

## Regarding "The Shakespeare Project"

*The Shakespeare Project* is an Acting Ensemble made up entirely of members of Actors' Equity Association, dedicated to the exploration of the complete works of William Shakespeare and other playwrights. The group had its genesis as a Special Project of **Equity Library Theatre Chicago** and currently presents "Theatrical Readings" of the plays of Shakespeare that achieve a clarity usually only accomplished by fully producing the plays. Assembled by *The Shakespeare Project's* Artistic Director, Mara Polster, these exceptionally skilled actors have been seen on the stages of the Shakespeare Repertory, The Goodman, Steppenwolf, The Court Theater, and many other theatres in the Chicago area and around the country.

*The Shakespeare Project* performed its first public reading in November of 1995. In January of 1996, monthly performances began at The Chicago Cultural Center, at 78 East Washington Street (These readings are presented as a Special Project for Equity Library Theatre). In June of 1996, The Chicago Park District adopted *TSP* as a sponsored organization to present its monthly readings as a survey course with discussion to follow at The Berger Park Cultural Arts Center, 6205 North Sheridan Road. *TSP* will continue performing at both of these locations throughout 1997- completing the entire canon with *Hamlet* in December of 1998- and plans its first full production, the apocryphal *King Edward the Third*, for early in 1998.

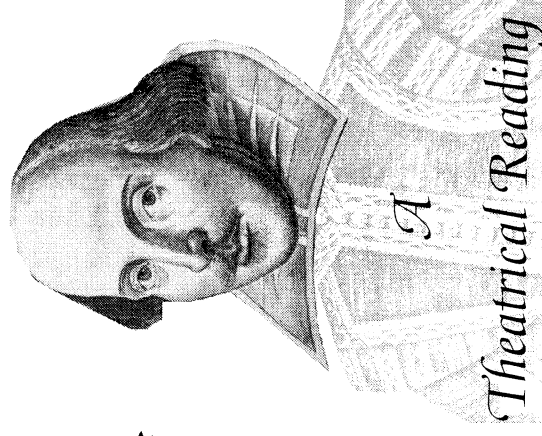
This year, *The Shakespeare Project* presents its 1997 Theatrical Reading Series, entitled "A History of the English Kings (as presented by Elizabethan Dramatists)". We hope you will join us as we take you through eleven of the Elizabethan history plays in chronological order. Next month, we begin what is affectionately know as "The Lancaster Cycle" with *The First Part of Henry the Fourth*. All readings begin at 1:00 p.m. and are free to the public. *TSP* is a nonprofit organization and may receive tax-deductible contributions. If you wish, you may send contributions to *The Shakespeare Project*, 2706 North Albany Street, Chicago, Illinois 60647. For further information or to book a reading, contact *TSP* at 773/252-8544. Fax number 773/252-5433. Email address [TSPchicago@aol.com](mailto:TSPchicago@aol.com). Or take a look at our website: <http://members.aol.com/TSPchicago/shakespeare.html>.

**Special thanks to** SCOTT PARKINSON, NANCY NICKEL, RICH WHARTON, CHRIS WILSON, PHIL MARTINI, SUE FASTWOLF, JIM WATKINS, ALEX AND ALSO TO ROBERT SCOQIN AND BRENDON FOX FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN CUTTING THE SCRIPT.

*The Shakespeare Project* would like to say, "THANK YOU" to the following people and organizations for their generous donations:

Judy Blue	Carolyn LaMacchia
Ron & Barbara Butts	Richard Sullivan Lee
Chicago Park District	Phil Martini
Chicago Cultural Center	Arlene & Ralph Polster-Moore
Chicago Scenic Studios	Michelle Sterling
Maureen Gallagher	Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Paul Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Garino	James P. & Nita Lee Wilson
Arlene Hirsch	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Wittrock
Gary Houston	& Our Many Anonymous Contributors!

