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Mara Polster

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(In Kind Contributions)
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Rich Bynum
Berger Park Cultural Center
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Lindley Curry Traynor
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Hawkeye Scenic Studios
Maria Jaskot-Inclan
Ann Johnson
Chuck Lippitz

Connie McGrail
Ned Mochel
Sue Nicotera

North American Bear Company
Michael O'Conner

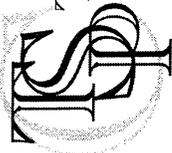
Arlene Polster-Moore
Mara Polster-Wilson
Lance Retallick
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Abigail Rose St. John

Laura St. John
Marlon St. John
Janet Schirn
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Dennis Sook
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Michael Aaron Wilson
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The Shakespeare Project of Chicago
Presents

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

a theatrical reading

DIRECTED BY

JEFF CHRISTIAN* & LAURA ST. JOHN*

Stage Manager
Tom Hagglund*

Performances: May 17 and 18, 2003

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



The Shakespeare Project of Chicago is also partially supported by:



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

The Players

(In order of appearance)

Jeff Christian* (Co-Director, Artistic Director) was appointed the company's second Artistic Director in August 2002, and adapted and directed the premier of *50 Minute Hamlet*. Other directing credits include *Driving Miss Daisy* (New American Theater), *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) 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 The Project include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Buckingham in *Richard III*, Antonio in *Twelfth Night* and Hortensio in *Taming of the Shrew*. Other Chicago credits include Writers' Theatre, Shakespeare Rep, Drury Lane Evergreen Park, Lifeline, Illinois Theatre Center, CT20 Ensemble, Bailiwick, Oak Park Festival, Artistic Home, Shakespeare's Motley Crew and Bernie Sahli's production of *Murder in the Cathedral*. He also shared in three Jeff Awards and an After Dark Award for his work on The Journeymen's production of both parts of *Angels in America*, co-directing, playing Joe Pitt and choreographing the fights. Regional credits include work with Milwaukee Rep, Madison Rep, Michigan Ensemble and New American. Jeff recently played 12 characters in the critically-acclaimed production of *The Laramie Project* at Madison Repertory Theatre, will play Lt. Osborne in Seanachai's *Journey's End*, and co-fronts the rock band Ingenious Whittler.

Laura St. John (Co-Director, Education Director) was last seen as Gal in *50 Minute Hamlet*. She directed and played the role of Maria in last December's *Twelfth Night*. Other TSP roles include Calpurnia (*Julius Caesar*), 3rd Witch (*Macbeth*), and the Player Queen (*Hamlet*). Laura works as a Drama Artist with Whirlwind -- a drama based reading program servicing the children of the Chicago Public Schools. She is a collaborator on the children's book *Through the Cracks* (Davis Publications). Laura's most recent film performance, *Jumper*, debuted at last year's *New York International Film and Video Festival*. Listen for Laura's voice in *Miss Twiggley's Tree*, an animated film showing on PBS stations this summer.

Mara Polster* (Producer, Founding Director) during her tenure as Artistic Director, Mara 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 playing many great Shakespearean women, like Emilia, Tamora, Margaret, Paulina, Isabella, Katherina, Lady Macbeth. Mara has acted on many of the stages here in Chicago and many others across the country. Favorite roles include Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*, Miranda in *The Tempest*, Emily in *Our Town*, Angie in *Top Girls*, and Edna the Terrorist in *Top 40 Terror*. Mara has also performed in musicals all across the country including *Candide*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Evita*, *A Little Night Music*, *Oklahoma*, *Brigadoon*, *Best Little Whorehouse*, *Sweet Charity*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The King and I*, *Zorba*, and so on. The Shakespeare Project began on May 7, 1995. After seven years of outstanding performances, Mara and the Board of Directors invited Jeff Christian -- with his strong attachment to TSP's mission and ideals, his outstanding talent, vision, experience and charismatic leadership -- to beacon our continued journey. Mara is a graduate of The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University in St. Louis and her work with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago continues as the grateful commemoration of two fiercely strong souls, Samuel E. LaMacchia and Michael Alan Wilson.

Earl of Gloucester John Kishline
 Earl of Kent..... Stephen Spencer*
 Edmund, bastard son to Gloucester..... Michael A. Torrey
 Lear, King of England..... Ray Wild
 Goneril Linda Kimbrough
 Regan Karen Janes Woditsch
 Cordelia Connie McGrail*
 Duke of Albany, husband to Goneril.....Mark Ulrich
 Duke of Cornwall, husband to Regan.....James Krag
 King of France David Skidmore*
 Edgar, son to Gloucester..... Aaron Christensen
 Oswald, steward to Goneril..... Douglas Rainey
 Fool, to Lear David Skidmore*
 A ServantMark Ulrich
 A Gentleman Douglas Rainey

Scene: Britain

There will be one 10 minute intermission

* Denotes Artistic Associates of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago.

Aaron Christensen (Edgar) is thrilled, stunned and amazed to be returning to The Shakespeare Project, following his shameless turn as Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well* earlier this year. Other Chicago credits include Ned in Remy Bumppo's production of *Holiday*, and *Anna Christie* (Apple Tree). *Among the Thugs* (Next, Goodman), *King Lear* (Chicago Shakespeare), *Mrs. Coney, True West*, and *Broken Spokes* (Bailiwick), *Not About Nightingales* (Timeline), *Xena Live!* (About Face/greasy joan & co.), *Richard III* (Shakespeare on the Green) and *Twelfth Night* (Festival).

Linda Kimbrough (Goneril) Chicago Shakespeare Theater credits include Decia Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, The Countess in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Margaret in *Richard III*, Dionya and the Goddess Diana in *Perciles*, 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 *Betsy'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).

John Kishline (Gloucester) has participated in 150 productions as a member of Milwaukee's Theatre X Ensemble since 1972. This work took him often to Europe as well as Japan and 28 of the states and won Theatre X an OBIE in New York. John has written 8 plays and also worked with other theatre companies in Milwaukee, Madison and Rockford as an actor and director. He last appeared in Chicago at the Goodman in Theatre X's *My Werewolf*.

James Krag (Cornwall) just returned from New York where he appeared in a remount of Court Theatre's *Pheдре*, directed by Joanne Akalitis. Before that he appeared as Tom in *Dinner With Friends* at the Goodman and Longaville in *Love's Labour's Lost* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. Jim has also appeared at Victory Gardens, Festival Theatre, Organic, Steppenwolf, New American and Peninsula Players. Film and TV roles include, *While You Were Sleeping*, *Mercury Rising*, *Crossing the Bridge*, *ER*, *Ellen*, *Dharma and Greg*, *Early Edition* and a recurring role on *Missing Persons*. He has appeared in over 50 commercials and 200 industrial films.

Connie McGrail* (Cordelia) is a long time company member of the Project and was last seen as Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. Connie has also been seen as Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Celia in *As You Like It*, Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida*, Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*, Katharine in Henry V, Diana in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Lady Anne in *Richard III* and Cordelia in TSP's first *King Lear*. She has been seen locally with Northlight Repertory, Illinois Theatre Center, the Drury Lanes and Theatre at the Center and regionally with Peninsula Players, Purple Rose Theatre, and Florida's Asolo Theatre.

Douglas Rainey (Oswald, Gentleman) is pleased to be making his debut with The Shakespeare Project in *King Lear*. Chicago credits include *Blithe Spirit*, *An Enemy of the People*, and *Noxious Humors* at Aspect Theatre (where he has also directed *The Crucible* and *Fool for Love*), *Strange Interlude* at the NLCC, and Night Light with Performing Arts Chicago. He has also appeared in the American premieres of *Voix Dire* (Trinity Repertory Theatre), Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* (Sugan Theatre/Actor's Studio), and in the National Tour of *The Story of Anne Frank*.

David Skidmore (Fool, France) was last seen as "Guy" in last month's premier 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 Theatre'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. He also directed *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.

Stephen Spencer (Kent) is a TSP founding member and was last seen as Orsino in *Twelfth Night*. He played Iago in *Othello* and Timon in TSP's *Timon of Athens*. Prior to that he directed *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and has appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Henry VIII*; *Love's Labor's Lost*; *Henry VI, part 3*; *Henry VI, part 2*; *Henry V*; *Edward III*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *All's Well That Ends Well*; *Richard II* and *Macbeth*. Steve was in the Jeff Award-winning *The Liquid Moon* at Chicago Dramatists where he's performed in *Judevine*, *Marisol*, *Wingwalkers* and *Robin Hood*.

Other Chicago credits include *Season's Greetings* at the Forum; *The Sea* with The Cypress Group and *Limbo Tales* at Café 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 Leninsky Komsomol Theatre, and performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

Michael A. Torrey (Edmund) is pleased to be working with the Shakespeare Project once again and collaborating with director Jeff Christian. Michael and Jeff last teamed up at the New American Theatre in Rockford on the hit production of *Driving Miss Daisy*. Mr. Torrey has been seen at many other Theatre's including: The Goodman, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Next Theatre, Drury Lane-Evergreen Park, and Theatre at the Center in Munster, IN. Michael also enjoys working in commercials, television, and film.

Mark Ulrich (Albany, servant) is pleased to be participating in The Shakespeare Project's reading of *King Lear* where he has previously been seen as Edgar in *Lear*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Edward in *Henry VI, part 3*, Prince Hal in *Henry IV, part 2*. Mark has appeared in *Spite for Spite* at Writers' Theatre of Glencoe, *A Blue Moon* at Chicago Dramatists, *The Gamester* at Northlight, and the Jeff nominated *Descent* with The Aardvark Theatre in Chicago. He is a proud member of Division 13 with whom he appeared in the After Dark award winning *Bloodline*. When not acting, Mark enjoys criticising, mocking and saying rude things.

Rav Wild (King Lear) recently was in *House and Garden* at the Goodman; in Court's *Desire Under the Elms* here and at Philadelphia's Freedom Theatre; and in Irish Rep's *A Life*. He played Judge Danforth in *The Crucible* and a Juror in *Twelve Angry Men* at Steppenwolf. He played King Duncan alongside Sam Wannamaker in Goodman's *Macbeth* 40 years ago and at Next a few years ago. He has worked with Roadworks, Raven, European Rep, Famous Door, Shaw Chicago, Goose Island, Touchstone, and other venues in a variety of roles and was The Bishop in *In the Flesh* at the Organic. A Chicago writer and actor, Mr. Wild studied at the Goodman. Thanks TSP Chicago.

Karen James Woditsch (Regan) This is Karen's debut with The Shakespeare Project. She was last seen as Louise in *Always Patsy Cline*. Other Chicago credits include Belle Stark in *Rocket to the Moon*, Dynamene in *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, Diana in *Spite for Spite* (After Dark Award - Best Production), Ann Butley in *Butley*, Saunders in *Fallen Angels*, Prossy in *Candida*, and the Angel in *Biuke* (all Writers' Theatre); Philomena in *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre); *Mirandolina* in *Mirandolina* (Noble Fool Theatre); Louka in *Arms And The Man* and Gloria in *You Never Can Tell* (Shaw Chicago); Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* (Shakespeare on the Green); Goneril in *King Lear*, Luciana in *Comedy of Errors* and Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* (Shakespeare's Motley Crew) and Barto Productions' *Under Milkwood*.

Tom Hagglund (Stage Manager) *King Lear* marks Tom's thirteenth production with the Shakespeare Project, having stage managed *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *My Name Is Will*, *The Tempest* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Recent credits include stage managing Red Hen Theatre's entire past season of five plays. At the Theatre Building he ran OTG's *A Ritual of Faith* and Famous Door's *Hellicab*. He has worked with the Lyric Opera. Aspect Theatre, LJPG's *Khe Sanh Bagman* & ELT's *Dreams of Baby*. Tom was the Technical Director of the St. Nicholas Theatre & has worked on numerous productions at Court Theatre, Piven Theatre, Ballet Entre Nous, Mordine & Company, Wisdom Bridge, the Chicago Opera Theatre, the Forum & Indiana's Theatre at the Center. Tom is proud to have been named an Artistic Associate of The Shakespeare Project.

Notes from the Director:

Thank you for joining us for this afternoon's performance of *King Lear*. I find this to be one of Shakespeare's most human plays -- addressing (among other things) love, loss, envy, greed, compassion, remorse -- all in a tightly dramatic and darkly comedic way.

We are proud to have assembled this group of extremely talented, intelligent and compassionate actors who have been charged with relaying this powerful story to you. I am especially honored to work with my dear friend Ray Wild as he brings a lifetime of experience to the titular character.

We look forward to seeing you all next fall as we embark on our eighth year of presenting free theatrical readings to the people of the Chicago area. A special thanks to all of you whose continued support means so much to the future of The Shakespeare Project of Chicago.

Enjoy the show!

- Jeff Christian
Artistic Director

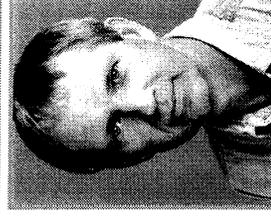
This Month's Artists



Aaron Christensen
Edgar



Linda Kimbrough
Goneril



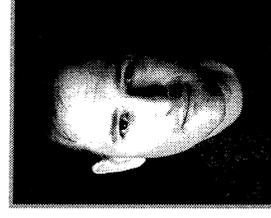
John Kishline
Gloucester



James Krag
Cornwall



Connie McGrail*
Cordelia



Douglas Rainey
Oswald



David Skidmore*
Fool, France



Stephen Spencer*
Kent



Michael Torrey
Edmund



Mark Ulrich
Albany



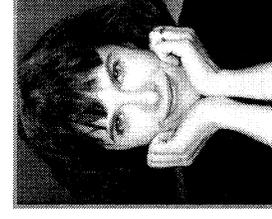
Ray Wild
Lear



Karen James Woditsch
Regan



Jeff Christian*
Director



Laura St. John*
Co-Director

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