

THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO <i>the world in words</i>		20 th Anniversary Season	
KING LEAR	By William Shakespeare Directed by Peter Garino	10.24 → 10.26.2014	
50-MINUTE HAMLET & 50-MINUTE ROMEO AND JULIET	Directed by Jeff Christian By William Shakespeare Directed by Barbara Zahora	01.16 → 01.18.2015	
MACBETH	By William Shakespeare Directed by David Skidmore	02.27 → 03.01.2015	
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY	By Thomas Middleton Directed by Peter Garino	04.24 → 04.26.2015	

2014-2015 Performance Schedule:

Fridays at 7:00PM - The Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton Street, Niles, IL (Pre-registration required)

Saturdays at 10:00AM – The Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton, Street, Chicago, IL

Saturdays at 2:00PM – Wilmette Public Library, 1242 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, IL

Sundays at 2:00PM – Highland Park Public Library, 494 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park, IL

Admission is FREE, seating is limited. All performances are preceded by an introduction to the play that commences 15 minutes prior to curtain.

THE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO

the world in words

20th Anniversary Benefit

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago

With special guest
David Bevington

Saturday, November 8, 2014



www.shakespeareprojectchicago.org
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P.O. Box 25126
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Attention educators with an interest in Shakespeare!

Now booking in-school performances of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago's Education Outreach Productions. Performances available January 19 – March 28, 2015.

email: outreach@shakespeareprojectchicago.org



50-Minute Romeo and Juliet

Adapted by Barbara Zahora, Michelle Shupe and Peter Garino, "50-Minute Romeo and Juliet" presents an abridged telling of Shakespeare's most enduring love story that places an enhanced emphasis on the journey of the star-crossed lovers. Utilizing four actors, two which play Romeo and Juliet and two which play all other supporting roles, "50-Minute Romeo and Juliet" contains many of The Bard's most famous lines and speeches while retaining much of his saga's pathos, poetry and passion.

Pictured: Amanda Catania (Juliet) and Behzad Dabu (Romeo).



50-Minute Hamlet

Adapted by Jeff Christian, "50-Minute Hamlet" presents Shakespeare's most enduring tragedy. Utilizing just two actors, "50-Minute Hamlet" is the perfect in-classroom accompaniment to students' study of the play that illuminates the play's most important scenes and characters. The Shakespeare Project of

Chicago has presented it to numerous Chicago area schools since its premier in 2002. It has won the acclaim of students and teachers alike each time it has been presented.

Pictured: James Krag (Hamlet) and Gail Rastorfer (Gertrude).

SHAKESPEARE PROJECT OF CHICAGO MARKS ITS 20TH YEAR

Chicago *Tribune*, October 23, 2014

By Rick Kogan

The current production of William Shakespeare's "King Lear," playing through Nov. 9 at the handsome and justifiably renowned Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier, stars Larry Yando as the increasingly delusional title character and features the music of Frank Sinatra.

Another, quite different "King Lear" will be taking place this weekend at four libraries around the area. There is no Sinatra. There are no costumes. There is no set. There are just actors reading from scripts held in their hands — "on book," in theater-speak — the words that Shakespeare wrote more than 400 years ago. And it's free.

The cast is composed of theater pros, all members of Actors Equity, the professional union of actors and stage managers. All of these people have long lists of credits, from Broadway to TV and movies and dozens of local stages. All love Shakespeare and his words.

"You might think of us as 'Shakespeare unplugged,'" says Peter Garino, the director of this show and one of the founders of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago (shakespeareprojectchicago.org). "We greatly admire what Barbara (Gaines, the founder and artistic director of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater) does. Many of our actors have performed on her stage to great joy. But we are unadorned and direct, and sometimes a person will tell us after a reading, 'I finally get this play.' That means a great deal to us."

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago is celebrating its 20th year in the Bard business, and if you have never heard of it you are not alone. "We are under the radar," says Garino. "We are barely if ever reviewed, mentioned by the mainstream press. We are up and gone in a weekend."

