

A vibrant theatrical poster for 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. At the top, two performers are shown: a man on the left with a bright orange mohawk, blue face paint, and a beaded necklace, and a woman on the right with dark curly hair, blue face paint, and a green dress. They are both gesturing with their hands. Below them is a large, dense arrangement of various flowers, including purple irises, red and yellow roses, and orange bird of paradise flowers. The title 'A MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM' is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the floral arrangement.

A MID-SUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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PHOTO BY: Jeff Sciortino
PICTURED ABOVE: T.R. Knight
and Alexandra Silber in rehearsal
PHOTO BY: Liz Lauren

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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,

We have much to be thankful for here at Chicago Shakespeare—our 2018/2019 Season is brimming with bold reimaginings of Shakespeare's plays, acclaimed new work, and extraordinary presentations imported to Chicago from around the world. Beyond our stages, students from 50 area high schools are bringing the Bard to life as part of the Chicago Shakespeare Slam. And today we welcome you to our artistic home as we commemorate the Theater's 20th Anniversary Season on Navy Pier.

Here in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater is a musically infused version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play has been masterfully directed by the incomparable Joe Dowling, who last staged this same title as part of Chicago Shakespeare's inaugural season on the Pier. Memorably, that production ended with a blessing for the theater, and signified for us the theatrical consecration of our permanent artistic home in Chicago. Now, two decades hence, it is our privilege to have Joe Dowling revisit Shakespeare's magical and joyous comedy on the Courtyard Stage.

Through December 30, the revelry continues next door in our newest venue, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, with *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*. This fresh take on Dickens' classic will have audiences on their feet with a mix of reggae, dancehall, dubstep, and epic rock ballads. Developed with Creative Producer Rick Boynton as part of the Theater's new play initiative, it's a hip-hop wonder that has quickly become a Chicago holiday tradition.

Thank you for joining us this season as we mark a special anniversary for our company! Together, we can ensure that Shakespeare's home in Chicago serves as a global beacon of world-class artistry for generations to come. ■

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About CST

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 defies theatrical category. This Regional Tony Award-winning theater's year-round season features as many as twenty productions and 650 performances—including plays, musicals, world premieres, family programming, and presentations from around the globe. The work is enjoyed by 225,000 audience members annually, with one in four under the age of eighteen. Chicago Shakespeare is the city's leading presenter of international work, and in touring its own productions across five continents has garnered multiple accolades, including the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award. Emblematic of its role as a global theater, the company spearheaded Shakespeare 400 Chicago, celebrating Shakespeare's legacy in a citywide, yearlong international arts and culture festival, which engaged more than one million people. The Theater's nationally acclaimed arts in literacy programs support the work of English and drama teachers, and bring Shakespeare to life on stage for tens of thousands of their students each school year. Over the summer, the company tours a professional production of Shakespeare's work, free for all, to neighborhood parks across the city. In 2017 the Theater unveiled The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare—with its innovative design that has changed the shape of theater architecture. Together with the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater and the Thoma Theater Upstairs, The Yard positions Chicago Shakespeare as the city's most versatile performing arts center. ■

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On the Boards



Raúl Esparza's expansive performance career bridges stage and screen. This *Law and Order: SVU* star makes his Chicago Shakespeare debut this spring in the title role of *Hamlet*, directed by Barbara Gaines. With three Drama Desk Awards and four Tony nominations, Esparza is no newcomer to the stage; he has been seen on and off Broadway in a wide range of shows, including *Twelfth Night*, *Company*, *Arcadia*, and *The Homecoming*. *Hamlet* marks his return to Chicago, where he has previously performed at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Victory Gardens Theater. Talking about Esparza, Gaines shared, "It's a joy to be able to create and celebrate *Hamlet* with Raúl—who was positively born to play this role. His natural charisma, never-ending curiosity, and generosity of spirit will fill our stage with wonder. The prospect of examining this story alongside such an outstanding artist is thrilling."



Throughout the fall, student ensembles from fifty Chicago area high schools have participated in the second annual Chicago Shakespeare Slam. Through a slam-style showcase performance, teams from across the region came together to celebrate the power of Shakespeare and their own voices. Following a Saturday workshop, each team prepared two performance pieces to be presented at Regional Bouts: any Shakespeare scene from the canon, selected by the team; and a creative exploration inspired by a single play that the entire Slam community focuses on together—this year, *Macbeth*, the play that CST will stage for tens of thousands of students this winter. The top-scoring teams advance to perform in the Final Bout on December 10, held onstage in The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare. Above all, the Slam is an ensemble program that seeks to build community within and across schools.



