forgone all custom of exercises...*

He then continues, giving a beautiful and explicit description of all the virtues of the world and humanity, which he has now lost his ability to appreciate.

I further find it intriguing that the play features a son who has lost his father, and is written by a father who had lost his son. I see this fact reflected throughout the play. Shakespeare created what on the surface might appear to be quite a mass-appeal murder and intrigue story, while underneath it ventures to deal with the complexity of dealing with loss. Above all, I hear Shakespeare's universal voice bellowing out the truths of the human condition in a timeless tale of "Everyman". I hope this masterpiece can be revealed somewhat anew to all of you today.

***-Mara Polster***

Ps. I didn't forget.

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