THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
“Experience is a jewel, and it had need be so, for it is often purchased at an infinite rate.”

—The Merry Wives of Windsor
About CST

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) believes that Shakespeare speaks to everyone. A global theatrical force, CST is known for vibrant productions that reflect Shakespeare’s genius for storytelling, musicality of language, and empathy for the human condition. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, Chicago Shakespeare has redefined what a great American Shakespeare theater can be—a company that, delighting in the unexpected, defies theatrical category. A Regional Tony Award-winning theater, CST produces acclaimed plays at its home on Navy Pier, throughout Chicago’s schools and neighborhoods, and on stages around the world. In 2017, the Theater unveils The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, with an innovative design that will change the shape of theater-making. Together with the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater and the Thoma Theater Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare, The Yard positions CST as the city’s largest and most versatile performing arts venue.

Chicago Shakespeare’s year-round season features as many as twenty productions and 650 performances—including plays, musicals, world premieres, and visiting international presentations—to engage a broad, multigenerational audience of 225,000 community members. Recognized in 2014 in a White House ceremony hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama, CST’s education programs support literacy and creativity for 40,000 students each year. Each summer, 30,000 family audiences welcome the free Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks tour into their neighborhoods across the far north, west, and south sides of the city. The Theater is the leading producer of international work in Chicago and, touring its own plays across North America and abroad to Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East, CST has garnered multiple accolades, including the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award. Emblematic of its role as a global theater, CST spearheaded Shakespeare 400 Chicago, a yearlong international arts and culture festival, which engaged an estimated 1.1 million people through 863 events at 231 locations across the city in 2016—all in celebration of Shakespeare’s 400-year legacy.

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Part of the John W. and Jeanne M. Rowe Inquiry and Exploration Series

“O earth, I will befriend thee.” —W.S.
Welcome

Dear Friends,

Last year at this time, we were in the midst of Shakespeare 400 Chicago—an unrivaled international festival that led the world in marking the 400-year legacy of our eponymous playwright. It was a seminal moment in our organization’s history, and one that defined Shakespeare as an artistic beacon and creative catalyst for our city. One year later, and we have again redefined what this extraordinary entrepreneur and playwright can inspire centuries after his own lifetime.

Today’s reimagining of The Taming of the Shrew, with its all-woman cast and an original frame penned by the comedic writer Ron West, reinforces how important these plays remain. By shifting what has been viewed by some as a misogynistic tale into a love song to the suffragettes who paved the way forward for women’s empowerment and equality in our country, the enduring relevance of Shakespeare’s canon is once more revealed.

This spirit of innovation is emblematic of our company, amplified this year by the addition of our new state-of-the-imagination theater, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare. Creating a three-theater campus like no other in our city, our expanded home will allow us to program a vibrant season of plays across three distinct venues. Over the course of this historic season, our artistic collective will explore Shakespeare’s work in bold imaginings like today’s production; increase our service to students and educators by tens of thousands; and continue our service as a global ambassador by inviting work from France, Ireland, and México to our stages.

Our work continues to be surprising, audacious, and fueled by the spirit of Shakespeare. We look forward to exploring this extraordinary season with you!

Barbara Gaines
Artistic Director
Carl and Marilynn Thoma Endowed Chair

Criss Henderson
Executive Director

Steve Solomon
Chair, Board of Directors

www.chicagoshakes.com
With the opening of the 2017/18 Season, Chicago is now home to one of the most flexible theater venues in the world.

The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare introduces a new trend in theater architecture to our city—a dynamic design featuring nine mobile audience “towers” that can be arranged in a wide variety of ways.

With each visit, you will come to “expect the unexpected” as the relationship between audience and actor is redefined by the vision of each production’s creative team.

We look forward to welcoming you to...

A three-theater campus—encompassing our Courtyard Theater, Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare, and newly added The Yard—will enable us to offer more productions, extend runs of successful shows, and greatly increase our service to students.

NOW OPEN!
See what’s on stage at www.chicagoshakes.com/yard

This season’s shows in The Yard highlight the versatility of this innovative new venue—from its largest proscenium configuration (above) to a unique cabaret-like environment and intimate thrust stage with runway aisles.
Our City, Our Shakespeare

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Join the generous community of civic and corporate leaders supporting this bold vision for Chicago Shakespeare. Your gift will provide capital funding for The Yard and safeguard the Theater’s work on stage and in the community.

To make a gift, contact Brooke Flanagan at 312.595.5581 or bflanagan@chicagoshakes.com.
On the Boards

Beginning December 1, Associate Artistic Director Gary Griffin stages a fascinating glimpse into theater history after his “must-see” look into the future with last season’s King Charles III. Called “fiery and funny” by Time Out New York, Red Velvet is set in 1833 at the Theatre Royal in London’s Covent Garden. Edmund Kean, the greatest actor of his age, collapses on stage while performing the lead in Othello. He is replaced by a young, black actor, Ira Aldridge—a first for the role on London’s West End—stunning cast and theatergoers alike due not only to his race, but also his naturalistic approach to acting. This multi-award-winning play features Stratford Festival favorite Dion Johnstone in the starring role of Aldridge, who previously appeared in CST’s recent productions of Julius Caesar and Pericles.

This fall, a new education program launches: the Chicago Shakespeare Slam, giving students from fifty high schools across Chicagoland the opportunity to play with Shakespeare’s words and create their own interpretation of his rich texts. Following Saturday workshops and weeks of in-school rehearsals, each team prepares two performance pieces to showcase to the Shakespeare Slam community: a scene, plus a creative exploration inspired by one play—this year’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Shakespeare’s comedy of teen angst and love madness—the same play that CST will be staging for students and families this winter. With a shared focus on a single play, teachers and students will dive deep into Shakespeare and build community amongst the participating schools—a “one play, one Chicago” experience leading up to the Finals Bout in CST’s Courtyard Theater.

Continuing the Theater’s longstanding commitment to global cultural exchange through our World’s Stage Series, Chicago Shakespeare is a proud partner of the inaugural Chicago International Latino Theater Festival—Destinos, spearheaded by the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA). Featured as the largest international production of the festival is Teatro Línea de Sombra’s evocative Amarillo, October 17–29, in The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare. Devised by one of México’s most celebrated ensembles and directed by Jorge A. Vargas, Amarillo combines stunning multimedia projections, visceral imagery, and poetic storytelling in a rich theatrical meditation on the harsh realities faced by immigrants and their families. The production will be performed in Spanish with projected English translation.

Chicago Shakespeare is proud to recognize Marilyn Halperin’s twenty-five years at the helm of the Theater’s extensive education and audience enrichment initiatives in her role as Director of Education and Communications, Ray and Judy McCaskey Endowed Chair. Joining our founding leadership team in the company’s early days, Marilyn was tasked with launching an education program that would strive to make Shakespeare’s work accessible to all. Under her guidance, the Theater’s work with students and teachers has evolved into one of the most respected arts-in-education programs in the country. Her work has inspired literacy and creativity in generations of students, totaling nearly two million since the program began. In August, Marilyn was honored at a celebration among CST colleagues, teachers, former students, scholars, and artists, who paid tribute to the impact she has made to the field.

From left: Dion Johnstone; Students from Islamic Foundation School; company of Amarillo; Marilyn J. Halperin. Photos by Sophie García and Liz Lauren.
2017/18 UP & COMING

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
by William Shakespeare • conceived & directed by Barbara Gaines
Columbia Women's Club scenes by Ron West
Now through November 12, 2017 • CST's Courtyard Theater
Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and an all-woman cast of suffragettes pull back the curtain on a story of power, politics, and love.

JAMES THIERRÉE’S
THE TOAD KNEW
A World's Stage production from France
September 19–23, 2017 • The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare
Teasing and twisting audiences’ imaginations with astonishing theatrical creations for nearly two decades, cirque nouveau master James Thierrée’s newest creation features dancers, high-wire artists, and musicians—creating an intoxicating world evocative of Salvador Dalí and Tim Burton.

TEATRO LÍNEA DE SOMBRA’S
AMARILLO
A World’s Stage production from México • directed by Jorge A. Vargas
October 17–29, 2017 • The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare
One of México’s most celebrated and forward-thinking ensembles visits as the largest international engagement of the inaugural Chicago International Latino Theater Festival—Destinos.

Q BROTHERS CHRISTMAS CAROL
written by Q Brothers Collective (GQ, JQ, Jax, Pos)
developed with Rick Boynton • directed by GQ and JQ
November 21–December 31, 2017
The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare
The holiday treat set to a bangin’ beat is back! The ghosts of Hip-hop Past, Present, and Future lead Scrooge on a journey of rhythm, rhyme, and redemption.

RED VELVET
by Lolita Chakrabarti • directed by Gary Griffin
December 1, 2017–January 21, 2018 • CST’s Courtyard Theater
This multi-award-winning play transports audiences to the turbulent backstage world of London’s Theatre Royal in the mid-1800s. In taking the stage as Othello, a black actor sends shock waves across the city—challenging a society reluctant to change.

SHORT SHAKESPEARE!
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM
adapted & directed by Jess McLeod
February 3–March 10, 2018 • Saturdays at 11:00 am & 2:00 pm
The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare
This 75-minute abridgment introduces Shakespeare’s magical comedy to family and student audiences. One night, four lovers find themselves lost in a forest. When the Fairy Court finds them, hijinks and hilarity ensue until dawn.

SCHILLER’S
MARY STUART
in a new version by Peter Oswald • directed by Jenn Thompson
February 21–April 15, 2018 • CST’S Courtyard Theater
Replete with Tudor splendor, a power play for the throne finds Queen Elizabeth I confronting her rival in this “electrifying update of Schiller’s royal drama” (The Guardian).

MACBETH
by William Shakespeare • adapted & directed by Aaron Posner and Teller
April 25–June 24, 2018
The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare
Following their success with Chicago Shakespeare’s sold-out production of The Tempest, the famed creative duo Aaron Posner and Teller (of Penn & Teller) returns for a magical take on “the Scottish Play.”

DRUID’S
WAITING FOR GODOT
A World’s Stage production from Ireland
by Samuel Beckett • directed by Gary Hynes
May 23–June 3, 2018 • CST’S Courtyard Theater
One of the world’s most prestigious theater ensemble returns with a universally acclaimed interpretation of Beckett’s seminal work.
A Conversation with the Director

Artistic Director Barbara Gaines met with CST’s staff to share her plans for the Theater’s production of The Taming of the Shrew.

What made you decide to direct The Taming of the Shrew again—and now?

To be honest, the thought of doing it again surprised me. I directed this play in the early years of this company, and Shakespeare’s script wasn’t particularly intellectually challenging to me, frankly—though the actors were brilliant and hilarious. But when we were planning our current season, an entire concept came to me as one thought—“Shrew, all women, 1919, suffragettes.” We’re still fighting for women’s rights all over the world, including here in the States. But my goal for this show is to make people laugh—and to see how the issues of a hundred years ago resonate still with Shakespeare, and in 2017 with us.

In directing it now, twenty years later, has your relationship to the story changed?

Yes. I never realized how much wisdom there is in this play until we started working on the suffragette framework, and I started trying to connect these characters with the ones they’re playing in The Taming of the Shrew. When I first staged it as a young director, I honestly did not see its profundity. And so this time, when I began my moment-to-moment work in preparation for rehearsal, I was dazzled by some of the moments in this text. “It is the mind that makes the body rich,” Petruchio says to Kate when she desperately wants a new dress to wear to her father’s house, returning there for the first time as a married woman. Speaking this simple, beautiful truth, his character is made more complex than the label “woman abuser” affords. There are many other equally profound lines that I hope our audience will hear, perhaps for the first time. I’m so grateful for this opportunity to direct it again.

We never mock the play. But in the framework we will struggle with it—just as every company has struggled with it for centuries.

Talk about your decision to replace Shakespeare’s Christopher Sly Induction with the Columbia Women’s Club scenes, written by Ron West.

Christopher Sly appears only in the first few pages—you never see or hear from him again, and so the frame’s relationship to the larger story can be easily overlooked in Shakespeare’s text. In our frame story, each character’s personality is specific. We will play Shrew as a very funny—and enlightening—piece of work. We never mock the play. But in the framework we will struggle with it—just as every company has struggled with it for centuries. I hope the framework will enlighten Shrew, and that Shrew will enlighten the age that these suffragettes lived in—as well as the age we live in now. We’ve made enormous strides, but women are far from having equal rights. Will we be conscious always that it is women playing men’s roles in The Taming of the Shrew?

I would love for you to get so caught up in the characters that you forget. We’ve done cross-dressing before—so many of Shakespeare’s plays demand it—so this is nothing new. Ultimately men have the same feelings that women have—though we express them differently...

Will we come to understand Shakespeare’s characters as they live side-by-side with the characters in this new frame story?

Absolutely. Remember that Shakespeare worked with a team—he wrote for those specific actors whom he worked with, side by side. These were his...
drinking buddies. He knew the souls of Burbage, Hemmings, and Condell, and he was able to infuse them into his Hamlet and Feste, among so many others. Ron West, who developed the frame story for our production, has the same gift of infusing comic characters with the breadth of humanity. When we watch comedy, the more we see ourselves in its characters, the more real, and touching—and hilarious—it all becomes.

What dictated what you have cut to accommodate the new frame?

As you know, cutting Shakespeare is second nature to me by now. But everything you cut has ramifications, so when you’re cutting in Act 1, you better know what’s going on in Act 5. I cut some minor characters—easy to do because you can always give those lines to other characters onstage. I cut plotlines that lead nowhere—and, as always, I cut repetition. Shakespeare, particularly as a young playwright, enjoyed creating lists of metaphors, one after another. Orson Welles (whose mother we commemorate as one of our suffragette characters) once said—and I’m paraphrasing here—that every time you direct Shakespeare, you betray him. When you’re reading a play, all possibilities are available—and there are countless possibilities and choices. But when a director starts to shape their vision, they are necessarily ignoring so many other ways that one might interpret Shakespeare.

Have you discovered something new in Shakespeare’s characters as you’ve watched women portray them?

Yes, I absolutely have—in part, through the characters they are also playing in the frame story. The men they play in Shrew have become more three-dimensional to me. As they play them, we see how women view these men and their behavior. Male inspiration—and the complete lack of it sometimes—is so clear as I watch these women in these roles. I’ve seen great wisdom in Petruchio (Crystal Lucas-Perry) and a different kind of vulnerability in Kate (Alexandra Henrikson). You often watch Kate, completely worn down, just learning the game to survive her ordeal. But this is different. Instead, I’m watching the meeting of two people who are equally intelligent, strong—and lonely. I’ve seen more learning in both of them—each one comes to a place of recognition that their past behavior might have been worth changing. Crystal and Alexandra aren’t afraid to go to that place of vulnerability with one another, where there are cracks in the heart. It is in those cracks that daylight is let in. As always, the places that we learn the most about Shakespeare’s characters are the intersections where our souls touch theirs.
IT SHAKES YOUR SOUL

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
THE TOAD KNEW
AMARILLO
Q BROTHERS
CHRISTMAS CAROL
RED VELVET
SCHILLER’S
MARY STUART
WAITING FOR GODOT
MACBETH

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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Columbia Women’s Club Scenes by RON WEST

conceived & directed by BARBARA GAINES

Scenic Design KEVIN DEPINET
Costume Design SUSAN E. MICKEY
Lighting Design THOMAS C. HASE

Original Music & Sound Design DAVID VAN TIEGHEM
Wig & Make-up Design RICHARD JARVIE

Verse Coach KEVIN GUDAHL
Music Direction ROBERTA DUCHAK
Fight Choreography MATT HAWKINS

Casting BOB MASON
New York Casting NANCY PICCIONE
Production Stage Manager DEBORAH ACKER

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Welcome. If we can help accommodate you during your visit, please speak with our House Manager. Please note that flashing lights and haze may be used during this performance. Also, actors will make entrances and exits throughout the theater. For your safety, we ask that you keep aisles and doorways clear. We request that you refrain from taking any photography and other video or audio recordings of the production. There will be one 15-minute intermission.

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Chicago Shakespeare Theater strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all patrons. You’ll find our staff is ready to help in any way possible if assistance is required. Simply request accommodations when purchasing your tickets.

**Open-captioned performances**
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- Courtesy wheelchair service
- Wheelchair-accessible seating
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- Assistive-listening devices
- Personal induction neckloops
- Large-print programs
- Braille programs

**Audio-described performances with optional Touch Tours**

**ASL Duo-interpreted performances**

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**Cast** (in alphabetical order)

- **Dr. Fannie Emmanuel** as **Baptista/Nathaniel**
- **Mrs. Lucinda James** as **Biondello**
- **Mrs. Beatrice Welles** as **Hortensio**
- **Mrs. Sarah Willoughby** as **Vincentio/Joseph**
- **Mrs. Louise Harrison** as **Katherine**
- **Mrs. Elizabeth Nicewander** as **Pedant/Nicholas**
- **Mrs. Dorothy Mercer** as **Tranio/Haberdasher**
- **Mrs. Victoria Van Dyne** as **Petruchio**
- **Mrs. Mildred Sherman** as **Grumio/Widow**
- **Miss Judith Smith** as **Gremio/Peter**
- **Mrs. Barbara Starkey** as **Curtis/Tailor/Officer**
- **Miss Olivia Twist** as **Lucentio**
- **Mrs. Emily Ingersoll** as **Bianca**

- **E. FAYE BUTLER**
- **LILLIAN CASTILLO**
- **TINA GLUSCHENKO**
- **CINDY GOLD**
- **ALEXANDRA HENRIKSON**
- **ANN JAMES**
- **HEIDI KETTENRING**
- **CRYSTAL LUCAS-PERRY**
- **RITA REHN**
- **HOLLIS RESNIK**
- **FAITH SERVANT**
- **KATE MARIE SMITH**
- **OLIVIA WASHINGTON**

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance: **Lynn Baber** for **Mrs. Sarah Willoughby** as **Vincentio/Joseph**, **Mrs. Mildred Sherman** as **Grumio/Widow**; **Sarah Dunnivant** for **Miss Olivia Twist** as **Lucentio**, **Mrs. Dorothy Mercer** as **Tranio/Haberdasher**; **Tina Gluschenko** for **Mrs. Louise Harrison** as **Katherine**; **Grayson Heyl** for **Mrs. Beatrice Welles** as **Hortensio**; **Mrs. Barbara Starkey** as **Curtis/Tailor/Officer**; **Ann James** for **Miss Judith Smith** as **Gremio/Peter**; **Laurie Larson** for **Dr. Fannie Emmanuel** as **Baptista/Nathaniel**, **Mrs. Elizabeth Nicewander** as **Pedant/Nicholas**; **Patricia Lavery** for **Mrs. Victoria Van Dyne** as **Petruchio**, **Mrs. Beatrice Welles** as **Hortensio**; and **Faith Servant** for **Mrs. Emily Ingersoll** as **Bianca**, **Mrs. Lucinda James** as **Biondello**.

**Production Stage Manager**
**Stage Manager** (beginning October 17)
**Assistant Stage Manager**

*denotes member of Actors’ Equity Association.

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www.chicagoshakes.com/access
THE STORY

In Padua, a wealthy merchant named Baptista is resolved: his lovely daughter Bianca will not be wed until her elder sister, Katharina “the curs’d,” is married off. The field of frustrated suitors for Bianca’s hand is crowded already with local gentlemen, including Hortensio and Gremio, when Lucentio arrives in town to pursue his studies. But after one look at the merchant’s charming daughter, Lucentio, too, is compelled to leave all logic behind. In order to gain access to Baptista’s barred treasure, Hortensio dons the robes of a music instructor; Lucentio, handing off his identity to his servant Tranio, disguises himself as another tutor for the younger daughter.

Just when it seems as though the lovely Bianca will never be free to wed, another suitor arrives in town. His name is Petruchio, an adventurer who seems quite undaunted by life’s obstacles—and one determined to shore up his financial future with a wife. Baptista’s eldest daughter will fit the bill.

After their sudden courtship, Petruchio manages to escort his “bride” down the aisle, then sets out to tame her. Bianca available at last, Tranio (disguised as his master) manages to convince her father that Lucentio is the man for her. When Baptista requires that the young man’s father agree to the terms of the contract, another imposter is cast to play the part—just as Lucentio’s real father arrives in town. In the end, true identities are revealed, three marriages are celebrated, and a wager is placed as the newlyweds roll the dice on married life.

SUFFRAGE, WOMEN’S CLUBS, AND SHAKESPEARE

The emergence of women’s clubs in mid-nineteenth-century America began a social movement that sought to provide women an avenue for education, community, and civic service. An estimated two million American women were active in these clubs by the turn of the twentieth century. Promoting education for women, clubs frequently focused on literature and history. Many took on local and national reform issues—the need within their own communities for schools, libraries, and public parks, and, on a national level, the women’s suffrage debate.

Shakespeare became a popular theme as club members studied, memorized, and performed his plays. During the heyday of the women’s club movement, there were more than 500 Shakespeare clubs across the country, including three in Chicago: the Hull House Shakespeare Club, Argyle Park Portia Club, and Shakespeare Club of Chicago, which operated into the 1940s. While women’s clubs routinely drew criticism for drawing their members away from their domestic duties, clubs devoted to Shakespeare remained relatively unscathed. They offered a safe harbor for carrying out progressive agendas and social activism while providing places where women could freely discuss such topics as politics, suffrage, sexual relations, and domesticity.

AMERICAN SUFFRAGISTS

I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

In a letter dated March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams wrote these words to her husband while he served as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Her words now ring prophetic—a call to women who rose up in the next century to fight for a voice and representation. But the Continental Congress had no such plan as it prepared to secede from England.

The women’s rights movement began in earnest in 1848 with the first US women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Attendees signed the “Declaration of Sentiments and Grievances,” a treatise (modeled after the Declaration of Independence) that documented the injustices faced by women in America, and calling for them to petition for equal rights. In 1869 Wyoming Territory became the first to grant women the right to vote.

The Nineteenth Amendment, prohibiting denial of suffrage based on sex, was first introduced to the US Senate in 1878. The proposed amendment remained a controversial issue for more than forty years. The efforts of the women’s rights movement finally resulted in the passage of the amendment by Congress in June 1919. With the Nineteenth Amendment ratified by three-fourths of the States, it became part of the United States Constitution on August 18, 1920. ■
Profiles

E. FAYE BUTLER
(Or. Fannie Emmanuel as Baptista/Nathanial) 
Returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she appeared in Seussical. Other Chicago credits include productions with: Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Marriott Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Drury Lane Theatre, Royal George Theatre, The Vic Theatre, and Broadway Playhouse. Regional credits include productions with: The Muny, Olney Theatre Center, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Arena Stage, Center Stage, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Signature Theatre, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, The Pasadena Playhouse, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, and The Washington Ballet.

TINA GLUSCHENKO
(Mrs. Beatrice Welles as Hortensio) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she appeared in Hamlet, the Musical, a joint production with Second City Theatricals, which later moved to Ars Nova for a New York run under the title Melancholy Baby. Other Chicago credits include: The House of Martin Guerre, Randy Newman’s Faust (Goodman Theatre); A Christmas Carol (Drury Lane Theatre); The Bardy Bunch (Mercury Theatre); Away (Northlight Theatre); A Class Act (Porchlight Music Theatre); End Days (Windy City Playhouse); Songs of the Second City, and Sex and the Second City (Second City Theatricals). Ms. Gluschenko’s national tour credits include Into the Woods and The Secret Garden. Her film credits include The Package. She received a BFA from the Theatre School at DePaul University.

LILLIAN CASTILLO
(Mrs. Lucinda James as Biondello) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include: Ride the Cyclone, the Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks production of Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits, and Seussical. Other Chicago credits include: In the Heights (Paramount Theatre); Hairspray (Phoenix Theatre); Glorious! (Arcadia Repertory Theatre); Macbeth, Fiddler on the Roof, Lend Me a Tenor: The Musical, School for Wives, The Merchant of Venice, Private Lives, and The Taming of the Shrew (Utah Shakespeare Festival).

CINDY GOLD
(Mrs. Sarah Willoughby as Vincentio/Joseph) makes her Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. Other Chicago credits include: Showboat, My Fair Lady (Lyric Opera of Chicago); In the Garden (Lookingglass Theatre Company); Measure for Measure (Goodman Theatre); Love, Loss and What I Wore (Broadway in Chicago); Awake and Sing (Jeff Award nomination); Pride and Prejudice, Mothers and Sons, Jekyll and Hyde (Northlight Theatre); Deathtrap (Drury Lane Theatre); Loving Repeating (Jeff Award, and A Kid Like Jake (About Face Theatre). Her regional credits include: Showboat, The Daughter of the Regiment (Washington National Opera, The Kennedy Center); and The Music Man (Glimmerglass Opera and Royal Opera, Muscat, Oman).

ANN JAMES
(Man of Steel) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she appeared in a production of: Of Blue Leaves (Artists Repertory Theatre); and The Taming of the Shrew. Other Chicago credits include: Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Broadway credits include: Empire, Chicago Fire, and Let’s Be Cops. Ms. Gold received her BFA from Boston University and an MFA from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival Professional Actor Training Program. She is a professor of theatre at Northwestern University.

ALEXANDRA HENRIKSON
(Mrs. Louise Harrison as Katherine) makes her Chicago debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Broadway credits include Larry David’s Fish in the Dark and The Snow Geese (Manhattan Theatre Club). Off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway credits include: We Play for the Gods (Women’s Project Theater); Boney in the Basket (The Araca Group); Hell House (St. Ann’s Warehouse); Commedia dell’Artichoke (Gene Frankel Theatre); The Maids (Impulse Artists); and Much Ado About Nothing (Smith Street Stage). Independent film works include: Towheads, Love Like Gold, and Here We Are in the Present…Again. Regional credits include: the world premiere of Steve Martin’s Meteor Shower (The Old Globe); Ironbound (Helen Hayes nomination, Round House Theatre); Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls (Suzi Bass Award-Best Ensemble, Alliance Theatre); and productions with California Shakespeare Theater and the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center.

CRISTAL LUCAS-PERRY
(Mrs. Victoria Van Dyne as Petrochka) makes her Chicago debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Other Chicago credits include: Bull in a China Shop (Lincoln Center Theater); Little Children Dream of God (Roundabout Theatre); Bastard Jones (The Cell Theatre); The Convert of Pleasure (Cherry Lane Theatre); Storm Still: A King from Happiness, and Leander Stilwell (Stage Left Theatre). She cofounded Chicagoland Production Company, where she directed Julius Caesar and Hamlet and created Bottome’s Dream, an adaptation of A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Ms. James’s television credits include Better Call Saul (AMC) and Unsolved Mysteries (NBC).

Heidi Kettnering
(Mrs. Dorothy Mercer as Sarah/Haberlaser) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include: Tug of War: Foreign Fire and Civil Strife, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The School for Lies, and Sunday in the Park with George. Other Chicago credits include: Nessa in Wicked (Broadway in Chicago) and productions with: Writers Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre (Oakbrook and Evergreen Park), Chicago Commercial Collective, Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and American Theatre Company. Chicago credits include: Disney’s Beauty and the Beast. Regional credits include productions with: Theatre at the Center, Fulton Theatre, Maine State Music Theatre, TheatreWorks, and Peninsula Players. Ms. Kettnering has sung concerts for Artists Lounge Live, Ravinia, Pensacola Symphony, and at Millennium Park, and is heard singing on two Disney books. Film and television credits include: Man of Steel, Chicago Fire (NBC), and Coup (ABC). A graduate of Northwestern University, she is the recipient of a Joseph Jefferson Award, seven Jeff Award nominations, The Sarah Siddons Award, an After Dark Award, and the Richard M. Kneeeland Award.

Fall 2017 | The Taming of the Shrew
RITA REHN (Mrs. Mildred Sherman as Grumio/Widow) makes her Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. Broadway credits include: Nine, A Chorus Line, and The Royal Family. Off-Broadway credits include: Last Dance, Defiance, and Lead Me Home. Her national and regional credits include: The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife, Clever Little Lies, The Roommate, Over the River, Sylvia, and Always...Patsy Cline (Florida Studio Theatre). Film credits include: The Producers, Pocket Pair, Extras, Show Me a Hero, and The Jinx. Ms. Rehn’s television credits include: Law & Order, Miami Vice, Moon over Miami, B.L. Stryker, Tough Cookies, General Hospital, Superboy, and The 100 Lives of Black Jack Savage. She received the New Jersey Theatre Critics Award for Best Actress in a Comedy and Best Featured Actress in a Musical.

HOLLY RESNIK (Miss Judith Smith as Gremio/Peter) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where her credits include King Charles III and Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night. Other Chicago credits include: An Almanac for Farmers and Lovers in Mexico (The Jades); Memory Tour (Pivot Arts); Top Girls, Twelfth Night (The Arc Theatre); Bellboys, Bears and Baggage (Redmoon); and Orpheus and Eurydice (Chicago Opera Theater). She is also a member of One Year Chekhov. Television credits include Chicago Fire (Universal Television). Ms. Smith received her BA in theatre performance and minor in music from Huntington University.

OLIVIA WASHINGTON (Mrs. Emily Ingorsill as Bianca) makes her Chicago debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. She has appeared off-Broadway as Laura in The Glass Menagerie (Masterworks Theater Company) and in Caucasian Chuck Circle (Stella Adler Studio of Acting). Her regional credits include Clybourne Park (Hangar Theatre). Film and television credits include Lee Daniel’s The Butler and Mr. Robot. Ms. Washington received her BFA in drama from the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU.

KEVIN DEPINET (Scenic Designer) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include: Love’s Labor’s Lost, Peer Apparent, Sense and Sensibility, Henry V, Gypsy, Cyrano de Bergerac, Sunday in the Park with George, Timon of Athens, Follies and As You Like It. Other Chicago credits include productions with: Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook and Chicago Children’s Theatre. Broadway credits include his work as associate designer for Of Mice and Men, August: Osage County and The Mother**Her With the Hat. Regional credits include productions with: American Players Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Denver Center Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Arden Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Brooklyn Academy of Music and Glimmerglass Festival. International credits include National Theatre of Great Britain. Film credits include scenery for Michael Mann’s Public Enemies. Mr. Depinet studied at the Yale School of Drama, and now serves as an adjunct professor of design at DePaul University.

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SUSAN E. MICKEY (Costume Designer) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater for her thirteenth production, including Shakespeare in Love, Tug of War: Foreign Fire and Civil Strife, Sense and Sensibility, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cyrano de Bergerac, The School for Lies (Jeff Award), Timon of Athens, The Madness of George III (Jeff Award), Richard III, Cymbeline, The Comedy of Errors and The Taming of the Shrew. Other Chicago credits include costume design for: The Marriage of Figaro (Lyric Opera); Jetney and Miss Evers’ Boys (Goodman Theatre). Regional credits include designs for: The Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Arena Stage, Huntington Theater Company, Center Stage, Cleveland Play House, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Goodspeed Musicals, Portland Center Stage, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Dallas Theater Center, Studio Arena Theatre, Geva Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and over fifty productions with the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta. International Credits include Madame Butterfly (Opera Pa Skaret, Sweden). Film credits include costume design for Miss Evers’ Boys (HBO) and Mama Flora’s Family miniseries (CBS). Ms. Mickey serves as senior associate chair at University of Texas at Austin.

THOMAS C. HASE (Lighting Designer) makes his Chicago Shakespeare Theater debut. New York credits include: Company on Broadway, several off-Broadway productions, and management credits with New York City Opera and BAM Next Wave Festival. Regional credits include productions with: Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Dallas Theater Center, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Los Angeles Opera. International credits include productions with: Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Theater Erfurt, and Bayerische Staatsoper (Germany); Barbican Theatre and Sadler’s Wells Theatre (London), Opera North (UK), the Abbey Theatre and Riverdreams (Dublin), Maló Opera (Sweden), the Dutch, Finnish, and Colombian National Operas, Stage Entertainment (Holland), Opéra de Marseille(France), Canadian Opera Company, the Luminato Festival (Toronto), Singapore Arts Festival, and Tokyo Metro Arts Center. Mr. Hase is the head of lighting for Cincinnati Opera Association, www.Haseltld.com.

DAVID VAN TIEGHM (Original Music & Sound Design) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where his credits include King John (Jeff Award nomination) and Measure for Measure. Other Chicago credits include Hedda Gabler (Steppenwolf Theatre). Broadway credits include: Heisenberg, The Gin Game, Doubt, The Lyons, Romeo and Juliet, The Big Knife, Born Yesterday, The Normal Heart, A Man for All Seasons, Inherit the Wind, Frozen, Arcadia, The Crucible, Judgment at Nuremberg, Three Days of Rain. Off-Broadway credits include: Incognito, Plenty, Hold on to Me Darling, Wit, Posterity, How I Learned to Drive, The Grey Zone, and Jack Goes Boating. Film/TV credits include: Working Girls, Bon Voyage, Buried Prayers, Penn & Teller, and Wooster Group. Dance credits: Twyla Tharp, Doug Varone, STREB, Pilobolus, Michael Moschen. Mr. Van Tieghem has performed as a percussionist for Laurie Anderson, Steve Reich, Brian Eno, and Talking Heads. He is the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, two Obie Awards, a Bessie, and has multiple Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Award nominations. Discography credits include: Thrown for a Loop, Strange Cargo, Safety in Numbers, and These Things Happen. www.vantieghem.com

RICHARD JARVIE (Wig & Make-up Designer) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he has designed wigs and make-up for: Madagascar, Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks: Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare in Love, Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet, Love’s Labor’s Lost, King Charles III; the inaugural season of Chicago Shakespeare on Navy Pier; and many productions at the Ruth Page Theatre. Mr. Jarvie spent twenty-eight years with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, eleven of them as the wig master and makeup designer. Other Chicago credits include productions with: Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, and Drury Lane Theatre Oakbrook. Regional and international credits include productions with: the Tom Patterson Theatre in Stratford, Ontario (supervisor of wigs and make-up); Guthrie Theater (wig master); Alliance Theatre; and McCarter Theatre. Opera credits include productions with: Atlanta Opera, San Francisco Opera, Hawaii Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Saint Louis Opera, and the Spoleto Festivals of Charleston, South Carolina, and Italy.

KEVIN GUDAH (Verse Coach) returns to Chicago Shakespeare, where he has served as verse coach for many CST productions, including: Tug of War: Civil Strife, Othello, 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. Gudah has taught Shakespeare acting courses at Northwestern University, DePaul University, University of Illinois-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 also performed in over forty Chicago Shakespeare Theater productions, and has also performed in Chicago at: Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Theatre, and Victory Gardens Theatre. Mr. Gudah has appeared internationally at the Stratford Festival, Donnar Warehouse, and Royal Shakespeare Company.

ROBERTA DUCHAK (Music Director) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she appeared in The People Vs. Friar Laurence: The Man Who Killed Romeo and Juliet and was music director for Murder for Two and The Little Match Girl. Other Chicago music director credits include: Chicago, Saturday Night Fever, Smokey Joe’s Cafe, Crazy for You, Hazel, Billy Elliot, Les Miserables (Jeff Award nomination), West Side Story, White Christmas, Young Frankenstein, Hello Dolly!, Oliver, The Sound of Music (Jeff Award nomination), Sweeney Todd (Jeff Award nomination), Ragtime (Jeff Award nomination), Spamlalot, (Jeff Award nomination), Gypsy, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Miss Saigon (Drury Lane Theatre), Brigadoon (Goodman Theatre); The Story of My Life (Victory Gardens Theater); The Original Grease (American Theater Company); and The Rocky Horror Show (Mercy Theater). Ms. Duchak was also the musical supervisor for A Little Night Music (Writers Theatre). Broadway acting credits include Mother in Ragtime. Ms. Duchak’s national tour acting credits include: Ghost of Christmas Past in Scrooge, Magnolia and Ellie in Showboat, and Rona Lisa Peretti in Spelling Bee (Chicago and national tour companies). Ms. Duchak has two vocal studios in the Chicago area and was the vocal coach for Russell Crowe and Hugh Jackman for the film Les Misérables.

MATT HAWKINS (Fight Choreography) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he has been fight choreographer, assistant director, director, and an actor in over twenty productions, including fight choreography for the upcoming production of Macbeth. Other upcoming productions include: director of Hatfield & McCoy (The House Theatre of Chicago) and Spring Awakening (University of Notre Dame); and as assistant fight choreographer for Shakespeare in Love (Asolo Repertory Theater) and Newsies (Marriott Theatre). Mr. Hawkins has been nominated for thirteen Jeff Awards and has received five. Mr. Hawkins received a BFA in acting from Southern Methodist University and his MFA in directing from The University of Iowa. Mr. Hawkins is an assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame, where he serves as the head of Musical Theatre for the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre.

DEBORAH ACKER (Production Stage Manager) has stage managed the past twenty-eight seasons at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Other stage management credits include: Puttin’ on the Ritz (National Jewish Theater); Six Degrees of Separation, Driving Miss Daisy, I’m Not Rappaport (Briar Street Theatre); The Nerd (Royal George Theatre); and A...My Name is Alice (Ivanhoe Theatre). She has production managed extensively
throughout Chicago, and has also provided lighting designs for: the Apollo Theatre, Candlelight Dinner Playhouse, Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s Team Shakespeare, the Museum of Science and Industry, Some Like It Cole (tour), and Pump Boys and Dinettes in Branson, Missouri.

DENNIS J. CONNERS (Stage Manager, beginning October 17) is a resident production stage manager at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where he has stage managed over one dozen productions, including: King Charles III, Othello, Ride the Cyclone, King Lear, The Little Mermaid, A Q Brothers’ Christmas Carol, and Othello: The Remix. Other Chicago credits include: Appropriate, Disconnect (Victory Gardens Theater); Freud’s Last Session (Mercury Theater, CRC Productions); Mr. Chickie’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 Theater Company); What Once We Felt (About Face Theatre); Dangerous Beauty, and In the Buff (American Music Theatre Project). Off-Broadway credits include: Clay (Kirk Douglas Theatre, Kansas City Rep) and Lookingglass Alice (Alliance Theatre). Mr. Conners is a graduate of Northwestern University, where he has served as an adjunct lecturer in stage management and currently serves as a stage management mentor.

CASSIE CALDERONE (Assistant Stage Manager) returns to Chicago Shakespeare Theater, where she was assistant stage manager for The Heir Apparent. Other Chicago credits include: Pass Over, Straight White Men, The Christians, Betrayal, Gary, Fair Use, The Glass Menagerie, To Kill a Mockingbird, Venus, Man in Love, fml: how Carson McCullers saved my life, Head of Passes, The Wheel, The Gospel of Franklin, Grand Concourse, Marie Antoinette, Animal Farm, Hushabye, Russian Transport, The Compass, Between Riverside and Crazy (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); Song for the Disappeared (Goodman Theatre); Grease, A Chorus Line (Paramount Theatre); The Homosexuals (About Face Theatre); Million Dollar Quartet, The Sparrow (Broadway in Chicago); and The MLK Project (Writers Theatre). Regional credits include productions with: Catheris Productions, Opera Illinois, and Portland Stage.

BOB MASON (Artistic Associate/Casting Director) is in his eighteenth season as CST’s casting director, where his credits include over one hundred 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. He recently directed and co-created Shakespeare Tonight! with Beckie Menzie, as part of CST’s Shakespeare 400 Chicago festival. Prior to casting, Mr. Mason enjoyed a career as a Jeff Award-winning actor and singer, and has been a visiting educator for the School at Steppenwolf, Acting Studio Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Northwestern University.

NANCY PICCIONE (New York Casting) is the director of casting at Manhattan Theatre Club. Broadway credits include: JITNEY, Heisenberg, The Father, Venus in Fur, Wit, Tiny Tim’s Stand-Up: Top Girls, Shining City, The Assembled Parties, Outside Mulligan, Casa Valentina, and Constellations. She cast the original production of Proof and The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife on Broadway and off-Broadway, as well as their national tours. Off-Broadway credits include: Linda, Incognito, The Explorers Club, Choir Boy, The Whipping Man, Ruined, Equivocation, The World of Extreme Happiness, and Of Good Stock. 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 the American actors for the first two seasons of the 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: The Book of Joseph, Ride the Cyclone (CST, MCC), Sense and Sensibility (CST, Old Globe), 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, off-Broadway); 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 staged 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.

CRISS HENDERSON (Executive Director) has produced Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s past twenty-eight seasons, and developed the citywide, yearlong celebration through 2016 of Shakespeare’s legacy, Shakespeare 400 Chicago. 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 2006 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 Theatres and 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.
Lost and Won

“When shall we three meet again?” asks the First Witch in the opening moment of Macbeth. The second witch’s answer:

When the hurly-burly’s done,
When the battle’s lost and won.

In Macbeth, losing and winning begin as a binary—an either-or—but quickly blur into something more complex. Macbeth decisively wins that battle of which the witches speak, and in the wake of that victory, “wins” the kingship too. And then proceeds to lose it all: self, wife, life. Tragedy, as Shakespeare often shows (and as we can recently attest) can readily begin with “winning,” catastrophically misconstrued.

Comedy is more generous; it generally transmutes losing into winning. For many, though, The Taming of the Shrew looms as a troubling exception. The play draws on a queasy-making tradition of jokes and anecdotes about husbands browbeating their wives into submission, and it culminates (spoiler alert!) in a speech expressing what seems total surrender, delivered by a wife who for most of the play has furiously resisted the attempts of any man (father, husband, wide-eyed onlookers) to mock or thwart her fierce autonomy. The Taming of the Shrew can thereby seem to fulfill its title’s prophecy all too easily. He wins, she loses, patriarchy prevails. In response, readers, playgoers, and show-shapers have for generations echoed the plaintive Peggy Lee: Is that all there is?

It’s a genuine and unsettling question. For the play’s many skeptics, the answer is an absolute yes: Shrew is too imbued with the benighted convictions of its own historical moment to do anything subtler than document and (worse yet) advocate them.

But for the Shrew’s admirers (I’m one), the answer can be more complicated, more hopeful, and more fun. Shakespeare does much in the play to mess with our very notions of winning and losing; he blurs the two into something new.

Shakespeare does much in the play to mess with our very notions of winning and losing; he blurs the two into something new.

Great drama, we’re taught in grammar school, depends on conflict. The core Greek word was agon, “struggle”—and the dramatic impact of the agon depends in large measure on the intense, matched powers of the agonists. In order to make the struggle work, Shakespeare had to make the strugglers worthy: passionate, witty, theatrically hypnotic. He never, ever failed. From the first moments of their first confrontation, the mighty agonists Katherine and Petruchio launch themselves far beyond the stereotypes—rabid Fury, bullet-headed misogynist—of then-standard taming tales into a new stratosphere of sexual combat. Exchanging verbal barbs, matching word against word with the speedy dexterity of mighty beboppers trading riffs on a magnificent night, they make their way into one of comedy’s highest places of elation—where characters and audience discover in tandem a new modality of fun. By scene’s end they’re still ostensibly at fearsome odds with one another, and there is considerable cruelty to come. But their sparring has already made them impassioned partners, whether they as yet detect the shift or not.

But what then of Katherine’s seeming submission to Petruchio in the end? Well, to echo Facebook, it’s complicated. From their first encounter onward, we’ve detected in the pair an impulse toward collaboration that underlies the combat; over time they come to see it clearer too, and to bring it to the fore, in a giddy mix of theater and sport: they provide high-wattage performances for each other’s delectation, for ours, and in this final scene for the friends and family who gape at what they take as proof of Petruchio’s victory and Kate’s defeat.

For us, though, who’ve accompanied the couple on their whole hard ride, this moment can read less as contest than as well-learned teamwork, a victory shared (rather than sundered) in the newfound depths of their own souls.
“You complete me,” says Jerry Maguire, in a clause that has become much-mocked shorthand for the way rom-coms generally work. Shakespeare, here near the origins of rom-com, spells out the process in glorious Elizabethan longhand. The object in love, as in any endeavor worth the undertaking, is nothing so simplistic as subordination; it’s the much more complex process of completion.

Ron West, who has crafted a new frame for Chicago Shakespeare’s all-women production, flips Shakespeare’s premise from the ludicrous to the aspirational.

In the original version of the play, Shakespeare clinched this point with a little skit at the outset, in which a drunken beggar is tricked into believing that he is a wealthy nobleman with a submissive wife; the play of Petruchio and Kate is then performed for his befuddled entertainment. The skit exposes the masculine desire for absolute dominion as a ludicrously misguided self-delusion—a drunkard’s dream if ever we’ve seen one.

Ron West, who has crafted a new frame for Chicago Shakespeare’s all-women production, flips Shakespeare’s premise from the ludicrous to the aspirational. The women’s suffragists, who in West’s reworking both perform and watch the play, are (unlike Shakespeare’s drunkard) possessed by a dream worth dreaming—one that we know they will soon attain, and that will ultimately confer grace and gain on the entire country, even on those who sought to thwart it.

The world is always awash (and perhaps never more so than now) in narrow, impoverished, zero-sum reckonings of winning and losing, whereby one group’s gain must inevitably entail another’s loss. So the play, done this way at this historical moment, may proffer a welcome respite: the opportunity to revel for a few hours of comedic comfort in other times, other paradigms, including our own possible future: a future like the one perhaps conjured by Shakespeare in his Shrew, and by the suffragists in this version of it, wherein what may seem momentarily a zero-sum matter of winners and losers turns out to entail something more tender: everybody wins, in the only ways that really count.
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