Opening in The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare in February is the National Theatre of Great Britain's award-winning production of JB Priestley's 1945 thriller, *An Inspector Calls*. One of Chicago Shakespeare's limited-run WorldStage presentations this season, it is helmed by internationally renowned director Stephen Daldry, whose genre-spanning career includes the hit Netflix series *The Crown*, Oscar-nominated films, and Tony Award-winning productions. First premiering in 1992, the production has since played to audiences around the world, making *An Inspector Calls* the longest-running revival of a play in history—amassing Olivier, Tony, Drama Desk, and Critics' Circle awards. Hailed by the UK's *Evening Standard* as "an epic for our epoch, a thrillingly physical piece of theatre—with the power to stir the heart as much as the mind," it runs February 19 through March 10.



Chicago Shakespeare is proud to present Compagnie Non Nova's *L'après-midi d'un foehn Version 1* from France, in partnership with the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. The production runs January 23–27 on stage in The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare—quite literally: with the audience arranged on the stage itself, surrounding performer Jean-Louis Ouvard. In a mesmerizing piece of puppetry, Ouvard transforms ordinary plastic grocery bags into lifelike figures that take flight in an intoxicating visual ballet. The Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival is a biennial event that aims to establish Chicago as a prominent center for the art of puppetry through a curated series of performances and workshops across the city. As part of the inaugural Festival in 2015, CST presented Blind Summit's *The Table*, whose star Moses captured hearts around the city.

From left: Raúl Esparza; Students participating in Chicago Shakespeare Slam; The company of *An Inspector Calls*; Jean-Louis Ouvard in *L'après-midi d'un foehn Version 1*. photos by Jean-Luc Beaujault, Mark Douet, and Liz Lauren.



BY **CHRISTINA ANDERSON** | DIRECTED BY **NIEGEL SMITH**

JANUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 24, 2019

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A Conversation with the Director

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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

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- DIRECTED BY JOE DOWLING
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A Midsummer Night's Dream
Director Joe Dowling

Internationally acclaimed director Joe Dowling spoke to CST's staff when he visited Chicago to cast the production.

What do you look forward to in revisiting this play now in your career?

Joe Dowling: This is the tenth time I have directed this play! But every time, something happens in rehearsal and it makes me say, 'Oh, I didn't see that before.' Obviously, new actors bring new ideas, and what is always exciting about Shakespeare is how his work can be interpreted through different cultural moments. This play certainly has lots to say about battles for power involving gender and sexuality. It is also a celebration of theater itself—and that is something that warms my heart.

Along with *The Tempest* and *Love's Labor's Lost*, it appears that Shakespeare created the *Dream* without references to literary sources or earlier plays. In each, there is a play-within-a-play, where we watch amateur performers attempt to explore ideas about love and death through drama. I love the idea that Shakespeare offers us a glimpse into the special world of theater enthusiasts.

Can you talk about your inspiration for the overall design for the set?

The basic visual reference that Todd Rosenthal, our set designer, and I worked from is the work of Hieronymus Bosch, the sixteenth-century Dutch painter—and, specifically, his *Garden of Earthly Delights* with its mixture of beauty and cruelty. Todd has adapted it to our needs quite magnificently, and it is a great playground for all our different worlds.



What is this forest like?

It is a place of beauty, of conflict, of strange and magical happenings. At the start of our time in the forest, Titania and Oberon are almost in a civil war over the possession of a 'changeling child.' The unease and discord is being felt in the mortal world—as Titania reminds us in that prescient speech about climate—and infects all that happens in our play. The young lovers, fleeing a repressive law, find themselves at the mercy of the spirit world. Through their ordeal of that night, they find a new maturity and a different understanding of each other. In other words, they grow up!

Titania wants peace, harmony with the mortal world—and to be serenaded by her devoted fairies.

How do you envision the king and queen of the Fairies who inhabit this forest?

Oberon and Titania are deeply in love, but we find them in a crisis in their relationship—not only because of the child but also with jealousy over sexual affairs. While they are spirits, their language and their attitude is very human in its emotional and sexual references. This is a night forest and a place of the imagination where, as Theseus puts it, 'how easy is a bush supposed a bear.' It is also filled with Puck, the goblin whose merry wanderings 'fright the maidens of the villagery,' and with the torment created by a fairy world out of order. Oberon is a mixture of tyrant and lover, equally powerful in both roles. Titania wants peace, harmony with the mortal world—and to be serenaded by her devoted fairies. Oberon's cruel trick leads to humiliation and distress for her. The task for the production is to reconcile their differences without letting Oberon completely off the hook for his bad behavior.

Can you talk about your decision to double the roles of Oberon and Titania with the actors who also play Theseus and Hippolyta?

