

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago

Since 1995, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago has performed theatrical readings of William Shakespeare and other classic dramatists to Chicago area audiences free of charge to audience members. It also offers a fee-based education outreach programs on Shakespeare studies to local schools. The company operates under an agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors.

Our mission is to bring “the world in words” to audiences that might otherwise not be able to experience the dramatic genius of the greatest dramatist in the English language. Our venues attract senior citizens as well as younger audiences that are not able to afford local Shakespeare offerings with prohibitive ticket prices. Our education outreach productions (*50-Minute Romeo and Juliet*, *50-Minute Hamlet*) provide abridged performances of Shakespeare’s plays to augment middle-school and high school teachers’ studies of Shakespeare. For our young learner audiences, our approach to the work is driven by a simple goal: make the student’s first experience with Shakespeare a positive one.

In our readings, our artistic focus is rooted in illuminating the timeless truths found in the words of these great plays. Our audience members value the emphasis we place on the text, opening up a unique experience for them unencumbered by scenery, props, costumes and imposed conceptual conceits.

THE
SHAKESPEARE
PROJECT OF CHICAGO

the world in words

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

Stage Manager: Peter Garino*

24th Season
July 20, 2024

Newberry Library



* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org

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THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO
PROUDLY ANNOUNCES ITS
30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

- ➔ **MEASURE FOR MEASURE**
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY ERIN SLOAN
NOVEMBER 16-20, 2024
- ➔ **THE WINTER'S TALE**
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY PETER GARINO
FEBRUARY 21-25, 2025
- ➔ **THE TEMPEST**
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY J.R. SULLIVAN
APRIL 4-12, 2025
- ➔ **KING LEAR**
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DIRECTED BY MICHELLE SHUPE
JUNE 13-21, 2025

For a complete listing of performance venues and times, visit
www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org

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

Stage Manager: Peter Garino

My Name Is Will was first presented by The Shakespeare Project of Chicago in 1997, originally as a staged reading of a selection of Shakespeare’s sonnets imagined as a series of conversations between four actors. In 2000, Chris Walz added his original music and we incorporated songs from several of his plays.

Since then, we have presented *My Name Is Will* dozens of times with multiple actors coming in and out of the show. Each time we revisit the sonnets, we discover something new. They are, as noted scholar Helen Vendler called them, little “contraptions.”

The landscape of the sonnets is a jagged one where the author shares meditations on the various aspects of love through the journey of one’s life. Shakespeare wrote the sonnets when the theatres were closed due to the plague in the early 1590s. Published several times during his lifetime, they were extremely popular, establishing him as an accomplished poet while his playwriting career was still in its infancy. He was still a relatively young man (26 in 1590) when he wrote the sonnets, yet their subject matter demonstrates an understanding of someone much older and experienced.

Our purpose today is to allow you to experience a selection of the sonnets (34 to be exact) through the art of theatre. You will hear songs from eight of Shakespeare’s plays that underscore or provide counterpoint to the themes presented. There is an intentional edginess to many of the sonnets: separation (both physical and emotional), betrayal, adultery, and mortality. At the same time, these darker themes are balanced by other sonnets and songs -- expressions of hope, optimism, patience, understanding and fidelity.

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

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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. 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 how actable 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.

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" Judy
Sonnet 149. "Canst thou, O cruel! Say I love thee not" Joe
Sonnet 151. "Love is too young to know what conscience is" Mary
Sonnet 152. "In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn" Joe
Song:..... "Fie on Sinful Fantasy" from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*..... Judy
Sonnet 129. "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame" Joe and Judy
Sonnet 57... "Being you slave what should I do but tend" Judy
Song:..... "Lover and His Lass" from *As You Like It* Christopher and Joe
Sonnet 138. "When my love swears that she is made of truth" Christopher
Sonnet 130. "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" Joe
Sonnet 42... "That thou has her is not all my grief" Christopher
Sonnet 27... "Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed" Mary
Sonnet 43... "When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see" Joe
Sonnet 61... "Is it thy will, thy image should keep open" Mary
Sonnet 113. "Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind" Judy
Sonnet 142. "Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate" Joe
Song:..... "Love's Bow Blues" from *Troilus and Cressida* Mary
Sonnet 139. "O! Call me not to justify the wrong" Judy
Sonnet 91... "Some glory in their birth, some in their skill" Christopher
Sonnet 94... "They that have power to hurt, and will do none" Judy
Sonnet 109. "O! Never say that I was false of heart" Christopher
Song:..... "O Mistress Mine" from *Twelfth Night* Joe
Sonnet 50... "How heavy do I journey on the way" Mary
Sonnet 44... "If the dull substance of my flesh were thought" Joe
Sonnet 102. "My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming" Mary
Sonnet 120. "That you were once unkind befriends me now" Judy
Sonnet 143. "Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch" Joe
Sonnet 119. "What potions have I drunk of Siren tears" Christopher
Sonnet 116. "Let me not to the marriage of true minds" Mary
Sonnet 49... "Against that time, if ever that time come" Christopher
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" Joe
Sonnet 123. "No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change" Judy
Sonnet 74... "But be contented when that fell arrest" Joe
Song:..... "Come Away Death" from *Twelfth Night* Joe
Song:..... "The Willow Song" from *Othello* Judy
Sonnet 93... "So shall I live, supposing thou art true" Christopher
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 66... "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry" The Company
Sonnet 147. "My love is as a fever longing still" Mary
Sonnet 136. "If thy soul check thee that I come so near" Christopher
Song:..... "Fear No More the Heat of the Sun" from *Cymbeline* The Company
Song:..... "Wind and the Rain Rag" from *Twelfth Night* The Company

