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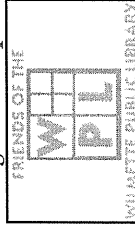
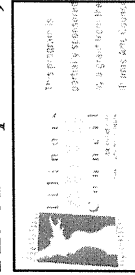
Christopher Wilson

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The Shakespeare Project of Chicago is also partially supported by:



and the generous contributions of our program audiences. *Thank You!*

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago *the world in words* presents

Charles Dickens'

The Cricket on the Hearth

"A Tale for the Home"

a theatrical reading

*Adapted and Directed by
Jeff Christian**

*Stage Manager
Shaun Pace*

Performances: December 13 and 14, 2003

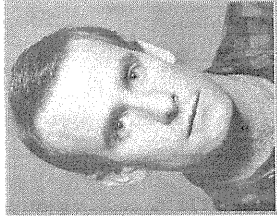
All Actors with *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago* are members of Actors' Equity Association the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.



This Month's Artists



Peter Garino*
Tackleton



Michael Grant
John Peerybingle



Alyson Green
May Fielding



Linda Kimbrough
Tilly Slowboy



Gail Rastorfer
Mary Peerybingle



David Skidmore*
A Stranger



Fredric Stone*
Caleb Plummer



Georgina Stovles
Bertha



Jeff Christian*
Artistic Director

* Denotes **Artistic Associates** of *The Shakespeare Project of Chicago*.

Notes from the Artistic Director

Thank you for joining us for this premiere adaptation of Charles Dickens' touching story. All involved with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago wish you and your families the happiest and safest of holiday seasons...and may you all have a (metaphorical, of course) cricket on your hearth.

- Jeff

About The Shakespeare Project of Chicago

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago began in 1995, providing free public performances of the complete works of William Shakespeare, offering several performances of one play per month at various public venues. Since that time, our mission has been to meet three goals: (1) To provide to our community, free or easily affordable professional performances of the works of William Shakespeare and other great dramatists; (2) To create the opportunity for professional actors to explore this great literature; and (3) To provide exceptional theatre experiences for audiences and artists by maintaining an artistic emphasis on the language of the plays and skill of the actors, all of whom are members of Actors' Equity Association.

We began with *Macbeth* in October of 1995, and in little over three years, completed William Shakespeare's canon with *Hamlet* in December of 1998. Our 1997 Season: The History of the English Kings, traversed the entirety of the great Elizabethan history plays in chronological order including *King John*, *Edward II* (by Christopher Marlowe), *Edward III* (an apocryphal play), *Richard II*, both parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, all three parts of *Henry VI*, and ending with *Richard III*. To date we have performed well over 50 plays.

We saved *Henry VIII* for 1999. Also during that year we presented our first fully realized production of *Hamlet* opening in March of 1999. We produced our first original adaptation, of *My Name Is Will*, (an exciting dramatic adaptation of William Shakespeare's sonnets and songs), debuting as a reading in 1999 and as a full production in 2000. Our original adaptation of Shakespeare's dark narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece* was performed in 2001 and we began development of our newest adaptation, *50 Minute Hamlet* in 2002, which we produced for its first fully realized production in 2003. This production of *50 Minute Hamlet* is now performing regularly at Chicago area schools and is available for booking October 2003 - June 2004.

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, now in its ninth season, is funded in part by the revenue from our school programs; by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Seabury Foundation; by the generous support of Friends of the Wilmette Public Library; and of course by the voluntary contributions of our audiences. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago is a not for profit 501(c)3 organization. As such, all donations are tax-deductible and all companies with matching gift programs will recognize their employees' contributions.

Again, we wish you Happy Holidays and peace in the New Year. Join us in March for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Check us out at our new venues in the New Year. For further information and to keep up to date on our additions, log on to our website at www.ShakespeareProjectChicago.org.

Georgina Stoyles (Bertha) returns to The Shakespeare Project where she also appeared in *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Most recently, she played Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. Other regional credits include: *Godspell* at The New Court Theatre, *The Entertainer* at Illinois Theatre Center, *Playboy of the Western World* at Long Wharf Theatre, *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Ft Worth Shakespeare in the Park, as well as *A Night in the Ukraine* and *The Lion Who Wouldn't* at Callaway Gardens. Chicago credits include: two seasons of *A Christmas Carol* at the Goodman Theatre, *Playboy of the Western World* at Steppenwolf Theatre, *Macbeth* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, *The Mill on the Floss* at Vitalist Theatre, *Saved* at Profiles Theatre, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* with ECT at the Athenaeum Theatre. In addition to her industrial commercial work, she can also be seen in the films, *With a Family Like Mine* and *Dead Decisions*. Georgina is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Shawn Pace (Stage Manager) This is Shawn's fourth show with TSP and he is excited to return. This summer he Stage Managed *Don't Drink The Water* at the Noble Fool Theater and The League of Chicago Theatre's gala at The Goodman. He has been back in Chicago since February and before that he Stage Managed *A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings* (directed by Graciela Daniel and written by 2002 Pulitzer Prize winner Nilo Cruz) and *Wizard of Oz* for Children's Theatre Company's TONY award winning 2002-2003 season. Regionally he has worked for Northern Stage, Rockwell Productions and Arkansas Rep.