Peter Brook was the first director to double these roles in his 1970 Royal Shakespeare Company production. By and large, it has been done ever since. There's clearly a link between the characters. It definitely makes sense from a *practical* point of view, and that may well have been Brook's intention. ►►



Psychologically it makes sense, too, but I don't think one should draw too many parallels because of the differences.

And the Mechanicals—what role do they play in this story, imagined out of whole cloth by Shakespeare?

For those of us who believe that theater is an important part of any community, this group has a very special place in our hearts. The Mechanicals aren't clowns. It is essential that they are not patronized, that we accept that these are real people trying to do their dead-level best. They're not from some distant 'Ancient Athens'; they're from *here*. They're like any community theater group trying to put together a production: they've got to find their own props and their own bits-and-pieces of costumes. And their performance has to

The Mechanicals aren't clowns. It is essential that they are not patronized, that we accept that these are real people trying to do their dead-level best.

feel like it's been put together in a hurry. Their competence as actors is certainly in question when they come to performing the "palpable gross" play for the Duke and Duchess. It is fascinating also to watch the group dynamics of this motley crew shift as personalities clash and tensions rise. Bottom is a wonderfully complex character; each of the amateur actors has a distinct personality that we are exploring in some detail.

What is it about your work that's so in sync with this particular script, making it a signature of your career?

I have always loved the play. I saw that famous Peter Brook production and it opened my eyes to the many possibilities of producing Shakespeare for a contemporary audience. As Ben Jonson said, he was 'not of an age, but for all time.' It is important that every new audience can see their own lives, emotions, and dreams in the work of this great genius. Through its powerful language, poetry, and hilarious action, every new production should speak of a world that is both exotic and familiar. That is our aim in this production and why I have come back to it so often. ■

previous page: Joe Dowling and the company of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in rehearsal;
above: the company of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in rehearsal. photos by Liz Lauren

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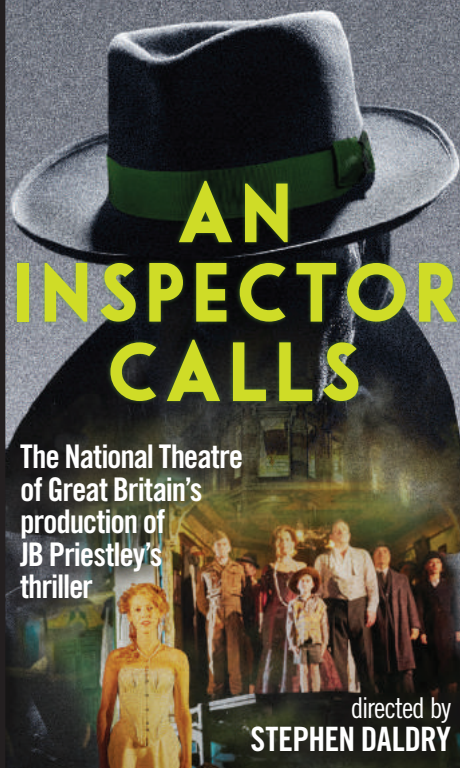


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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

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Costume Design
FABIO TOBLINI

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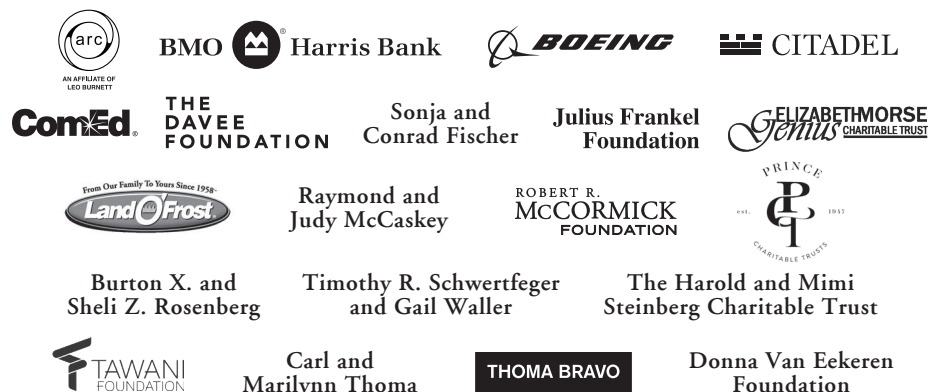
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Cast