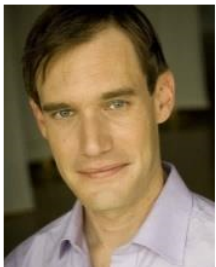
Artist Biographies



Judy Blue* most recently appeared with The Shakespeare Project as Mrs. Tiltyard in *The Roaring Girl*. Previously, she appeared in The Project's *Women Beware Women* and *My Name Is Will*. She served as assistant director for *Titus Andronicus*. Judy is a proud founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, in which she has appeared in countless readings, the touring *My Name Is Will* and the four-person *50-Minute Romeo and Juliet*. Judy has appeared numerous times at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, as well as Writers Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, CollaborAction, and Theatre at the Center among others.



Joe Lehman* is delighted to return to The Shakespeare Project of Chicago where he has previously been seen in *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *Cardenio*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *My Name is Will*. He is a longtime Chicago based actor and director whose work has been seen locally with Oak Park Shakespeare Festival, First Folio, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Citadel Theatre, Williams Street Rep, Metropolis, Shaw Chicago, Theatre at the Center, Marriott Theatre, and Illinois Theatre Center among others.



Christopher Prentice* was most recently seen in *The Comedy of Errors* after stage-managing *Timon of Athens*. Other Shakespeare Project favorites include Richard in *Richard III*, Sherlock Holmes (*A Baker Street Christmas Caper*), Starbuck, Touchstone, Berowne, Philip the Bastard, Leontes, Mark Antony (*Julius Caesar*), Thomas Heywood (*Christmas Comes But Once a Year*), Edmund Campion (*Shakeshafte*), and appearances in *My Name Is Will*, *50-Minute Hamlet*, *The Changeling*, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and *The Californian Incident*, among others. Other theater: Stratford Festival (five seasons), Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Montana Shakespeare in

the Parks, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Signal Ensemble Theatre (co-founder). christopher-prentice.com



Mary Ringstad* previous appearances with The Project include *Celebrating the Holidays in Verse and Song*, *Moby Dick Rehearsed*, *Cardenio*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Edward II*, *Ghosts*, *1-Henry VI*, *2-Henry IV*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *My Name is Will*, *Othello*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Selections from The Hollow Crown*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *A Woman of No Importance*. She has directed *Much Ado About Nothing*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and

Love's Labour's Lost and assistant directed *King Lear* for The Project. Mary, who has an MFA in Acting from Ohio University, is Professor of Speech and Theatre at Oakton College. Mary also serves on the Board of Directors for The Project.

Peter Garino (Adaptor/Director/Stage Manager) is a founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago and has served as Artistic Director since June 2010. He most recently directed *The Comedy of Errors* for The Project. In March, he played the title role in The Project's *Timon of Athens*. Recent directing credits for The Project include *Celebrating the Holidays in Verse and Song*, and *Isabella Andreini: Portrait of a Diva*. He is co-director (with Helene Augustyniak) of the film *By Help of Devils*, in which he portrays 14 of Shakespeare's villains. Selected appearances with The Project include Polonius in *Hamlet*, Marcus Andronicus in *Titus Andronicus*, Helicanus in *Pericles*, the Duke of Florence in *Women Beware Women*, Duke Senior and Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*, Camillo in *The Winter's Tale*, the title role in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, Lord LaFew in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and the title role in *The Merchant of Venice*. For The Shakespeare Project he has directed *Richard III*, *The Roaring Girl*, *A Baker Street Christmas Caper*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Dream Upon Avon* and Rowan Williams' *Shakeshafte*, among many others. Peter directed the Chicago premier of Tom Stoppard's *Darkside* (Incorporating The Dark Side of the Moon by Pink Floyd). Peter has worked with the Steppenwolf and Organic Theatre companies, the Body Politic, Pegasus Players, the Oak Park Festival Theatre and Illinois Shakespeare Festival. 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. Love 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.