Still, this is an essential thread in the cultural fabric of this clime.

It began in 1995 when Garino, along with a few other actors/Shakespeare fans, would bump into one another at auditions. A group of eight then decided to meet once a week in a room at the Chicago Park District's Berger Park Cultural Center on the North Side.

"This was a way for actors to flex their muscles. You can read and rehearse a monologue by yourself, but you can't do a scene all alone," says Stephen Spencer, who will be reading the role of the Fool, with Fredric Stone playing Lear. Shortly after they began meeting, "People would walk by and ask, 'Mind if I sit in and listen?'" says Garino, who is the group's artistic director. "We never went looking for an audience. People just started to find us, and there were so many dropping by to listen that we eventually decided to give a public performance."

They presented a reading of "The Merchant of Venice" at Berger Park. It was well-attended and enthusiastically received. Each of the dozen cast members was paid \$15.

The salaries have not gone up much since then. "No one does this for the money," says Spencer. But over the last decades the group has performed more than 100 plays — each

of Shakespeare's plays at least once — at such venues as the Chicago Cultural Center, Lincoln Park Cultural Center, Harold Washington Library, senior centers, civic organizations and school classrooms.

"We are the classic itinerant company," says Garino, smiling. Its current "stages" are in public libraries in Niles (7 p.m. Friday), Wilmette (2 p.m. Saturday), Highland Park (2 p.m. Sunday) and the Newberry (10 a.m. Saturday) in the city, but the group's performers rehearse wherever they can.

"It would be lovely if someone might offer us a permanent rehearsal space," says Garino, noting that organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

The company — "We never call ourselves an ensemble," says Garino — has, give or take, depending on people's other theatrical commitments, a couple of dozen regulars. Its annual budget is \$30,000, about what some big productions might spend on wigs. This money comes from an Illinois Arts Council grant, some private donors and from friends-of-the-library groups that raise funds through such activities as bake sales. It has a tiny board of directors.

"No matter how humble, we know we are part of the scene," says Spencer.

Later in its current season, the company will present its 50-minute productions of "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet" (in January), "Macbeth" (in late February) and "The Revenger's Tragedy" (in April). (Yes, that latter show is not from Shakespeare's pen but rather the work of Thomas Middleton, one of the Shakespeare contemporaries whose work is also performed by the company.) Each performance comes with short introductions to the play, and every performance is followed by the cast having conversations with the audiences.

As an acknowledgment of the company's durability and ongoing importance, the Newberry recently invited it to contribute artifacts such as scripts, production notes, photographs, programs, posters and other materials from its 20 years in business to form a permanent archive.

The library, which has a fine collection of Shakespearean materials, celebrated the 450th anniversary of the playwright's birth earlier this year with a terrific exhibition, "The Bard is Born." It featured The Shakespeare Project of Chicago's "All's Well That Ends Well," which played to a packed house.

rkogan@tribune.com

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Dear Patrons:

Thank you for joining us at our 20th Anniversary Fall Benefit for The Shakespeare Project of Chicago. Quite simply, we would not be here today without your ongoing support over these many years. Thanks to you, and the ongoing sponsorship of our libraries, we have been able to pursue our mission of providing free professional theatrical readings of Shakespeare and producing education outreach productions of Shakespeare in local schools. Today, as it was at our beginning, our focus remains firmly rooted on illuminating the universal truths embodied in the words of the greatest dramatist in the English language.

With gratitude,



Peter Garino
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Since 1995, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago has dedicated itself to presenting free theatrical readings of William Shakespeare and other classic dramatists to Chicago audiences. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago also offers education outreach programs in Shakespeare studies to local schools. The company draws its talent from the extraordinary pool of local professional actors, all members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

2014 Fall Benefit

Welcome Peter Garino
Excerpt from “Will and Testament” Fredric Stone
Two Fictional Shakespeare Films..... David Bevington
Silent Auction Winners..... David Skidmore

Special Thanks

Our hosts: Regina M. Schwartz and William A. Davis