Theseus, *Duke of Athens*
Oberon, *King of the Fairies*

Hippolyta, *Queen of the Amazons*
Titania, *Queen of the Fairies*

Philostrate
Puck

Egeus
Snug the Joiner

Hermia

Lysander

Demetrius

Helena

Peter Quince

Nick Bottom

Francis Flute

Robin Starveling

Tom Snout

First Fairy

Peaseblossom

Moth

Mustardseed

Cobweb

Ensemble

EDWARD O'BLENIS*

ALEXANDRA SILBER*

SAM KEBEDE*

WILLIAM DICK*

MELISA SOLEDAD PEREYRA*

TYRONE PHILLIPS

ERIC SCHABLA

CRISTINA PANFILIO*

JOE DEMPSEY*

T.R. KNIGHT*

ALEC SILVER

SARA SEVIGNY*

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ADRIENNE STORRS*

MICHAEL FERRARO

LUKE HALPERN

ANDREW MACNAUGHTON

MICHAEL RAWLS

ETHAN DEPPE
JARAIS MUSGROVE†

KJ SHELDON†
LAUREN SMITH†

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance: Daniel C. Brown for *Puck/Philostrate*; Kyle Bullock for *Lysander*; Jonathan Butler-Duplessis* for *Nick Bottom*; Sophie Dushko for *Helena, First Fairy*; Kayla Forde for *Hermia*; Madison Kauffman for *Titania/Hippolyta, Robin Starveling*; Chris Logan for *Cobweb, Peaseblossom*; Andrew MacNaughton for *Flute*; Yasir Muhammad† for *Ensemble*; Vance Okraszewski for *Ensemble*; David Sajewich* for *Theseus/Oberon, Demetrius*; Jason Shipman for *Egeus/Snug the Joiner, Peter Quince, Tom Snout*; Scott Simon for *Ensemble*; and Kaleb Van Rijswijk for *Mustardseed, Moth*.

Production Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager
(through December 23)

Assistant Stage Manager
(beginning December 26)

DEBORAH ACKER*

ELISE HAUSKEN*

HANNAH WICHMANN*

*denotes member of Actors' Equity Association.

†Chicago Shakespeare Theater gratefully acknowledges Carin Silkaitis and the North Central College, Sean Kelley and the faculty at Roosevelt University, and the faculty at Moraine Valley Community College for their participation in this production's intern program.

Playgoer's Guide

THE STORY

In four days, Theseus, Duke of Athens, plans to marry Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons—the warrior whom he has conquered in battle. As he anticipates his wedding, a high-ranking member of the Duke's court approaches Theseus on a family matter: Egeus's daughter Hermia refuses to marry Demetrius—her father's choice. Hermia professes her love for Lysander, and the Duke in reply gives her three choices: to marry Demetrius, become a nun, or die. She chooses instead her own path: to flee from the Athenian law with Lysander. Demetrius, tipped off by his former girlfriend Helena (who also happens to be Hermia's best friend), follows in hot pursuit. And where Demetrius goes, so goes the heartsick Helena.

All four head into the woods—right where the fairy king and queen are embroiled in relationship problems of their own. Enraged by Titania's devotion to a young human boy, Oberon commands Puck, his fairy servant, to retrieve the flower that will enchant his queen into falling madly in love with the first creature she encounters—whatever that may be. Seeing Helena in pursuit of Demetrius, Oberon takes pity on her and orders Puck to apply the flower's potent juice to the young man's eyes, too. But from Puck's vantage point, one Athenian looks pretty much the same as any other—and soon it will be Lysander, not Demetrius, who falls head over heels for Helena. And so it goes that the archrivals for Hermia's affections become archrivals for Helena instead.

That same night, a troupe of amateur actors heads into the woods—Athenian workers rehearsing a play that they hope to present on Theseus's wedding day. Among this motley crew, it takes Puck no time to target Nick Bottom as the perfect love match for the fairy queen, who will soon awake to dote upon this mortal—transformed, by Puck, into an ass. Love all around seems destined for disaster—until Oberon (and Theseus) step back in to set things aright.

ITS ORIGINS

Shakespeare almost never created his plots from whole cloth; instead, he typically borrowed from one or two primary sources: published histories, other plays, stories, or legend. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a notable exception. Here, Shakespeare wove material from a wide variety of sources—legend and folklore, mythology, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—creating an original story completely of his own imagining. The characters of Theseus, from Greek mythology and Chaucer, along with Puck, the legendary sprite Robin Goodfellow from English folklore, would have been well known to Shakespeare's audiences; and Shakespeare's lovers were

inspired from the pastoral tradition, a popular genre characterized by an escape from the confines of society in favor of a life surrounded by nature. Scholars believe that Bottom and his crew are entirely original, inspired by the actors of the playwright's own company, including the beloved clown Will Kempe. The play was entered on the Stationers' Register on October 8, 1600, and first published that same year.

