

About *Shakespeare for My Father* by Lynn Redgrave

In 1991 I set off on a journey that began almost as an act of desperation. I needed a job and decided to write myself a one-woman show. I had never attempted to write a play before but I had a gut feeling that my search for my father, my longing to come to terms with our relationship (or lack thereof), my passionately emotional desire to know him, even after his death in 1985, was something that I shared with men and women of all ages. Out of the blue that summer came an invitation from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC to give them an evening of theatrical reminiscences that would include readings from my favorite Shakespeare plays.

I'll write my show, I thought, and surprise them. And since they've asked for Shakespeare, couldn't I use the Bard's words to take my senses to a higher plane? I rehearsed alone, early in the morning before my family was awake and until I arrived in Washington in time for the performance, no one had seen the show.

The presentation at the Folger ran over an hour and the comments afterward were encouraging. It seemed that people saw their own relationships with their fathers, living or dead, reflected in my story. "Where are you going next?" they asked.

So in March of '92, I took another step in the show's development in front of an invited audience. The play had a title now, *Shakespeare For My Father*, but still only ran about an hour and a quarter. "You have to have two acts," they said. "An intermission so the theatres can sell drinks and souvenirs." A year later, with a full-length play in two acts, I was on the road. Twenty-seven cities in six weeks all across America. Performing arts centers, symphony halls, college campuses, high school auditoriums. Learning from every audience. Then the giant leap of faith. The Big Apple. Broadway.

What began as a limited six-week run at The Helen Hayes Theatre in April 1993, extended and extended...and extended. Almost three hundred performances over nine months. I continued to perform the show for another three years, in the US, Australia and finally, in London's West End.

My "act of desperation" changed my professional life. It led to films like *Shine* and *Gods and Monsters* and empowered me to continue to make my own opportunities. Telling my story night after night and conjuring my father's ghost to appear with me, brought me to the happiest place of all: a true reconciliation with the memory of my dad and a reunion with my mother and siblings.



Jill Gordon, Creative Director

PRESENTS

THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO

Michelle Shupe

in

a theatrical reading of

Shakespeare For My Father

By

Lynn Redgrave

Directed by Peter Garino

Vail Mountain School
January 24, 2025

"Shakespeare For My Father" is presented by arrangement
with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
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Artist Biographies



Michelle Shupe (Lynn Redgrave) is delighted to have the opportunity to work on Lynn Redgrave's wonderful and challenging piece, *Shakespeare For My Father*. She has been active with The Shakespeare Project for many years, both as an actor and director and some of her favorites include: *King Lear*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Duchess of Malfi*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Pericles* and many more. Other selected stage credits include: Milwaukee Repertory Theater (*Much Ado About Nothing*) Alabama Shakespeare Festival (*Our Town*, *God of Carnage*, *Romeo and Juliet*), Broadway in Chicago (*Love, Loss and What I Wore*), Goodman Theatre (*Pericles*), Illinois Shakespeare Festival (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard III* and *Scapin*), Shakespeare Theatre Company (*MacBeth*, *Winter's Tale*, *Don Carlos*, *Duchess of Malfi*), numerous credits with Washington Shakespeare Company (former company member), and additional credits with Studio Theater, Signature Theater, and Theater J. She has several Helen Hayes Nominations and serves as the associate artistic director of The Shakespeare Project. Many thanks to Peter for his guidance, direction and tutelage and always to JN for his support and belief.

Peter Garino (Director/Stage Manager) is a founding member of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago and has served as its Artistic Director for the past 14 years. Recent directing credits for The Project include *The Comedy of Errors*, *Dear Rhoda*, and *The Better Part of Me*. 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 the title role in *Timon of Athens*, Polonius in *Hamlet*, the Prince/Peter in *Romeo and Juliet*, Marcus Andronicus in *Titus Andronicus*, Helicanus in *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, 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 *Darksides* (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 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.

Christianna Howell (Technical Director) has lived in the Vail Valley for 23 years, dedicating her time to enriching the performing arts community. For the past 11 years, she has been an integral part of Vail Mountain School, serving as Director of Music, Performing Arts Chair, and now as Director of Theatre. In her current role, Mrs. Howell inspires students from Kindergarten through senior year, fostering their creativity, collaboration, and confidence through a vibrant theater program. Her work highlights the transformative power of theater and the performing arts in enhancing students' learning, self-expression, and love for the arts.

Jill Gordon (Creative Director, Weekend With Will) holds an M.A. in Theatre and Performance Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Applied Shakespeare from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Spearheading several types of Shakespeare immersion, Jill advocates for creating community through the intersection of Shakespeare, performance, and education.

A Vail resident and community builder since 1976, Jill and her husband Steve have deep roots in the Vail community. Jill realized there was no Shakespeare presence in Vail and decided to create interest by teaching introductory adult education classes at Colorado Mountain College. After years of teaching, she decided to take the next step. In collaboration with the Vail Symposium, Jill has created "Weekend with Will" to bring Shakespeare-related performances and educational workshops to Vail while uniting people through shared experience and the magic of theatre!

Lynn Redgrave (Playwright) was an English actress. She won two Golden Globe Awards during her career. A member of the Redgrave family of actors, Lynn trained in London before making her theatrical debut in 1962. By the mid-1960s, she had appeared in several films, including *Tom Jones* (1963) and *Georgy Girl* (1966), which won her a New York Film Critics Award, a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Musical/Comedy, as well as earning her a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actress. Redgrave made her Broadway debut in 1967 and performed in several stage productions in New York City while making frequent returns to London's West End. Redgrave performed with her sister Vanessa in *Three Sisters* in London, and in the title role of Baby Jane Hudson in a television production of *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* in 1991. Redgrave made a return to cinema in the late 1990s, in films such as *Shine* (1996) and *Gods and Monsters* (1998), for which she received her second Academy Award nomination and won a Golden Globe Award For Best Supporting Actress. Lynn Redgrave is the only person to have been nominated for all of the 'Big Four' American entertainment awards (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony, collectively known when all four have been won as "EGOT") without winning any of them.

SHAKESPEARE FOR MY FATHER

By Lynn Redgrave

Directed by Peter Garino

Stage Manager Peter Garino*

Technical Director Christiana Howell

Lynn RedgraveMichelle Shupe*

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

There will be one ten-minute intermission. A discussion will follow tonight's performance.

THE
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