Jeff Christian* (Director, Artistic Director) leads the company into his second season, having adapted and directed the outreach program *50 Minute Hamlet* and *The Cricket on the Hearth*, and having staged *King Lear* last May. Other directing credits include *Driving Miss Daisy* (New American Theater), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Lakeside Shakespeare -- Michigan), *Cruise Control* (Artistic Home; also playwright), *Land of the Free* (Artistic Home; written with Mark Ulrich), *Crate Expectations* (Chicago Dramatists; written with Nathan Carver), *Singer & Saw* (Actors' Gymnasium; written with Nathan Carver), the staged reading of *Medea* (Aspect Theatre; also adaptor), and both parts of *Angels in America* (The Journeymen; co-director and actor, sharing in three Jeff Awards and an After Dark Award). Acting credits with TSP include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Buckingham in *Richard III*, Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio in *Twelfth Night* and Hortensio in *Taming of the Shrew*. Other area acting credits include work with Writers' Theatre, Shakespeare Rep, Milwaukee Rep, Madison Rep, New American, Illinois Theatre Center, Oak Park Festival, Artistic Home, and Bernie Sahlin's production of *Murder in the Cathedral*. He recently played 12 characters in the critically-acclaimed production of *The Laramie Project* at Madison Repertory Theatre and Lt. Osborne in Seanachai's After Dark-winning and Jeff nominated production of *Journey's End*, and is a member of both the Seanachai and Lakeside Shakespeare ensembles. Jeff co-fronts the rock band Ingenious Whittier, and holds BBA in Marketing and a BA in International Relations from The University of Wisconsin. This spring he will direct *Proof* for New American Theater and Ibsen's *Ghosts* for TSP.

Mara Polster* (Founding Director) Since the company's inception in May of 1995, Mara has guided The Shakespeare Project through over 50 productions and the entirety of William Shakespeare's canon, directing such plays as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Richard III*, *Timon of Athens*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and last month *The Merchant of Venice*. The Shakespeare Project of Chicago continues as the grateful commemoration of two fiercely strong souls, Samuel E. LaMaccchia and Michael Alan Wilson.

The Players

(In order of appearance)

John Peerybinge, a mail carrier **Michael Grant**

Mary, his wife, called Dot **Gail Rastofer**

Tilly Slowboy, their help **Linda Kimbrough**

A Stranger **David Skidmore***

Tackleton, a toy merchant, **Peter Garino***
(often called Gruff and Tackleton)

Caleb Plummer, his aging employee **Fredric Stone***

Bertha, Caleb's blind daughter **Georgina Stoyles**

May Fielding, Dot's friend, **Alyson Green**
(engaged to Tackleton)

the Scenes:

Chirp the First -- The Home of the Peerybingles

Chirp the Second -- The Home of Caleb Plummer

(There will be one ten-minute intermission)

Chirp the Third -- The Home of the Peerybingles

* Denotes Artistic Associates of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago.

Profiles

Peter Garino* (Tackleton) was most recently seen at TSP as the King of France in *All's Well That Ends Well*. A TSP company member since 1995, Peter has appeared in over 30 TSP readings. He has also directed readings of *Pericles*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *2 Henry IV*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and *My Name is Will*. Peter made his Chicago debut in 1984 in Chicago City Theatre's production of *King Lear* playing the Duke of Cornwall. Since then, he has worked with Steppenwolf Theatre, Body Politic Ensemble, Pegasus Players, Absolute Theatre Company, Oak Park Festival Theatre and the Huron Theatre Company.¹ In 2000, he directed the critically acclaimed production of Leigh Johnson's Vietnam trilogy, *The Khe Sanh Bagman* at the Center Theatre. In 2004, he will direct Mr. Johnson's new play, *Lefties*. Peter received his B.A. in Theatre from Hofstra University, New York, an M.F.A. in Acting from Illinois State University and also attended the National Shakespeare Company Conservatory.

Michael Grant (John Peerybingle) was most recently seen as Sherlock Holmes in *The Sign of the Four* at Apple Tree Theater. Michael is a founding member of Seanachai Theatre Company and served as its Artistic Director from its inception in 1995 until this past July. As an actor, Michael has appeared in six of Seanachai's production including the world premieres of *Marked Tree* by Coby Goss, and *And Neither Have I Wings to Fly* and *The Pagans* by Ann Noble. Additionally, he has produced many of Seanachai's shows, including the recent Joseph Jefferson award winning *Journey's End*. Other Chicago acting credits include *God's Man in Texas* with Northlight Theatre (Joseph Jefferson nomination for Best Supporting Actor), *London Suite* with Fox Theatricals, *Are You Now or Have You Even Been...* with Next Theatre (Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Ensemble), and other work with Next Theatre, Interplay, Court Theatre, ShawChicago, European Repertory, and Center Theater. Michael is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame.

Alyson Green (May) Credits include: Mibs in *A Life at Irish Repertory*; Diana in *All's Well That Ends Well* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre; Vivie Warren in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and Nell Gwynne in *In Good King Charles's...* for ShawChicago; the Third Witch and Boy Macduff in *Macbeth* for Oak Park Festival; Kat in *Sex, Death & Art Chicks* and Stephanie in *Call Control* at the Toronto Fringe Festival; Julie in *Miss Julie*, Ms. Loon in *A Play on Paper*, Pat Jacobs in *The League of Nathans*, Hermione in *Andromache* and Blue in *Beirut* at the Orange Dog Theatre; and Shelley in *Buried Child* at Live Arts Theatre Alberta. She trained at the New School of Drama in Toronto, American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, Second City and the University of Calgary.

Linda Kimbrough (Tilly) returns to The Shakespeare Project where she played Goneril in last spring's production of *King Lear*. Most recently she appeared as Woman in *The Play About the Baby* at the Goodman Theatre. Chicago Shakespeare Theater credits include Decia Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, The Countess in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Margaret in *Richard III*, Dionyza and the Goddess Diana in *Pericles*, a Witch and Lady McDuff in *Macbeth*, Eleanor in *King John*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Queen in *Cymbeline*, and assorted roles in *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits*. Other Chicago credits include Evelyn in *Hearts*, Madame Securite in *The Gamester* (Northlight Theater); Mrs. Seizmagraff in *Betty's Summer Vacation* (After Dark Award, Roadworks Productions); Maria, Dr. Fritz and others in *Mere Mortals* (Touchstone Theater); and Nurse Preen in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (Steppenwolf Theater and the Barbican Theater in London).

Profiles

Gail Rastorfer (Dot) last appeared with TSP as Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* and prior to that as Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Other Chicago credits include: *Twelfth Night* at First Folio Shakespeare Festival, *The Rose Tattoo* at Goodman Theatre, *The Gamester* and *As Bees In Honey Drown* at Northlight Theatre, *Murder by the Book* and *A Bed Full of Foreigners* at Drury Lane Evergreen Park, *Quick Change Room* with Pendulum Theatre, *Anna Weiss* with Dolphinback and Griffin Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet*. Last spring she appeared as Rosalind in *As You Like It* at Indiana Repertory Theatre. Many thanks to Dan.

David Skidmore* (Stranger) was last seen as Fool in *King Lear* and can be seen regularly as Hamlet in The Shakespeare Project's school production of *50 Minute Hamlet*, the role which he developed for the 2002 season's premier theatrical reading of the piece. David has appeared in such diverse roles as the Hunchback in NOWtheatre's *Signal to Noise*, Hally in *Master Harold and the Boys*, C.K Dexter Haven in *The Philadelphia Story*, Jesus in *The Medieval Mystery Cycle*, Philoctetes in Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* and Sidney in *Smash*; an adaptation of one of G.B. Shaw's novels in Milwaukee Chamber Theater's annual Shaw Festival. In addition to serving as *TSP's* Board President, David is a longstanding Artistic Associate and has been involved in nearly every production, performing such roles as Puck, Iago, Cassio, Petruccio, Troilus, Dogberry, Hotspur, Henry VI, Romeo and Hamlet in *TSP's* premier full production in March of 1999; and directing *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.

Fredric Stone* (Caleb Plummer) is pleased to return to The Shakespeare Project after a long absence and to be part of this premier adaptation of *Cricket on the Hearth*. He just finished doing *Singin' in the Rain* at Theatre at the Center. Recently he played the Duke and Antonio in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Shakespeare on the Green in Lake Forest and Agamemnon in Mary Zimmerman's acclaimed production of *Trojan Women* at the Goodman Theatre last spring. He has spent much time at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in productions of *Love's Labor's Lost* (Boyet), *The Tempest* (Alonso), *Richard II* (Northumberland), *Henry IV parts 1 and 2* (Northumberland, Francis, Vernon, and Silence); *Henry V* (multiple roles), *The Winter's Tale* (Camillo), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Gremio). Other Chicago credits include *Fires in the Mirror* (Northlight), *Beau Jest* (Victory Gardens), *Isn't it Romantic* (Ivanhoe), as well as work at the Court Theatre, Drury Lane Evergreen Park, and Illinois Theatre Center. Regional credits at New American Theatre, BoarsHead Theatre, Madison Repertory and First Stage Milwaukee. Broadway and Off B'way credits include *All Over Town* and *Awake and Sing* and tours include *A Funny Thing Happened....Forum* with Zero Mostel. Film and Television credits include *Thief*, *The Untouchables*, *Crime Story*, and *Missing Persons*. Mr. Stone also created and performs a one-person Shakespeare show, *Will and Testament (a life after death comedy)* that he tours. He teaches a "Performing Shakespeare" class at Victory Gardens Theatre.