IN PERFORMANCE

There is no extant record of the first performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Based on the nature of its language and the play's style, in addition to some topical references in the script, this early comedy is usually dated between 1595 and 1596—approximately the same time that Shakespeare was writing *Romeo and Juliet*. For nearly 300 years, the play remained popular, though barely recognizable, as a romantic pastoral play, abridged and radically adapted both for the stage and in an array of music, opera, and fairy ballets. In 1914 British director Harley Granville Barker stunned critics and audiences by presenting the *Dream* with Shakespeare's script restored. Perhaps the most influential twentieth-century production came in 1970 when Peter Brook directed the play with the Royal Shakespeare Company, with its minimalist, brilliantly lit, white box set, and a cast of circus performer actors, flying from trapezes and balancing along the top edges of the walls. Joe Dowling's production marks Chicago Shakespeare Theater's fourth full-length production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the Theater's Inaugural Season on Navy Pier, Dowling first directed the play in CST's Courtyard Theater in 2000. A 2008 CST WorldStage production, led by the English director Tim Supple, was performed in eight different languages—half in English and half in the South Asian languages native to the performers. In 2012 Gary Griffin staged the Theater's third full-length production, after also directing the company's first abridged version of the play; since then, myriad abridged productions have followed for school and family audiences, as well as for Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks—including last summer's production, directed by Barbara Gaines. ■

Profiles



JONATHAN BUTLER-DUPLESSIS (*Tom Snout*)
CHICAGO

SHAKESPEARE: *Peter Pan - A Musical Adventure*. **CHICAGO:** *Man of La Mancha, Sister Act* (Marriott Theatre);

Parade (Jeff Award - Actor in a Supporting Role, Writers Theatre); *The Little Mermaid, In the Heights, The Who's Tommy* (Paramount Theatre); *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Drury Lane Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Big River* (Theatre at the Center); *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It* (Riverside Theatre); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Actors Theatre of Louisville); *Dreamgirls, The Color Purple* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *From My Hometown* (Molloy Theatre) **TELEVISION:** *Empire* (Fox); *Chicago Med* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** BFA in acting, University of Illinois.



JOE DEMPSEY (*Peter Quince*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: *Short Shakespeare! The Taming of the Shrew*. **CHICAGO:** *20,000 Leagues Under the Seas* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The*

Rembrandt (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Ah, Wilderness!* (Goodman Theatre); productions with Northlight Theatre, Court Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Theater Wit, Victory Gardens Theater, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company. **REGIONAL:** *Faceless* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); productions with Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Baltimore Center Stage, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, City Theatre Company (Pittsburgh). Mr. Dempsey is an artistic affiliate with American Blues Theater, and a former member of The Second City National Touring Company and the Neo-Futurists.



ETHAN DEPPE (*Ensemble*)
CHICAGO
SHAKESPEARE: *Peter Pan - A Musical Adventure, Madagascar, The Tempest, The Little Mermaid, Sense and Sensibility, Pericles, Seussical, Shrek the*

Musical, Sunday in the Park with George, Murder for Two, Follies, The Adventures of

Pinocchio; Short Shakespeare! productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, The Taming of the Shrew, Macbeth*.

CHICAGO: *Million Dollar Quartet* (Chicago, first National Tour); *Legally Blonde, Cabaret, Mamma Mia!, Les Miserables, The Who's Tommy, Mary Poppins, In the Heights* (Paramount Theatre); *South Pacific, 42nd Street, West Side Story, Altar Boyz* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Trevor* (Writers Theatre); *Titanic* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, The Christmas Schooner, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Theatre at the Center).

REGIONAL: *The Good War* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre); *Naperville* (Slant Theatre Project); *Mamma Mia!* (5th Avenue Theatre); *Henry IV, Richard III, Hamlet* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival).



WILLIAM DICK (*Egeus/ Snug the Joiner*)
CHICAGO

SHAKESPEARE: *The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cyrano de Bergerac, Henry VIII, The Madness of George III, Macbeth, The*

Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, The Two Noble Kinsmen, A Flea in Her Ear, The Merchant of Venice, among many others.

CHICAGO: *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Blind Date, Moonlight and Magnolias, House and Garden, The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* (Goodman Theatre); *The Book of Will, The Odd Couple* (Northlight Theatre); *The Pitmen Painters* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *We All Went Down to Amsterdam* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** Asolo Repertory Theatre, Michigan Public Theatre, Studio Arena Theater, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire, Crisis* (NBC); *Empire, Mob Doctor* (Fox); *Leverage* (TNT). **FILM:** *The Company, Ice Harvest, Stranger Than Fiction, The Break Up, The Promotion, The Merry Gentleman, Fred Claus, Oz the Great and Powerful*.



MICHAEL FERRARO (*Peaseblossom*)
CHICAGO

SHAKESPEARE: *The Little Mermaid*. **CHICAGO:** *Rock of Ages* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Mamma Mia!* (Paramount Theatre);

Revisits: Little Me, Dreamgirls (Porchlight

Music Theatre); *Ghost* (Theatre at the Center); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre); *Cymbeline* (First Folio Theater). **REGIONAL:** *It Shoulda Been You, The Fantasticks, My Fair Lady* (Actors Theatre of Indiana); *The Little Theatre on the Square*. **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre, Ball State University.



LUKE HALPERN (*Moth*)
CHICAGO

SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **CHICAGO:** *A Chorus Line* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre); *Fucking Men* (Pride Films and Plays); *Songs for a New World*

(Dominican University Performing Arts Center); *Liberators: An American Musical* (Chicago Musical Theatre Festival). **TOURING:** *A Very Electric Christmas* (Lightwire Theater). **REGIONAL:** Le Petit Theatre, Summer Lyric Theatre, Jefferson Performing Arts Society. **FILM:** *Love Type D*. **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre, Tulane University.



SAM KEBEDE (*Philostrate/Puck*) **CHICAGO**

SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **OFF BROADWAY:** The Public Theater, Ars Nova. **REGIONAL:** IRT Theater, Adirondack Theater Festival, B Street Theatre,

Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Schaefer Theater, Reynolds Industries Theater. **FILM:** *Bright Lights* (feature), *First Day* (short film). **TELEVISION:** *Blacktots* (webseries); *Surina & Mel* (pilot). **EDUCATION:** MFA in acting, University of Connecticut; BS in neuroscience and BA in theater studies, Duke University.



T.R. KNIGHT (*Nick Bottom*) **CHICAGO**

SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **BROADWAY:** *It's Only a Play, A Life in the Theatre, Tartuffe, Noises Off*. **OFF BROADWAY:** *Pocahontas* (Playwrights

Horizons); *Romeo & Juliet* (Classic Stage Company); *Scattergood* (Drama Desk nomination, MCC Theater); *Boy* (Primary Stages). **REGIONAL:** *Parade* (Mark Taper Forum); *Amadeus, Ah, Wilderness!, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Racing Demon, Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (Guthrie Theater).

FILM: *42*. **TELEVISION:** *Genius: Picasso, Genius: Einstein* (National Geographic); *The Catch* (ABC); *11.22.63* (Hulu); *Grey's Anatomy* (Emmy nomination, ABC).



ANDREW MACNAUGHTON (*Mustardseed*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut.

CHICAGO: *Sweeney Todd* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre).

INTERNATIONAL: *Into the Woods* (Edinburgh

Fringe Festival/The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). **REGIONAL:** *Grand Hotel, Damn Yankees, Chess, Canadian Music Theatre Project* (Theatre Sheridan); *We Are Canadian, Bremen Rock City* (The Charlottetown Festival); *Back in 59* (Haliburton Highlands Festival).

EDUCATION: MA in musical theatre performance, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; BA in musical theatre performance, Sheridan College. Mr. MacNaughton has also performed in The Four C Notes, a cover band of The Four Seasons.



EDWARD O'BLENIS (*Theseus/Oberon*)
CHICAGO

SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **OFF BROADWAY:** *Uncle Romeo Vanya Juliet* (Bedlam); *Coriolanus* (Red Bull Theater); *Uncle*

Vanya (Target Margin Theater); *Tall Grass* (Clurman Theatre). **OFF-OFF-BROADWAY:** *Big Trouble in Little Hazard, Say You Love Satan* (The New York International Fringe Festival); *Spring Awakening, Einstein's Dreams, Hamlet, Home Affairs, Planet Heart*. **REGIONAL:** Westport Country Playhouse, Triad Stage, Contemporary American Theater Festival, Cape Fear Regional Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Delaware Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre, Nebraska Shakespeare Festival, Hamptons Shakespeare Festival, Crossroads Theatre Company, People's Light, Gulfshore Playhouse, Passage Theatre Company, Premiere Stages at Kean University, Intiman Theatre, New Century Theatre, Actors' Shakespeare Project, Hangar Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre. **TV:** *Law & Order SVU* (NBC); *Bill Nye the Science Guy*. **FILM:** *Shirley, Eden, Proud, On the Outs*. **AWARDS:** Fox Fellow Recipient.

EDUCATION: MFA, Yale School of Drama; BFA, Cornish College of Arts. Mr. O'Brien is a member of New Jersey Repertory Theater and Actors Center Workshop. www.edwardoblenis.com



CRISTINA PANFILIO
(Helena) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: *Pericles*, *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*. **CHICAGO:** Tom Jones (Northlight Theatre); *The*

Explorers Club (Windy City Playhouse). **REGIONAL:** *Our Country's Good*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *Born Yesterday*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Pericles*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Seascape*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *An Ideal Husband*, *King Lear*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, *Travesties*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Alcestis*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Truitt and Cressida*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (American Players Theatre); *The Foreigner*, *Mirandolina*, *Seascape*, *Laughing Stock* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *Fallen Angels*, *Hound of the Baskervilles* (Indiana Repertory Theatre); *The Merchant of Venice* (Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival); *I and You*, *The Other Place* (Next Act Theatre); *Educating Rita*, *Memory House* (Renaissance Theaterworks); *Riverside Theatre in the Park*. **TOURING:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Utah Shakespeare Festival). **EDUCATION:** BFA in acting, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



MELISA SOLEDAD PEREYRA
(Hermia) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **CHICAGO:** *BLOOD WEDDING* (Lookingglass Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** *Lines*

(director/writer, Theatre Lila); *Fade* (Dallas Theater Center); *Boeing-Boeing* (Indiana Repertory Theatre); *Cassius in Julius Caesar* (Sacramento Theatre Company); *A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *Lavinia in Titus Andronicus*, *Scapin*, *The Tempest*, *King John*, *Juliet in Romeo and Juliet*, *Moth in Love's Labour's Lost* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Juliet in Romeo and*

Juliet, *Alcestis*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Game of Love and Chance*, *King Lear*, *Eurydice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Maids*, *Catherine in A View from the Bridge*, *Rosalind in As You Like It*, *Isabella in Measure for Measure* (American Players Theatre). **EDUCATION/TRAINING:** MFA in classical acting, Illinois State University; BFA, Utah State University; Royal Shakespeare Company; Shakespeare's Globe. Ms. Pereyra is a Core Company actor at American Players Theatre.



TYRONE PHILLIPS
(Lysander) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Shakespeare in the Parks production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Red Velvet*, *King Charles III*. **CHICAGO:**

An Octoroon, *A Doll's House*, *Genesis*, *The Brothers' Size* (Definition Theatre Company); *George Orwell's 1984* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Stick Fly* (Windy City Playhouse); *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning* (Prologue Theatre Company at the Steppenwolf Garage). **REGIONAL:** *Assassins*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Mountaintop* (understudy), *Clybourne Park* (understudy, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre). **FILM:** *Gimmick*, *Boss*, *Divergent*, *Fare Thee Well*. **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Justice*, DiGiorno's "Don't Settle" commercial. **EDUCATION/TRAINING:** BFA in acting, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Shakespeare's Globe; emerging professionals resident, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. Mr. Phillips is the founding artistic director of Definition Theatre Company and former artistic assistant at Writers Theatre. He was named one of *Chicago Tribune's* "Hot New Faces of 2015."



MICHAEL RAWLS
(Cobweb) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: *Madagascar*. **CHICAGO:** *Man of La Mancha* (MadKap Productions); *Yellowman* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre); *Rudolph*

the Red-Hosed Reindeer (Hell in a Handbag Productions); *The Wiz* (Kokandy Productions). **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre performance, Columbia College Chicago.



ERIC SCHABLA
(Demetrius) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*. **REGIONAL:** *As You Like It*, *Born Yesterday*, *Measure for Measure*, *Death of a*

Salesman, *The Comedy of Errors*, *King Lear*, *Knives in Hens* (reading) (American Players Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Tavern* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Earthquakes in London* (Guthrie Theater); productions with Children's Theater of Madison, Back Room Shakespeare Project, Kansas Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Shakespeare, In Tandem Theatre, First Stage, among others.

EDUCATION: BFA Actor Training Program, University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater.



SARA SEVIGNY (Robin Starveling) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **CHICAGO:** *My Fair Lady* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Mamma Mia!* (Paramount Theatre); *I Love Lucy Live*

Onstage (Broadway Playhouse); *Assassins* (Jeff Award—Actress in Supporting Role, Porchlight Music Theatre); *Goodnight Moon*, *Houdini Box* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Fiorello* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *Threepenny Opera* (The Hypocrites); *Marathon '33* (Jeff Award—Best Ensemble, Strawdog Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** *Canterbury Summer Theater*. **FILM:** *Rogers Park*, *Cold War*, *Falsely Accused*. **TELEVISION:** *Empire*, *The Gabriels* (FOX); *Southside* (Comedy Central); *Mind Games* (ABC); *Hot Date* (POP TV). **EDUCATION/TRAINING:** MFA in performance, Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University; BA in communications and theater, Curry College Boston; Second City Training Center graduate; American Theater Conservatory Training Congress graduate. Ms. Sevigny teaches on-camera with Actors Training Center.



ALEXANDRA SILBER
(Hippolyta/Titania) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **BROADWAY/NEW YORK:** *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Master Class*, *Arlington* (Outer Critics Circle

Award nomination); *Hello Again* (Drama League Award); *Song of Norway*, *She Loves Me*. **REGIONAL:** *Camelot* (Shakespeare Theater Company); *My Fair Lady* (The Muny); *Carousel* (Ovation Award nomination, Reprise Theater Company); *Love Story* (Walnut Street Theatre); *Murder on the Orient Express* (McCarter Theater Center). **LONDON:** *Kiss Me, Kate* (BBC Proms at Royal Albert Hall); *Carousel* (TMA Award); *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Woman in White*. **FILM:** *1408*. **TELEVISION:** *Elementary* (CBS), *Mysteries of Laura*; all three renditions of *Law & Order* (NBC).

CONCERTS: *Maria in West Side Story* (Grammy nomination, San Francisco Symphony); *I Am Harvey Milk* (Los Angeles); *Trouble in Tahiti* (Tanglewood); concerts with Symphony Space, Orchestra of St Luke's, Carnegie Hall, Caramoor, Dark Star Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, John Wilson Orchestra for the BBC Proms.

TRAINING: The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Ms. Silber's novel *After Anatevka* and memoir *White Hot Grief Parade* are published by Pegasus Books.



ALEC SILVER (Francis Flute) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Wolf Play*, *End of Message*, *Office Hour* (Victory Gardens Theater IGNITION Festival of New Plays); *Porcelain*

(understudy, Prologue Theatre); *Motherland* (MOZAWA); *[dot]* (Room 916 Collective); *Good Zoo* (Bittersweet Arts Co.); *M. Butterfly*, *The Tempest*, *Hot 'N' Throbbing* (Columbia College Chicago). **REGIONAL:** *Forsythian Dwellers Club* (Minnesota Fringe Festival); *Peter Pan and Wendy* (Burning Coal Theatre Company); *Coriolanus*, *Richard III*, *Hairspray*, *Scapin*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (New England Youth Theatre). **EDUCATION:** BA in theatre, Columbia College Chicago.



ADRIENNE STORRS (*First Fairy/Dance Captain*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: Rico in *Madagascar*. **CHICAGO:** *Cabaret*, *West Side Story* (Paramount Theatre); *Smokey Joe's Cafe*,

Saturday Night Fever (Drury Lane Theatre); *Oklahoma*, *Newsies*, *Anything Goes*, *Cats* (The Marriott Theatre); *A Disappearing Number* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *Helldivers of Daytona* (Royal George Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Chicago* (Welk Resort Theatre); *Elf The Musical* (Theatre Under the Stars). **TOURING:** *Elf The Musical*. **EDUCATION:** BA in theatre, University of Southern California; British American Drama Academy in London.



JOE DOWLING (*Director*)

joined the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in 1967. He co-founded The Young Abbey, Ireland's first theater-in-education group, and three years later he became artistic director of the Peacock Theatre. In 1976 he was appointed artistic director of the Irish Theatre Company, the national touring company. He became the youngest-ever artistic director of the Abbey Theatre in 1978. His tenure is particularly remembered for the encouragement and development of new plays and young playwrights. After leaving the Abbey in 1985, Mr. Dowling became managing and artistic director of the Gaiety Theatre. In 1986 he founded and was the first director of the Gaiety School of Acting. In 1995 he was appointed as artistic director of The Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis. During his twenty years as director of this prestigious American theater, he directed more than 50 productions, including the American premiere of Brian Friel's *The Home Place* in 2007, and his signature production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, presented in 1997, 2008, and 2015. In 2009 Mr. Dowling both directed and starred in Brian Friel's play *Faith Healer*. He holds an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the National University of Ireland, as well as Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, St. Johns University in Collegeville, Minnesota, St. Olaf College in

Northfield, Minnesota, and from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, as well as an Honorary Doctorate of Law from Gonzaga University, Washington. Among his numerous other awards, Mr. Dowling is the recipient of the 2006 Sally Ordway Irvine Award for Vision.

TODD ROSENTHAL (*Scenic Designer*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Edward II*.

CHICAGO: Steppenwolf Theatre Company (over 30 productions), Goodman Theatre (artistic partner). **BROADWAY:** *August: Osage County*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *This Is Our Youth*, *Fish in the Dark*, *Straight White Men*, *Of Mice and Men*. **OFF BROADWAY:** Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, St. Ann's Warehouse, Playwrights Horizons, Atlantic Theater Company.

REGIONAL: Guthrie Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Alley Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, American Repertory Theater, Yale Repertory Theatre. **INTERNATIONAL:** *August: Osage County*, *Downstate* (National Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company); *Nice Fish* (Harold Pinter Theatre); *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Theatre Royal Waterford); *Madama Butterfly* (Irish National Opera). **EDUCATION:** MFA, Yale School of Drama.

AWARDS: Tony Award, Laurence Olivier Award, Helen Hayes Award, