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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: Barbara Gaines
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ABOVE AND COVER:
James Vincent Meredith and Bethany Jillard,
photos by Jeff Sciortino

On the Boards 12

*A selection of notable CST
events, plays and players*

Cast 19

Playgoer's Guide 20

Profiles 22

Unhoused 32

*Scholar Wendy Wall explores the role of
home and belonging in Othello. Part of the John W. and
Jeanne M. Rowe Inquiry and Exploration Series*



"O earth, I will
befriend thee."
—W.S.

Welcome



DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to Chicago Shakespeare and the continuation of our city's landmark international arts festival—Shakespeare 400 Chicago. Today's production of *Othello* has been woven into a psychological thriller—one that could have only come from the brilliant mind of British director, Jonathan Munby. Jonathan was last with us for his visceral interpretation of *Julius Caesar* in 2012, which astutely reflected the power of political rhetoric in an important election year for the US. His *Othello* artfully mines the themes of jealousy and racism inherent in this play, and poignant at this moment in our world's history.

Shakespeare 400 Chicago will complement Munby's *Othello* staged at Chicago Shakespeare by exploring the same play through: dance in the Hamburg Ballet's awe-inspiring interpretation at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance; hip-hop in the internationally acclaimed adaptation *Othello: The Remix* by rap artists the Q Brothers; and even through a Brazilian-inspired dish designed by Chef John Manion of La Sirena Clandestina, part of *Culinary Complete Works*.

These are just a few examples of the myriad ways Shakespeare's thirty-eight plays will be brought to life across our city this year. We are proud to spearhead this initiative that reaffirms Chicago's position as a global destination for cultural tourism. Your support fuels this work, and for this we are truly grateful.

Here's to a year of Shakespeare! ■

Barbara Gaines
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About CST

CST is a global theatrical force, known for vibrant productions that reflect Shakespeare's genius for storytelling, language and empathy for the human condition. Throughout 2016, CST is spearheading the international arts and culture festival, Shakespeare 400 Chicago, a citywide celebration of the playwright's 400-year legacy. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, CST is dedicated to creating extraordinary production of classics, new works and family programming; to unlocking Shakespeare's work for educators and students; and to serving as Chicago's cultural ambassador through its World's Stage Series. CST serves as a partner in literacy to Chicago Public Schools, working alongside English teachers to help struggling readers connect with Shakespeare in the classroom, and bringing his text to life on stage for 40,000 students every year. And each summer, 30,000 families and audience members of all ages welcome the free Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks tour into their neighborhoods across the far north, west and south sides of the city. Reflecting the global city it calls home, CST is the leading producer of international work in Chicago, and has toured its plays abroad to Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Canada/ North America and the Middle East.

CST is proud to take an active role in empowering the next generation of literate, engaged cultural champions and creative minds. The Theater's tradition of excellence and civic leadership has been honored with numerous national and international awards, including the Regional Theatre Tony Award, three Laurence Olivier Awards, and eighty total Joseph Jefferson Awards. CST's work with Chicago Public School students and teachers was recognized by the White House in 2014 with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. Among its many international engagements, CST participated in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2006 Complete Works Festival and was selected to represent North America at the Globe to Globe festival as part of London's 2012 Cultural Olympiad. ■

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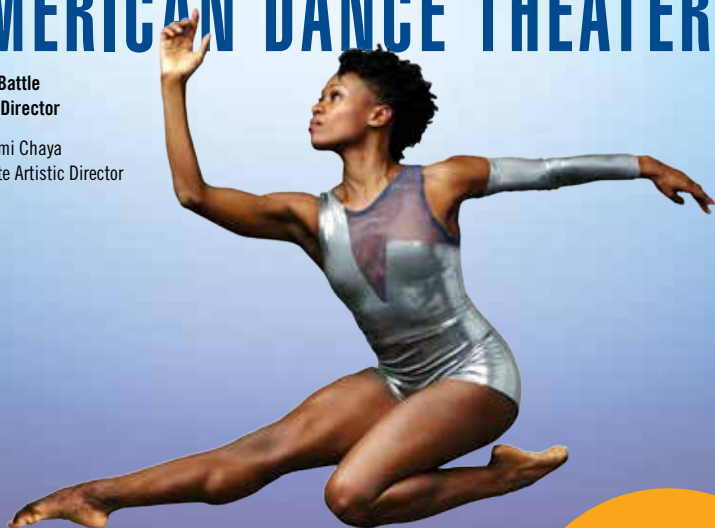
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On the Boards



This spring, CST's ever-popular annual 75-minute production for student and family audiences is *Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night*, the first time that this comedy of shipwrecked twins and a triangle of unrequited love has been abridged by CST. Adapting and directing the work is CST's longtime collaborator, Kirsten Kelly. A co-founder of CST's CPS Shakespeare! program—engaging CPS students and teachers in creating and performing their own adaptation of the Bard's work—this will be the second *Short Shakespeare!* production that Kelly has directed. After a five-week run in the Courtyard Theater, the show will hit the road for a tour of schools across the Midwest, engaging thousands of students in Shakespeare's work.



Uniting scholars from ten universities, City Desk 400 is a true 21st-century expression of Shakespearean scholarship. Throughout the year, academics from across the state—from the University of Chicago and Northwestern University to University of Illinois at its Urbana-Champaign campus—will respond online to the remarkable body of artistic work encompassed by Shakespeare 400 Chicago in essays that illuminate Shakespeare's work as living, ever-changing scripts. Their collective responses will form a permanent archive for the festival, and allow the scope of work shown in Chicago in 2016 to be celebrated worldwide. Audiences can follow the discussion by subscribing to the feed online at citydesk.shakespeare400chicago.com.



For over a decade, Chicago Shakespeare's World's Stage Series has imported leading international artists to Chicago and sent our own work out to festivals across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In 2016, Shakespeare 400 Chicago builds on this legacy of global producing, which promotes exploration of the canon by a breadth of cultures. Chicago, in fact, will host the most diverse festival across cultures and artistic disciplines, as the world commemorates the 400-year legacy of Shakespeare this year. Launched recently by four-star productions from Russia and Belarus, and continuing on to work from the Australia, Belgium, China, Germany, India, the UK and beyond—Shakespeare 400 Chicago is as global as the world-class city we call home.



The tastiest facet of Shakespeare 400 Chicago, *Culinary Complete Works* presents a bold intersection of the Bard and the gastronomic world, pioneered by Chicago restaurateur and sommelier Alpana Singh with CST's Creative Producer Rick Boynton, and featuring thirty-eight chefs inspired by Shakespeare's thirty-eight plays. "*Culinary Complete Works* allows Chicago to experience Shakespeare's canon in such a unique way, especially with our diverse line-up of talented Chicago chefs," explains Singh. "Everyone has a connection to Shakespeare—from studying *Romeo and Juliet* in high school or seeing *Macbeth* live for the first time as an adult—and our culinary community is thrilled to create inspired, personal dishes to celebrate the Bard's 400 years of timeless works." To learn more about where you can taste their dishes, visit shakespeare400chicago.com/culinary.

photo credits: LaShawn Banks in *Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night*, Alpana Singh; photo by Michael Brosilow.

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There will be one 15-minute intermission.

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Cast

(in order of appearance)

Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman,
in love with Desdemona

FRED GEYER

Iago, a soldier, Othello's ensign

MICHAEL MILLIGAN*

Brabantio, a senator

DAVID LIVELY*

Othello, a general in the Venetian military

JAMES VINCENT MEREDITH*

Cassio, a lieutenant

LUIGI SOTTILE*

Duke of Venice

MELISSA CARLSON*

Desdemona, Brabantio's daughter
and Othello's wife

BETHANY JILLARD*

Montano, Governor of Cyprus

BRET TUOMI*

Emilia, Iago's wife and a soldier

JESSIE FISHER*

Bianca, a Greek Cypriot prostitute

LAURA ROOK*

Lodovico, a delegate from Venice

JAMES KRAG*

Gratiano, brother to Brabantio

DAVID LIVELY*

Ensemble

KEVIN PATRICK DUFFY†

CONOR FOLEY†

BRIAN GREY*

KYLE HADEN*

JAMES KRAG*

CODY PROCTOR

MARVIN QUIJADA

LAURA ROOK*

JOSEPH SULTANI

MAX THOMAS

BRET TUOMI*

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance: Ty Fanning for *Cassio*, *Ensemble*; Brian Grey* for *Iago*, *Lodovico*; Kyle Haden* for *Othello*; Leslie Ann Handelman* for *Emilia*, *Bianca*; Sheila Landahl for *Duke of Venice*; Jose Nateras for *Ensemble*; Laura Rook* for *Desdemona*; Dan Stearns for *Montano*, *Ensemble*; and Bret Tuomi* for *Brabantio*, *Gratiano*.

*denotes member of Actors' Equity Association.

†Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges Sean Kelley and Ray Frewen along with the faculty and students of Roosevelt University for their participation in this production's intern program.

Special Thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Matthew J. Yandura and Sergeant First Class David Fink of the Loyola University Department of Military Science and Army ROTC Rambler Battalion. Additional thanks to the Sex Workers Outreach Project of Chicago.

For more information about how you can support our work on stage, in the community and around the world, please contact Brooke Flanagan, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 312.595.5581 or bflanagan@chicagoshakes.com.

Playgoer's Guide

THE STORY

In the city street shadows, two men discuss the night's intel: Othello, a hired general in the Venetian army—and a Moor—has eloped with a young aristocrat of Venice, named Desdemona. Iago, the soldier, reassures Roderigo that all hope of winning the young woman's heart is not yet lost; that he, too, harbors reasons for hating the Moor, who has promoted over him Cassio, a young and privileged officer. From the street below, Iago and Roderigo yell the news of Desdemona's elopement to awaken her father Brabantio, who immediately seeks the full justice of Venetian law. But this night the Duke and senators are intent upon more pressing affairs of state: the Turks threaten Venetian interests in Cyprus, and the Moor's service is required. Othello prepares to deploy to Cyprus and, with the Duke's permission, Desdemona will join him there, attended by Iago's wife Emilia.

Now Iago conceives his plan: he will make Othello believe that his new lieutenant is Desdemona's lover. And so begins his work. First ensnaring Cassio in a drunken brawl, Iago looks on as Othello predictably dismisses the officer from his service. Iago urges Cassio to seek Desdemona's aid in recovering the general's favor—while suggesting to Othello that her interest in a man's misfortunes might signal a wife's infidelity. Demanding proof, Othello is convinced when his first gift to Desdemona—an embroidered handkerchief belonging once to his mother—is misplaced and now passes, with guidance, to Cassio, then into the possession of a Cypriot prostitute named Bianca.

For his service, Iago is appointed Othello's new lieutenant. Desdemona, stunned by her husband's accusations, pleads with him—first for compassion, then for her life. And as Emilia comes to understand her own husband, two women become caught inextricably in the crossfire.

ITS ORIGINS

Many of Shakespeare's later plays, including *Othello*, interweave stories from familiar folk tales and myth with contemporary Elizabethan topics. The primary source for the story appears to have been an Italian 1565 collection of tales, *Hecatommithi* by Giovanni Battista Giraldi, known as Cinthio, also the source for Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Cinthio seems to have drawn his inspiration from one of the tales from *One Thousand and One Nights*. Only Desdemona is named in Cinthio's telling, and Shakespeare changed the killing of Desdemona from a murder designed to seem accidental to an intimate, personal act.

IN PRINT

Most scholars date the composition in 1603 or 1604, but *Othello* did not appear in print until 1622 when it was first published as a quarto, a small volume comparable to a modern paperback. It was included a year later in the First Folio—the first collection of Shakespeare's plays printed in 1623, seven years after his death. The significant differences between the Quarto and Folio texts have led scholars to attribute them to different theatrical manuscripts. Desdemona's willow song, for example (foregrounded in this production by Director Jonathan Munby), appears for the first time in the Folio edition. Approximately eighty percent of the text is written in verse, the remaining twenty percent in prose.

IN PERFORMANCE

The first record of a performance appears in the Revels Accounts for the court of King James I on November 1, 1604. When *Othello* was first performed at the Globe Theatre, Richard Burbage, one of Shakespeare's leading actors, played the title role. In the 1660s when women were first allowed to perform on the English stage, the role of Desdemona was the first to be played by a professional actress. The Victorians did not want to see a cruel or sensual Othello: all allusions to sex were cut from the text, and Othello's foreignness downplayed. In America, a more violent portrayal was given by Edwin Booth, the famous actor-brother of John Wilkes Booth. In the nineteenth century Ira Aldridge, the American grandson of a Senegalese chieftain, was the first African American to play Othello, but the actor was prohibited from performing the role in the US; instead, Aldridge played Othello, among many other roles, in the great theaters of Europe. Nearly a century later, Paul Robeson, too, was forbidden to appear on the American stage as Othello, and so, like Aldridge, Robeson went to England. Not until 1942, after an extensive public relations campaign and an exhaustive search for a white actress who would agree to play Desdemona, was Robeson able to perform the title role in the US. More than twenty film and television versions and adaptations have been made, notably Orson Welles' *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice*, and Oliver Parker's 1995 film feature film adaptation starring Kenneth Branagh and Laurence Fishburne, the first African American to portray Othello in a major film. Artistic Director Barbara Gaines first staged *Othello* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in 1995. Since then CST has produced the play under the direction of Marti Maraden (2008) and in the Q Brothers' hip-hop adaptation, *Othello: The Remix*, first staged in 2012 and returning to the theater Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare in spring 2016. ■

Profiles



MELISSA CARLSON

(*Duke of Venice*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include: *The School for Lies*, and Short Shakespeare! productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Other Chicago credits include: *The Winter's Tale*, *Tea at Five*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Antigone* (First Folio Theatre); *Berlin '45*, *Pyretown*, *The Action Against Sol Schumann* (Victory Gardens Theater); *The Real Thing*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *All My Sons* (Illinois Theatre Center); *Dylan* (Seanachai Theatre Company); *Titus Andronicus* (Shakespeare's Motley Crew); *Six Degrees of Separation* (Raven Theatre); *Tattoo* (Trap Door Theatre); *A Yard of Sun* (Famous Door Theatre); *Edward II* (Red Hen Theatre); *Richard III*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare on the Green). As former director of education for The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, she has taught in numerous schools in and around the Chicago area. Television credits include: *Early Edition* (CBS), *Underemployed* (MTV) and currently, three seasons as Meredith Olinsky on *Chicago PD* (NBC).



JESSIE FISHER

(*Emilia*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include *The Heir Apparent* and *Short Shakespeare! The Taming of the*

Shrew. Other Chicago credits include: *Cabaret* (Jeff Award, Best Actress in a Musical), *Frankenstein* (The Hypocrites); *33 Variations* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *The Pride, Abraham Lincoln Was a F*gg*t* (About Face Theatre); *The Original Grease, It's a Wonderful Life* (American Theatre Company); *Of Mice and Men* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *These Shining Lives* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble); *Cloud 9* (The Gift Theatre); *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* and *Red Kite Roundup* (Chicago Children's Theatre). Broadway credits include the lead in *Once* for the final year of its run. Television credits include *Boss* (Starz) and *Chicago PD* (NBC). Ms. Fisher attended University of Colorado and is a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf.



FRED GEYER

(*Roderigo*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *Dunsinane*, *King Lear*, *Henry V* and *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's*

Dream. Other Chicago credits include: *Fallen Angels*, *Northanger Abbey* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company); *The Pitchfork Disney* (Jeff Award nomination, Interrobang Theatre Project); *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Twelfth Night* (First Folio Theatre); and *The Mistakes Madeline Made* (LiveWire Chicago Theatre). Mr. Geyer is a co-founder of Buzz22 Chicago, where his credits include *She Kills Monsters* and *Ghost Bike*. Regional credits include productions with Montana Shakespeare in the Park, Riverside Theatre and the Texas Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Geyer received his BA in theatre from Northwestern University.



BRIAN GREY

(*Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he appeared in *Pericles*. Other Chicago credits: *The Oxford Roof*

Climber's Rebellion (Jeff Award nomination, Caffeine Theatre); *The Hyacinth Macaw* (The Bridge); *Closer* (Spartan Theatre Company); *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, *Bud*, *Not Buddy*, *The Houdini Box* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Heddatron* (Sideshow Theatre/Steppenwolf Garage Rep); *Goodbye Cruel World* (The Strange Tree Group); and *The Wheel* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). Regional credits include: *Death of a Salesman* (SARTA Elly Award - Best Supporting Actor, San Joaquin Delta College); three seasons with Texas Shakespeare Festival; and work with Riverside Theatre, PCPA Theatrefest, Anteaos Theatre Company, The Great American Melodrama and Vaudeville, and American Blues Theatre Company (Stockton, Ca). Mr. Grey trained at PCPA in Santa Maria, CA, and received his MFA from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.



KYLE HADEN

(*Ensemble*) makes his Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. Other Chicago credits include *The Winter's Tale* (First Folio Theatre) and the world premiere of

Do-Goooder (16th Street Theater). His New York credits include *Richard 3* (La MaMa). Regional credits include: three seasons with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, four seasons with Colorado Shakespeare Festival, and productions with Shakespeare Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Arizona Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Sacramento Theatre Company and the Arvada Center. A native of Pittsburgh, Mr. Haden received his BA from Wake Forest University and his MFA from Columbia University. He is currently an assistant professor of theatre at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, as well as the artistic director of the Ashland New Plays Festival, Oregon.



BETHANY JILLARD

(*Desdemona*) makes her Chicago debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. As a member of the Stratford Festival company for five seasons, her credits include: *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Othello*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard III*, *The Little Years*, *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Peter Pan*. Other Canadian credits include: *The Seagull*, *Gone with the Wind* (world premiere), *After Miss Julie* (Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre); *How It Works*, *The Little Years*, *Cake and Dirt* (Tarragon Theatre); *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (Theatre PANIK); *A Man of No Importance* (Acting Up Stage Company); *That Face* (Nightwood Theatre/Canadian Stage); and *Tough!* (Factory Theatre). Film and television credits include: *If I Were You* with Marcia Gay Harden (Paragraph); *Murdoch Mysteries* (Shaftesbury); *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* (TMN); *Rookie Blue* (ABC); and *I Love You, But I Lied* (Lifetime). Ms. Jillard is a graduate of University of Toronto and the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre Training.



JAMES KRAG (*Lodovico/Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *Private Lives*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *King Lear* and *The Two Gentleman of Verona*.

Other Chicago credits include: *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, *Court Martial at Fort Devens*, *Homeland Security*, *Battle of the Bands* (Victory Gardens Theater); *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Dinner with Friends* (Goodman Theatre); *Thyestes*, *Phedre* (Court Theatre); *Pacific* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Night and Day* and *The Best Man* (Remy Bumppo Theatre Company). Mr. Krag has worked extensively with The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, both acting and teaching. New York credits include the original Broadway production of *Burn This* and *Mill Fire* at Women's Project Theater. Film and television credits include: *While You Were Sleeping*, *Mercury Rising*, *Crossing the Bridge*, *Chicago PD*, *Prison Break*, *Early Edition*, *Dharma and Greg*, *Ellen* and *ER*. Mr. Krag received his BFA in acting from The Goodman School of Drama at DePaul University.



DAVID LIVELY (*Brabantio/Gratiano*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *King Lear*, *Henry VIII*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens*, *The Madness of George III*,

Romeo and Juliet (2005, 2010) *Macbeth*, *Amadeus*, *Henry IV in Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* (at CST and at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon), *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, among others. Other Chicago credits include: *Carousel* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *October Sky*, *White Christmas*, *My Fair Lady*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *1776* (Marriott Theatre); *Cabaret*, *1776*, *Camelot*, *Anything Goes*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Foreigner* (Drury Lane Theatre); and *Hay Fever* (Court Theatre). Regional credits include the national tour of *Twelve Angry Men* (Roundabout Theatre Company), and productions with: Asolo Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Geva Theatre and The Kennedy Center. Television credits include: *The Chicago Code*, *Prison Break* (FOX); *What About Joan*, *Cupid* (ABC); and *George Washington* (CBS). Film credits include *The Opera Lover* and *Contagion*.



JAMES VINCENT MEREDITH (*Othello*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Other Chicago credits include: *The Pain and the Itch*, *The Crucible*, *The Tempest*, *The Hot L Baltimore*, *Superior Donuts*, *Carter's Way*, *The March* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company, where he is an ensemble member); *Othello*, *The Dutchess of Malfi* (Writers Theatre); and *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* (Piven Theatre Workshop). Broadway credits include *Superior Donuts*. National tour credits include *The Book of Mormon*. Television credits include: *Prison Break*, *Chicago Code* (FOX); *ER*, *Law and Order SVU* (NBC); *Detroit 187*, *Betrayal* (ABC); and *BOSS* (Starz).



MICHAEL MILLIGAN (*Iago*) makes his Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut, following his recent move to this city. Prior Chicago credits include *Mercy Strain* (American Theater Company). Broadway credits include: *August: Osage County*, *La Bete*, and *Jerusalem*. Off Broadway credits include: *Mercy Killers* (Harold Clurman Laboratory Theater and Working Theater); *Thom Pain* (DR2 Theatre); and *The Golem* (Manhattan Ensemble Theater). Regional credits include productions with: McCarter Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Folger Theatre, Westport Country Playhouse, Studio Arena Theater, Charlotte Repertory Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Shakespeare & Company, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Milwaukee Shakespeare, Santa Cruz Shakespeare and the Alabama, Colorado, Illinois and Utah Shakespeare Festivals. International credits include *La Bete* (Comedy Theatre, London) and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Mr. Milligan's one-man show, *Mercy Killers*, received the 2013 "Fringe First" award in Edinburgh. Television credits include: *Law and Order*, *Person of Interest* and *The Knick*. Mr. Milligan received training from The Ohio State University and The Juilliard School.



CODY PROCTOR (*Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he previously appeared in *Henry V*. Other Chicago credits include: *Stupid F*cking Bird*, *Idomeneus* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *The Mother* (Oracle Theatre); *The Iceman Cometh* (Goodman Theatre); *Great Expectations* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *The Moonstone* (Lifeline Theatre); *We Live Here*, *The Water Engine* (Theatre Seven of Chicago); and *Brand* (Red Tape Theatre). Regional credits include work with Music Theatre Wichita and three seasons at Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Mr. Proctor received his BFA in theatre performance with a minor in dance from Wichita State University.



MARVIN QUIJADA (*Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *Pericles* and *Short Shakespeare!* and Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks productions of *The Comedy of Errors* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Other Chicago credits include: *The Dueling Gentlemen* (Silent Theatre Company); *Season on the Line* (The House Theatre of Chicago), and productions with: Goodman Theatre, Stage Left Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Next Theatre and Teatro Vista, among others. Television credits include *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago P.D.* Mr. Quijada received his BFA in acting from Columbia College Chicago. He is also an iOS musician and live performer. silent marvin on soundcloud.



LAURA ROOK (*Bianca/Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include *Henry V* and *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*. Other Chicago credits include: *Skylight* (Court Theatre); *The Liar* (Writers Theatre); and productions with Bohemian Theatre, Muse of Fire Theatre Company, Silk Road Rising and XIII Pocket. Regional credits include: *Othello*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Seagull*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Troilus and Cressida* (in four seasons with American Players Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet*; *The Winter's Tale* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival); and three seasons with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Ms. Rook received

her BFA from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.



LUIGI SOTTILE (*Cassio*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he appeared in *The Tempest*. Other Chicago credits include *Buena Vista* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company).

Regional credits include: *Zombie: The American* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); *The Cherry Orchard*, *Nathan the Wise*, *King Lear*, *Kidnapped!* (People's Light); *Sex with Strangers* (Signature Theatre); *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival); *Three Sisters*, *Cyranos* (Arden Theatre Company); *Angels in America: Parts 1 & 2*, *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*, *Leaving, Macbeth*, *Proliferation of the Imagination* (The Wilma Theatre); *An Ideal Husband* (Walnut Street Theatre); *Seminar* (Philadelphia Theatre Company); *A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Act II Playhouse); *The Lonesome West*, *The School for Wives*, *The Hothouse* and *The Government Inspector* (Lantern Theater Company). Mr. Sottile received his BA from Temple University.



JOSEPH SULTANI (*Ensemble*) makes his Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. Other Chicago credits include: *Inana* (TimeLine Theater); *The Hundred Flowers Project* (Silk Road Rising);

Henry V: Thou Proud Dream (S.I.T.E. Festival); *Make Me Love You* (New Rock Theater); and *The Observatory* (Viable Theater Company). Regional credits include: *Hamlet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Amadeus* and *Henry V* (Richmond Shakespeare Theater). Film credits include *Glass House*. Television credits include *Empire* (FOX) and *Chicago Fire* (NBC). Mr. Sultani received his BFA in performance from Virginia Commonwealth University.



MAX THOMAS (*Ensemble*) makes his Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. Other Chicago credits include *Without Trace*, *LAWD the CVS Is Burning* (MPAACT Theatre); *A Matter of Life and Death*, *Ivanov* (University of Illinois at Chicago); *Prelude to Dream* (The March Civil

Rights Project sponsored by Goodman Theatre); and *Animal Farm* (Coriolis Theater Company). International credits include: *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Strip* and *Thoughts of a Colored Man* (British American Drama Academy). Television credits include: *Chicago P.D.* (NBC), *Underemployed* (MTV) and *Dixmoor Five* (NBC). Mr. Thomas received classical acting training from British American Drama Academy at Magdalen College University of Oxford and his BFA in performance from University of Illinois at Chicago.



BRET TUOMI (*Montano/Ensemble*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*. Other Chicago credits include: *Lieb in The Iceman Cometh*

(Goodman Theatre); *Victor in The Price*, *Jeff Skilling in Enron* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *Red Will O'Danaher in The Quiet Man Tales* (Smock Alley Theatre Company); Mr. Braithewaite in *Billy Elliot*, Lt. Schrank in *West Side Story* (Drury Lane Theatre); Chanal in *Feydeau-si-deau* and Jim Shine in *Two for the Show* (Theater Wit). Broadway and national tour credits include *Hertz in Rock of Ages*. Regional credits include productions with: Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, Montana Repertory Theatre, Alpine Theatre Project and Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Film credits include the made-for-TV movie *Keep the Change* (TNT). Mr. Tuomi's television credits include *Mind Games* (ABC) and *The Fly Fishing Challenge* (ESPN2).

JONATHAN MUNBY (*Director*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he directed *Julius Caesar*. His US credits include: *A Human Being Died That Night* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *Measure for Measure*, *The Dog in the Manger*, for which he was nominated for the Outstanding Director Helen Hayes Award (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *The Recommendation* (The Old Globe); *The Winter's Tale* (Guthrie Theater); and *Noises Off* (Kreeger Theatre). International credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Tokyo/Osaka, Japan) and *A Number* (Fugard Theatre, South Africa). Mr. Munby serves as creative associate for the English Touring Theatre. His many UK credits include: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All the Angels: Handel and the First Messiah*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Wendy and Peter Pan*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Madness in Valencia* (Royal Shakespeare Company);

Twelfth Night (winner of Best Touring Production, UK Theatre Awards), *A Number, The Comedy of Errors, Bird Calls* (Sheffield Theatres); *Thérèse Raquin* (Theatre Royal Bath); *The Prince of Homburg, Life Is a Dream* (Donmar Warehouse); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Serious Money* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre); *A Number, The White Devil* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *24 Hour Plays* (The Old Vic); *Henry V, Mirandolina* (Royal Exchange Theatre); *Nakamitsu* (Gate Theatre); *Journeys Among the Dead* (Young Vic); *Bed Show* (Bristol Old Vic); *The Anniversary* (Garrick Theatre, West End); *John Bull's Other Island* (Lyric Theatre Belfast); *Tartuffe* (The Watermill Theatre/Tour); *The Gentleman from Olmedo, The Venetian Twins, The Triumph of Love and Dancing at Lughnasa* (The Watermill Theatre). Opera credits include: *Carmen* (Opera Holland Park); *Don Giovanni* (English Touring Opera); and *Sweetness and Badness* (Welsh National Opera).

ALEXANDER DODGE (*Scenic Designer*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include *Julius Caesar* and *King John*. Broadway credits include: *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Awards nominations; and National Tour), *Present Laughter* (Tony Award nomination), *Old Acquaintance, Butley and Hedda Gabler*. Recent Off-Broadway credits include: *Ripcord* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* (Second Stage Theatre); and *Rapture Blister Burn* (Playwrights Horizons). Recent regional credits include: *Rear Window* (Hartford Stage); *Disney's The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (La Jolla and Paper Mill Playhouses) and the upcoming musical *Anastasia* for Hartford Stage. London West End credits include: *All New People*. Opera credits include: *The Ghosts of Versailles* (LA Opera); *La Rondine* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis); *Il Trittico* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); *Così Fan Tutte* (Minnesota Opera); *Der fliegende Holländer* (Würzburg); and *Lohengrin* (Budapest State Opera). Mr. Dodge is a graduate of Yale School of Drama.

LINDA CHO (*Costume Designer*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she designed *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Broadway credits include *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony Award) and *Velocity of Autumn*. Other New York credits include productions with: Theatre for a New Audience, Lincoln Center Theater 3, Second Stage Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Julliard School, Public Theater, Asia Society, Vineyard Theatre, Classic Stage

Company and Atlantic Theater Company. Ms. Cho's regional credits include productions with: Arena Stage, The Old Globe, Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Center Stage, Huntington Theatre Company and Westport Country Playhouse. Internationally her work has been seen at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the United Kingdom and the Stratford Festival in Canada. Opera credits include productions at LA Opera, Virginia Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Ms. Cho holds a BA in psychology from McGill University and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

PHILIP ROSENBERG (*Lighting Designer*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: *Henry V, Gypsy, Julius Caesar* (Jeff Award nomination), *The School for Lies, Sunday in the Park with George* (Jeff Award nomination), *Beauty and the Beast, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Elizabeth Rex, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth, Edward II, Amadeus* (Jeff Award nomination) and *Cymbeline* (Jeff Award nomination). Broadway credits include: *The Elephant Man, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *It's Only a Play*. Mr. Rosenberg has previously served as associate lighting designer on over thirty-five Broadway productions. Off Broadway credits include *The Explorer's Club* and *Cactus Flower*. Regional credits include productions with: The Kennedy Center, La Jolla Playhouse, Ford's Theatre, Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe, TheatreWorks, Huntington Theatre Company, Portland Stage Company, TACT, Barrington Stage Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Bay Street Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, George Street Playhouse and Westport Country Playhouse.

LINDSAY JONES (*Composer/Sound Designer*) has created music for, and designed, over twenty-five productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, including: *King Lear, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry VIII, Julius Caesar, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* and *Henry V*. Other Chicago credits include productions with: Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre Company. Broadway credits include: *A Time to Kill* and *Bronx Bombers*. Off Broadway credits include: *Bootycandy, Wild with Happy, The Brother/Sister Plays, Top Secret, Rx* and *Beautiful Thing*. Regional credits include productions with: Guthrie Theater, South Coast Repertory, McCarter Theatre, Arena

Stage, The Old Globe and Hartford Stage. International credits include productions with: Royal Shakespeare Company (UK) and Stratford Festival (Canada), as well as productions in Ireland, Austria, Zimbabwe, Scotland and South Africa. Recent film and television scoring credits include *The Brass Teapot* for Magnolia Pictures and *A Note of Triumph* (2006 Academy Award for Best Documentary, Short Subject) for HBO Films. He is the recipient of seven Jeff Awards (with twenty-three nominations), two Ovation Awards, three Drama Desk Award nominations and the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award.

MELISSA VEAL (*Wig/Make-Up Designer*) has designed wigs and make-up for over ninety productions at CST, which have included: *The Heir Apparent, Ride with the Cyclone, Sense and Sensibility, Pericles, A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol, King Lear, Henry V, Road Show, Gypsy, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cyrano de Bergerac, The School for Lies* (Jeff Award), *Sunday in the Park with George, Othello: The Remix* (CST, London, Germany, Edinburgh, South Korea, Sydney, Poland, Melbourne, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Auckland), *Elizabeth Rex* (Jeff Award nomination), *Follies, The Madness of George III* (Jeff Award), *Twelfth Night, The Comedy of Errors, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* (at CST and Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon) and *Rose Rage: Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3* (at CST and The Duke on 42nd Street). She worked for ten seasons with the Stratford Festival, where she received four Tyrone Guthrie Awards. Other Canadian credits include work with the Shaw Festival and The Grand Theatre in London, Ontario. Ms. Veal received the 2007 Hurckes Award for Artisans and Technicians.

MATT HAWKINS (*Fight Choreography*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater for his seventeenth production, in which he has played various roles—as fight choreographer, assistant director, director or actor: *King Lear, Henry V, Julius Caesar, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, Edward II, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice*; Short Shakespeare! productions of *Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*; and CPS Shakespeare! productions of *Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Othello* and *Hamlet*. Other Chicago credits include productions with: Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Lookingglass Theatre Company, The House Theatre of Chicago and Writers Theatre, among others. Regional credits include productions with: South Coast Repertory, American Players Theatre,

The Kennedy Center and the Stratford Festival. Mr. Hawkins has been nominated for twelve Jeff Awards and has received five. He earned his BFA in acting from Southern Methodist University and his MFA in directing from The University of Iowa. Mr. Hawkins is a lecturer in music theatre for the Department of Theatre at Northwestern University and is also an adjunct lecturer at Loyola University Chicago.

KEVIN GUDAH (*Verse Coach*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he has served as verse coach for many CST productions including: *The Tempest, Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks* productions of *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* and *The Taming of the Shrew, Short Shakespeare! Macbeth, Henry IV Parts 1 & 2, Troilus and Cressida, Macbeth, As You Like It, Timon of Athens, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Henry VIII, The Comedy of Errors* and *King Lear*. Mr. Gudahl has taught Shakespeare acting courses at Northwestern University, DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Columbia College Chicago, Act One Studios, Acting Studio Chicago and Victory Gardens Studio, and is a regular instructor in CST's Classical Training program. He has acted in over forty Chicago Shakespeare Theater productions, and has also performed throughout Chicago at: Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre and Victory Gardens Theater. Mr. Gudahl has appeared internationally at the Stratford Festival, Donmar Warehouse and Royal Shakespeare Company.

BEATRICE BOSCO (*Dramaturg*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she serves as a Pre-Amble Scholar and previously as associate director of education. She is an adjunct faculty member at The Theatre School at DePaul University. She serves as a consultant for the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Small Theater & Dance grants. Recent directing projects include work for 2nd Story, Collaboration Theatre Company and Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre. Ms. Bosco served as program director and faculty for the Associated Colleges of the Midwest Chicago Arts Program. She earned her PhD in theatre and drama from University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation, *Surviving Collectives*, examines the practices of ensemble theater companies. She is the business development analyst at Chicago Public Media-WBEZ.

DENNIS J. CONNERS (*Production Stage Manager*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he has stage managed nine productions, including: *Ride the Cyclone*, *A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol* and *Othello: The Remix* (CST, London, South Korea, Australia, UAE, New Zealand). Other Chicago credits include: *Appropriate*, *Disconnect* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Freud's Last Session* (Mercury Theater, CRC Productions); *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, *The Houdini Box*, *Goodnight Moon* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Ethan Frome*, *Peter Pan: A Play*, *Lookingglass Alice*, *Fedra: Queen of Haiti*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Clay* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *What Once We Felt* (About Face Theatre); *Dangerous Beauty* and *In the Bubble* (American Music Theatre Project). Off-Broadway credits include *Clay* (Lincoln Center Theater) and *Lookingglass Alice* (New Victory Theater). Regional credits include *Clay* (Kirk Douglas Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre) and *Lookingglass Alice* (Alliance Theatre). Mr. Connors is a graduate of Northwestern University, where he has served as adjunct lecturer in stage management and stage management mentor.

KEVIN GREGORY DWYER (*Assistant Stage Manager*) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, after serving as assistant stage coordinator for *CPS Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other Chicago credits include: *First Look 2015*, *This Is Our Youth*, *Leveling Up* and *Lord of the Flies* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). National tour credits include the first and second national tours of *The Book of Mormon*. Regional credits include: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *Betrayal*, *Private Lives* and *Captors* (Huntington Theatre Company). Mr. Dwyer received his BA in stage/production management from Emerson College.

BOB MASON (*Artistic Associate/Casting Director*) is in his sixteenth season as CST's casting director, where his credits include over eighty productions and thirty-two plays in Shakespeare's canon. In addition to numerous productions with Barbara Gaines, other productions of note include: a host of Sondheim musicals directed by Gary Griffin; *Rose Rage: Henry VI, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, directed by Edward Hall; and *The Molière Comedies*, directed by Brian Bedford. Additional Chicago credits include the precursor to *Road Show*, entitled *Bounce* (Goodman Theatre and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts), as well as productions for Asolo Repertory Theatre, Northlight Theatre and Northwestern University.

NANCY PICCIONE (*New York Casting*) is the Director of Casting at Manhattan Theatre Club. Broadway credits include: *Venus in Fur*, *Wit*, *Time Stands Still*, *Top Girls*, *Shining City*, *The Assembled Parties*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Casa Valentina* and *Constellations*. She cast *Proof* and *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife* on Broadway and Off-Broadway as well as their National Tours. Off-Broadway credits include: *The Explorers Club*, *Choir Boy*, *The Whipping Man*, *Ruined*, *Equivocation*, *Heisenberg*, *The World of Extreme Happiness* and *Of Good Stock*. She is currently working on *The Father* for the Friedman Theatre and *Incognito* for City Center Stage 1. Prior to working at Manhattan Theatre Club, she was a member of the casting staff at the New York Shakespeare Festival for ten years, where she worked on Shakespeare in the Park and numerous productions at the Public Theatre. She cast for the 2009 and 2010 Bridge Project, produced by BAM and the Old Vic London. She is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and a member of the Casting Society of America.

RICK BOYNTON (*Creative Producer*) focuses on current and future artistic planning and production, as well as the development of all new plays, musicals and adaptations for CST. Projects include: *Ride the Cyclone*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Cadre* (co-director) (CST, Johannesburg, Grahamstown, Edinburgh, Vancouver); *Othello: The Remix* (Chicago, London, Germany, Edinburgh, South Korea, Sydney, Poland, Melbourne, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Auckland, National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals 2015); *Funk It Up About Nothin'* (CST, Edinburgh, Australian tour, London); *A Flea in Her Ear* (CST, Williamstown Theatre Festival); *The Three Musketeers* (CST, Boston, London); *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (now licensed by Rodgers and Hammerstein Theatricals); *Murder for Two* (at CST, followed by New York and national tour) and *The Feast: an intimate Tempest* (in collaboration with Redmoon). Former artistic director of the Marriott Theatre and multiple Jeff Award-winning actor, he has starred in productions nationally, including CST's production of *A Flea in Her Ear* as Camille (Jeff Award, After Dark Award). As casting director/associate at Jane Alderman Casting, projects included: the television series *Early Edition*, *Missing Persons*, *Untouchables* and *ER*; the films *While You Were Sleeping* and *Hoodlum*, among others; and numerous national tours. Mr. Boynton has lectured at his alma mater Northwestern University, and is the past president of the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre.



BARBARA GAINES (*Artistic Director*) is the founder and artistic director of Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she has directed more than thirty of Shakespeare's plays. Honors include: the 2008 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre; the prestigious Honorary OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in recognition of her contributions strengthening British-American cultural relations; and Joseph Jefferson Awards for Best Production (*Hamlet*, *Cymbeline*, *King Lear* and *The Comedy of Errors*), and for Best Director (*Cymbeline*, *King Lear* and *The Comedy of Errors*). At Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ms. Gaines directed *Macbeth* and this season's *The Marriage of Figaro*. She received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from University of Birmingham (UK), the University Club of Chicago's Cultural Award, the Public Humanities Award from the Illinois Humanities Council and the Spirit of Loyola Award. Ms. Gaines serves on the Shakespearean Council of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London.



CRISS HENDERSON (*Executive Director*) Chicago Shakespeare Theater's executive director, has produced CST's past twenty-six seasons. Under his leadership, CST has become one of the nation's leading regional theaters and one of Chicago's most celebrated cultural organizations, honored with the 2008 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, as well as multiple Laurence Olivier and Joseph Jefferson Awards. Mr. Henderson has garnered multiple honors, including: the 2013 Cultural Innovation Award from the Chicago Innovation Awards; the Arts Administrator of the Year by *Arts Management Magazine* at the Kennedy Center and the Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the Minister of Culture of France. He was named among the top 40 business people under the age of 40 in *Crain's Chicago Business*. He serves as president of the Producers' Association of Chicago-area Theatres and on the Board of Directors of the League of Chicago Theatres. Mr. Henderson is director of the MFA/Arts Leadership Program, a two-year graduate-level curriculum in arts management training created through a joint partnership between Chicago Shakespeare Theater and The Theatre School at DePaul University.



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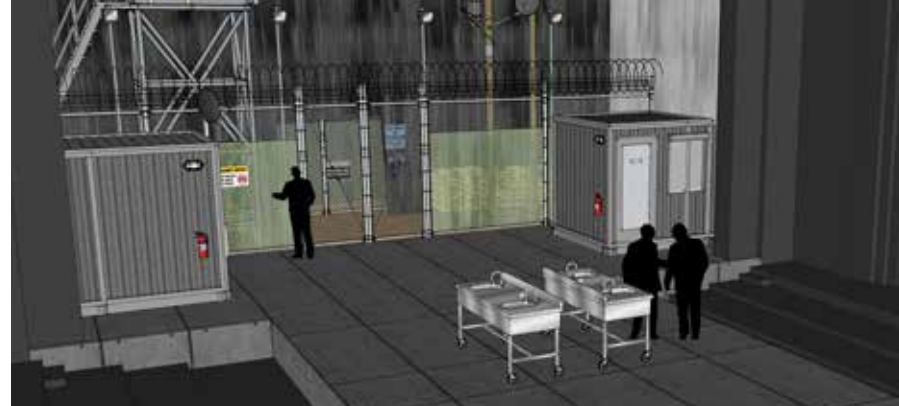
Wendy Wall, Avalon Professor of the Humanities at Northwestern University and Director of the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, specializes in Renaissance literature, and is the author of *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama*, and the newly published *Recipes for Thought: Knowledge and Taste in the Early Modern English Kitchen*.

“But that I love the gentle Desdemona, / I would not my unhoused free condition / Put into circumscription and confine / For the sea’s worth.”

What does it mean to feel “at home”? To have a place in society? And what does race have to do with place? Shakespeare’s most domestic tragedy takes up these issues by showing what is at stake in the marriage between a white Venetian woman and a black immigrant military hero converted from Islam.

The first scene in *Othello* makes “home” central to its exploration of “the green-eyed monster” jealousy, as Othello oddly describes his loss of bachelorhood as the state of being “housed.” He announces himself as someone whose place in society is outside of it, unhoused, in temporary tents used in military crusades. Beneath the veneer of the old ball-and-chain complaint about marriage, we discover the depth of Othello’s anxiety about how to locate himself. Described as a “wheeling stranger of here and everywhere,” he finds marriage a sure way to assimilate, to provide a durable place in the world.

And yet the tragedy of the play turns on the inequality of the dream of belonging. *Othello* opens with Iago clamoring to Desdemona’s father in the night: “Awake, Brabantio! Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags! . . . your daughter and the Moor are making the beast with two backs.” In his prejudicial view, daughters are material goods, and Othello and Desdemona’s marriage, a pornographic bestial melding. Guarding the



house means protecting a particular idea of family. As Mercutio’s curse upon the Capulets and Montagues suggests in *Romeo and Juliet*, the “house” is more than a physical structure; for it signifies lineage, community, and family.

The striking irony posed by the opening marriage is that Brabantio disowns his daughter just as Othello is joining a supposedly stable family. Shakespeare hits this point home by including a lengthy discussion about where the exiled Desdemona will live once Othello goes to war. As Othello houses himself in the solid affiliation she offers, Desdemona becomes a wandering stranger of here and everywhere. Such is the art of the first act of *Othello* where the stakes of marriage, identity

and belonging are conveyed by reference to the social meaning of home.

The tragedy of the play turns on the inequality of the dream of belonging.

The eerie fascination of the play rests in part on Iago’s success in getting Othello to see himself as an outsider. Othello was the first black tragic hero on the English stage, appearing at a time when England started to invest in the African slave trade. As a black man, he

exists on the margins of culture. So when Othello says of Desdemona, “When I love thee not, chaos is come again” (with chaos, for a Renaissance audience, being the ultimate nothingness), we understand the stakes of fidelity for him.

Incited into jealousy by Iago, Othello begins to see his own skin as a sign of his degradation: “My name, that was as fresh / As Dian’s visage, / is now begrimed and black / As mine own face,” he declares. Othello begins to view his own marriage as unnatural and out of place. The logical extreme of this view culminates in Othello’s final poignant suicide speech, where he splits into two identities: the insider Christian hero and outsider enemy. In his final moments, Othello imaginatively converts the violence of the bedroom into a remote battlefield in the Middle East. Attempting to prove himself a war hero (rather than a wife-killer), Othello ends up alienating himself as the stranger-infidel he has so courageously fought.

Othello is perhaps Shakespeare’s most anti-theatrical play, the text that most graphically portrays the devastating effect of believing in a reality shaped by



words, performances and images—by what one character calls “false gazing.” In making Othello conjure tortuous mental images of his wife as adulterous (and crediting these illusions as true), Iago becomes the consummate playwright, actor, and director—someone able to weave an alternate reality for those around him. He transforms a mundane and domestic stage prop—a handkerchief—into “ocular proof” of infidelity. He uses illusions to estrange the familiar.

Not only has the household ceased to function ethically and socially, but its dream of inclusion is shown to be especially dangerous for women and racial outsiders.

In a play whose first act meditates on the role of home for establishing kinship and social place, the final scene shows a wife refusing home as a place vulnerable to poisonous fantasies. Not only has the household ceased to function ethically and socially, but its dream of inclusion is shown to be especially dangerous for women and racial outsiders. Belonging, being housed, having a place: *Othello* brilliantly uncovers the fragility of these desires in a world where home is as illusory as theater. ■

Yet with some poetic justice, the handkerchief is the one smoking gun that unravels Iago’s web of fictions and reveals the truth at the conclusion. Disclosing Iago’s manipulation of the handkerchief, Emilia—Desdemona’s maid and Iago’s wife—emerges as the play’s unexpected hero. Standing defiantly by the dead Desdemona, she calls for justice even at the threat of death. How does Shakespeare present her heroism? As a new and improved vision of domesticity. When Iago commands, “I charge you get you home,” Emilia boldly declares, “Perchance, Iago, I will ne’er go home.”

Previous page: scenic rendering by Alexander Dodge
Above: Cast of *Othello* in rehearsal; photo by Liz Lauren

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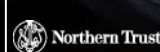
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Listed below are current members of the **First Folio Society**, individuals who have included Chicago Shakespeare Theater in their estate plans. The Society honors their thoughtful commitment to the future of CST.

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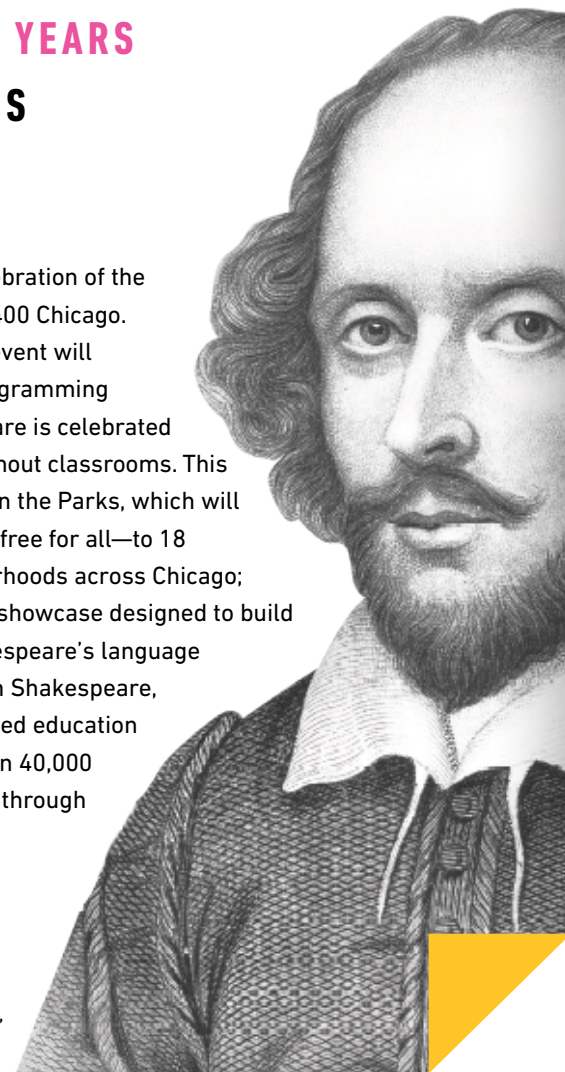
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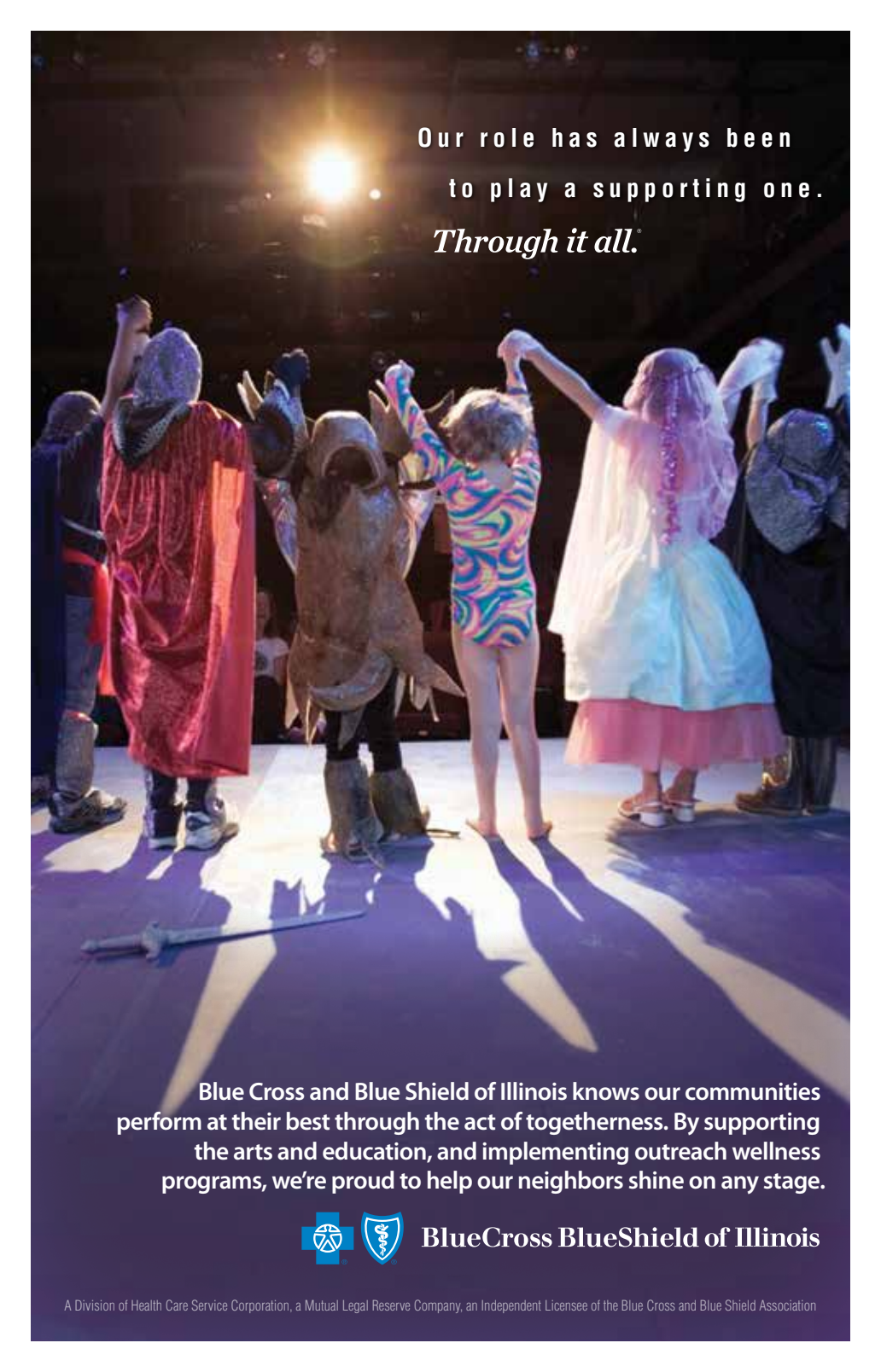
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