*The Shakespeare Project*  
presents



Theatrical Reading

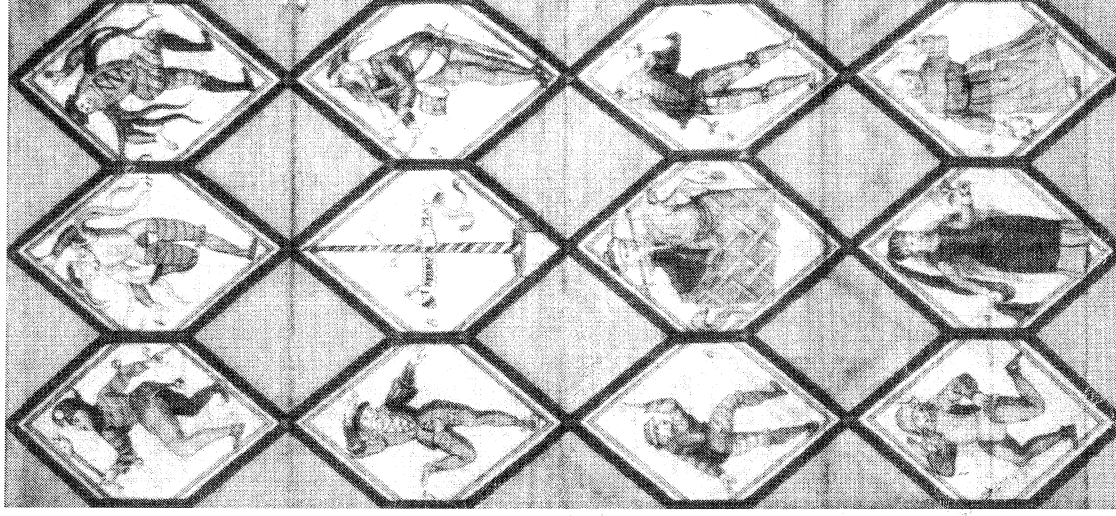
of

# Richard the Second

Directed By:

Michael Halberstam

"The Shakespeare Project" is sponsored by



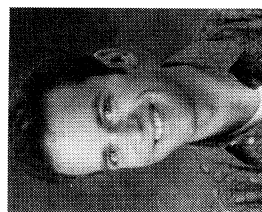
All of the actors with *The Shakespeare Project* are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of professional Actors and Stage Managers. All *T.S.P.* presentations at The Berger Park Cultural Arts Center are sponsored by The Chicago Park District. All performances at The Chicago Cultural Center are produced as a Special Project of Equity Library Theatre, for which the actors contribute their talents under a Special Agreement between *T.S.P.*, E.L.T. and A.E.A.



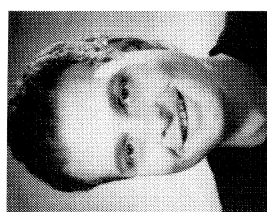
**Gary Houston** (York, Gardener) read Edward in *TSP's* most recent, *King Edward III*, as well as John in *King John*, Lancaster in *Edward II* and Petruccio in *Taming of the Shrew*; last season he directed *The Merchant of Venice*. Under Michael Halberstam's direction he was William Blake in *Blake: Innocence and Experience* for Writers' Theatre Chicago, where he was also Ring Lardner to Halberstam's F. Scott Fitzgerald in *Damon, Ring & F. Scott*. His Chicago debut came with his portrayal of Brachiano in *The White Devil* at Court under the late James O'Reilly's aegis. Other roles range from Rump in the world premiere of *Grease* at Kingston Mines to Sam in *Emma's Child* at Victory Gardens.



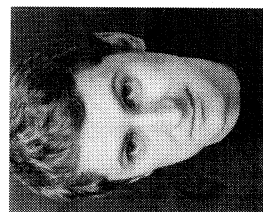
**Nancy Nickel** (Queen) has taken part in many of *The Shakespeare Project's* readings, recently playing Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. She has performed at the National Jewish Theatre, Oak Park Festival Theatre, Illinois Theatre Center, and Shakespeare Repertory in their award-winning production of *The Tale of Cymbeline*. In addition, Nancy is a writer of short stories and poetry, and is currently in the process of writing her first play. When not speaking in verse, Nancy also enjoys prose.



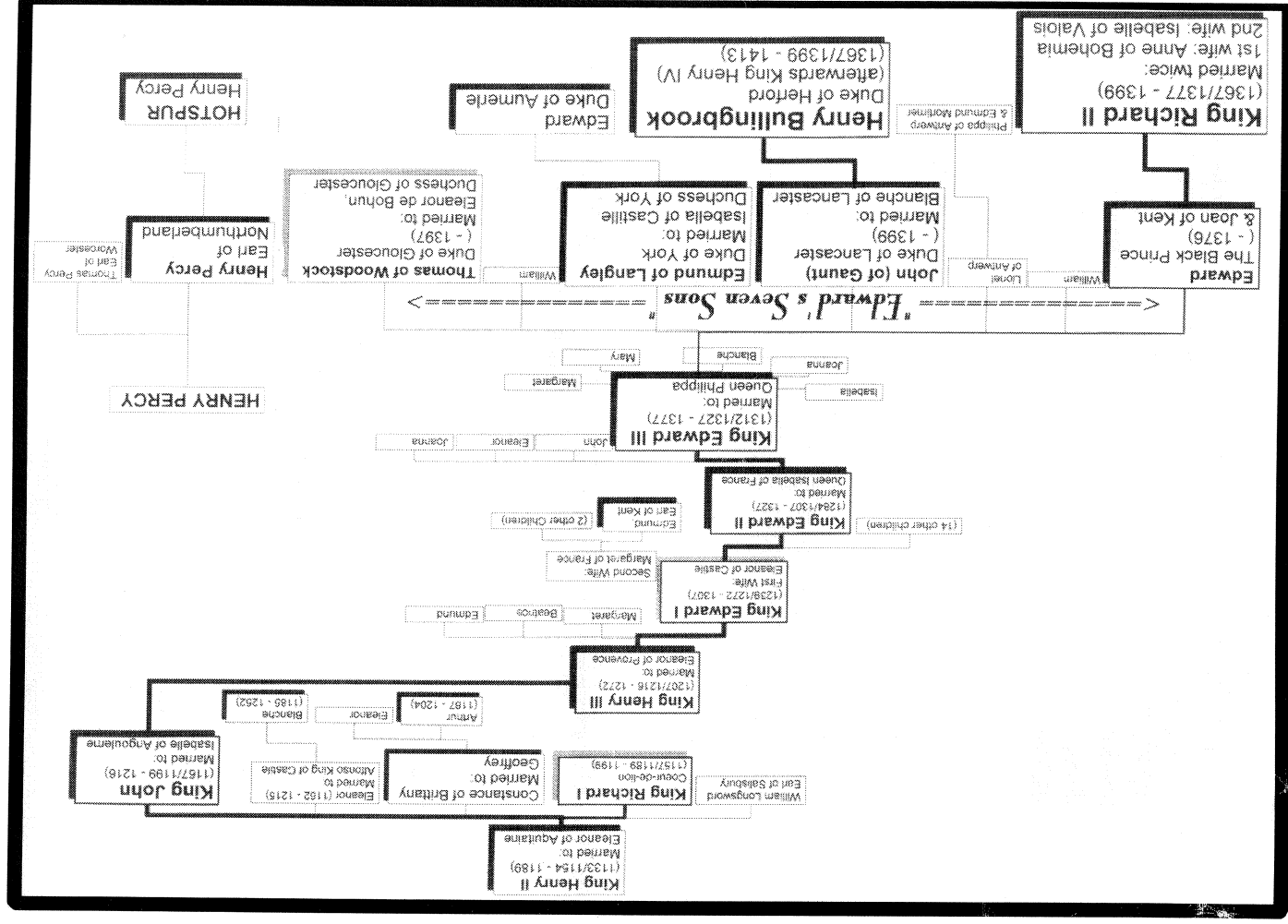
**Scott Olson** (Aumerle) was last seen as Lodowick in *T.S.P.'s Edward III*. Before that, he appeared for nine months as Tony Whitcomb in *Shear Madness*. Other Chicago credits include Opie in *As The Beaver* at Zebra Crossing and Ali in *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*. Past Shakespeare roles include Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Denver Center Theatre Company; Oliver in *As You Like It*, Chiron in *Titus Andronicus*, Elbow in *Measure for Measure* at Idaho Shakespeare Festival; Hortensio in *The Taming of the Shrew* for the Commonweal Theatre Company and touring as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* and Cassius in *Julius Caesar* for Chicspeare Productions.



**Lance Retallick** (Bushy, Percy, Keeper) graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit with an M.F.A. in acting as a member of the Hilberry Repertory Theatre, performing in over a dozen productions, including *The Grapes of Wrath*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other work in Detroit area theatres includes: *Mass Appeal*, *The Foreigner*, and *A Christmas Carol*, *The Good Times Are Killing Me* and the original production of *The Half-Life of Karen Silkwood*.



**David Skidmore** (Mowbray, Bagot, Groom) was most recently seen at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre in *The Cure at Troy* and in their 15<sup>th</sup> annual Shaw Festival. David has also appeared professionally in such roles at Hally in *Master Harold and the Boys*, Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, and Malcolm in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as well as Romeo and other roles in *The Shakespeare Project's* ongoing series of staged readings for the Chicago Park District. In addition, He reads a Spanish language weekly, "El Extra", on CRIS Radio in Chicago. David received a BA from Brandeis University in Boston and an MFA in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia. Love to Kori.



# The Shakespeare Project

Presents

## Richard the Second

### The Players

(in order of appearance)

King Richard the Second.....	Craig Bryant
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster >	Richard Henzel
Edmund of Langley, Duke of York	Gary Houston
Henry, <i>surnamed</i> Bullingbrook, Duke of Herford.....	Jason Eric Hays
son to John of Gaunt, Afterwards King Henry IV	
Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.....	David Skidmore
Duchess of Gloucester.....	Rengin Altay
widow of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester (Uncle to the King)	
Lord Marshall.....	Richard Wharton
Duke of Aumerle, son to the Duke of York.....	Scott Olson
Sir Henry Green.....	Marcus Vaughn
Sir John Bushy.....→	Lance Retallick
Sir John Bagot.....	David Skidmore
Queen to King Richard.....	Nancy Nickel
Lord Ross.....	Stephen Spencer
Lord Willowby.....	Peter Garino
Earl of Northumberland.....	Richard Wharton
Henry Percy, <i>surnamed</i> Hotspur, his son.....	Lance Retallick
Bishop of Carlisle.....	Peter Garino
Earl of Salisbury.....	Stephen Spencer
Sir Stephen Scroop.....	Marcus Vaughn
Lady, attending of the Queen.....	Rengin Altay
Gardener.....	Gary Houston
Gardener's Man.....	Richard Henzel
Duchess of York.....	Rengin Altay
Sir Pierce of Exton.....	Stephen Spencer
A Servant.....	Marcus Vaughn
The Groom.....	David Skidmore
The Keeper.....	Lance Retallick

The Scene: England and Wales

The will be one 10 minute intermission



**Rengin Altay** (Duchesses of York & Gloucester, Lady) was the Duchess of Salisbury in *Edward III* and the Duchess of Gloucester (*et al*) in *Edward II* for *T.S.P.* She has been seen on many of Chicago's many stages, most recently at the Court Theater in *Carmen*; also at The Goodman in *Unjustifiable Acts*, *A Little Night Music*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*; Steppenwolf in *Awake and Sing*; Wellington Theater in *Prelude To A Kiss*, and Victory Gardens, Appletree and Wisdom Bridge Theaters. Regional credits include work at Peninsula Players, Milwaukee Rep., The Huntington Theatre in Boston, Pittsburgh's Public, Trinity Rep. in Rhode Island, and Madison Rep.



**Craig Bryant** (King Richard) is delighted to be making his debut with *The Shakespeare Project* as King Richard, and to have this opportunity to work so vigorously with Michael Halberstam. Craig has appeared in productions at the Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Repertory, Mayfaire Theatre, and various local stages with the comedy troupe, "Wilde Boys". He has performed regionally at the Hartford Stage Company and The Indiana Repertory Theatre and also toured nationally in John Houseman's "The Acting Company".



**Peter Garino** (Willowby, Carlisle) For *T.S.P.*: Salisbury in *Edward III*, Mortimer in *Edward II*, Hubert in *King John*, Camillo in *The Winter's Tale*, Banquo in *Macbeth*, Titus Lartius in *Coriolanus*, Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Marc Antony in *Julius Caesar*. Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice*. Direction: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Pericles* and *Henry IV, Part II* this coming June. Other credits include work with Steppenwolf; Organic, Body Politic, E.L.T., Oak Park Festival Theatre and the Illinois Shakespeare Festival.



**Jason Eric Hays** (Henry Bullingbrook) is really excited about the work being done by *The Shakespeare Project*. As an aspiring director, the readings are invaluable as a source of inspiration and exploration of the Bard's works. As an actor, they offer a wondrous opportunity to play with Shakespeare's words. He has been with the group for many of it's recent projects: *Pericles*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King John* and *Edward II*. Prior to working with *T.S.P.*, Jason had the pleasure of performing at the Stratford Festival in Ontario, and also with Chicago's Shakespeare Repertory. Jason looks forward to his turn as director for *T.S.P.* later this season.



**Richard Henzel** (John of Gaunt, Gardener's Servant) last appeared with *The Shakespeare Project* as Egeus, Snug the Joiner/Lion, and Moth in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last July. For the past twenty years Richard has appeared on stage at all but a few Chicago Area Theatres and in over 30 plays here and around the world. Chicago audiences will best remember him as Mark Twain in *Mark Twain in Person* at the Steppenwolf, as Coles in *Other People's Money* at The Royal George, and in his widely known personification of Ronald Reagan in *Rap Master Rommie* and *Reagan: Dementia In Absentia*. In his spare time, Richard acts in Voice overs, Industrials, TV Shows and Movies and makes beeswax candles.

## Director's Notes

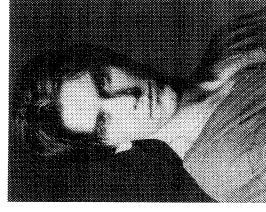
This is the fourth play of eleven to be presented in our 1997 Theatrical Reading series "The History of the English Kings." We began with Shakespeare's *King John*, the son of Henry II and brother of King Richard I (Coeur-de-lion). We saw John succeed at the end of the play by his son, Henry III, who reigns for 57-year years, followed by his son, King Edward I. In our second reading, we then picked up the story with *Edward II*, which concluded with a promising young prince ascending the throne--King Edward the Third. Then, in *Edward III*, we ended with the king's young son, Edward the Black Prince, having proved himself a warrior and *perfect* heir apparent to the English Throne (with never a mention of his son Richard, or any of his brothers and their sons). This historical scenario is where our fourth reading, *Richard II*, begins.

Many North American companies shy away from producing Shakespeare's history plays for fear of alienating or confusing an audience unfamiliar with the spectrum of pre-Tudor English history. In doing so however, they underestimate both the audience and the Bard. It is largely an established fact by now that Shakespeare had little time for factual occurrence and instead, utilized the tumultuous events of two centuries to explore themes of such universality that they can only continue to become more relevant with every passing decade. In this first play of the cycle (setting aside Edward III) we are brought face to face with themes of political manipulation, intrigue, familial struggle, true leadership abilities, self awareness, and of course, we are treated to some of the most poetic stanzas in the cannon. However, Shakespeare's true genius shines in his basic understanding of dramatic necessity, and brilliantly interwoven with these great themes, we are treated to scenes of extraordinary humanity as a father is torn from his son, a man confronts his inner strengths and weaknesses and gains self awareness, wives grieve for lost husbands, and political alliance threatens the fabric of a family. I hope you will treat yourself to return to these plays over the course of the next few months and find in them, (as I do) not only the terrifying analysis of human politics, not only the beauty of the world's greatest writer as these themes reveal themselves in poetic form, but the related experience of your own humanity.

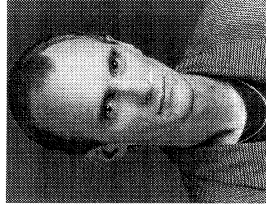
**Michael Halberstam**



Stephen Spencer (Ross, Salisbury & Exton) recently appeared in *Season's Greetings* at the Forum Theatre. In Chicago, he originated the title role in *Shakespeare's Robin Hood* at Chicago Dramatists Workshop where he's performed in *Judevine*, *Marisol* and *Wingwalkers*. Other Chicago credits include *The Sea* with The Cypress Group and *Limbo Tales* at Cafe Voltaire. Regional theaters include Florida's Asolo State Theatre and The Ruth Foreman Theatre; the Utah Shakespearean Festival; Wisconsin's Evergreen Theatre and New Jersey's Cape May Playhouse. He toured throughout Russia, starting with Moscow's Theatre, and performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

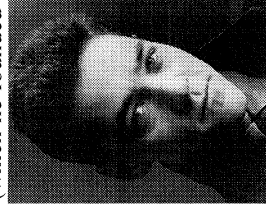


**Marcus Vaughn** (Green, Scoop, Servant) has acted in many readings with *The Shakespeare Project*, and composed and performed the musical accompaniment for *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Marcus received his B.A. in Anthropology and Theatre from The University of Notre Dame in 1993 and continued his acting studies at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. Before moving to Chicago he could be seen performing in Las Vegas for a spell. He recently returned from a screen acting gig in L.A. where he could (and will) be seen defacing the Hollywood sign (somebody had to do it). He is now happy to be back in Chitown doing Shakespeare.



**Richard Wharton** (Lord Marshall, Northumberland) Richard's credits include 5 years with the Free Street Theater, 5 years as a member of the Immediate Theatre Company, several productions with Shakespeare Repertory, assassinating Richard II at The Goodman Theatre, playing a roller-skating bear at The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, attempting to rob Billy Crystal and Gregory Hines in the movie *Running Scared* and passing out daisies on State Street dressed as a bumble bee.

**Michael Halberstam** (Director) is the Artistic Director of Writers' Theatre in Glencoe (which he founded in 1991 with his Artistic Associate Marilyn Campbell) and for which he has directed *Love & Lunacy*, *A Play On Words*, *Dear Master*, *Not About Heroes* (starring Nicholas Pennell and David New), *Diary of a Madman*, *My Own Stranger*, *Marriage & Bears*, *Blake* and *Memoir*. Michael's Chicago acting credentials include Bailiwick Theatre, The Court Theatre, Oak Park Festival Theatre, and Shakespeare Repertory. He spent two years at The Stratford Festival in Ontario, and performed in *Timon of Athens*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, (in which he played the title role), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Macbeth*. Michael appeared as Napoleon in the Writers' Theatre Chicago production of *Two By Shaw*. Lord Alfred Douglas in the one man show *Oscar Remembered*, *Damon Ring & F. Scott*, *In the Heart of Winter* '96, and most recently in the title role of Shakespeare's *Richard II*.



**Mara Polster** (Artistic Director) is very grateful and, frankly, honored to welcome Michael Halberstam to *The Shakespeare Project* as director of *Richard II*, having recently witnessed his brilliant performance in the title role at the Writers' Theatre, and also many examples of his strong directing talent in other productions there. With the help of an ever growing and enthusiastic audience and a wonderful acting company, *The Shakespeare Project* is gathering much steam in its journey towards our first full production -the apocryphal *King Edward the Third*, scheduled for early 1998- and the completion of the Canon with our final reading, *Hamlet*, in December of 1998. As always, *The Shakespeare Project* exists as the grateful commemoration of two fiercely strong souls, Samuel E. LaMaccchia (the sower of the seed) and Michael A. Wilson.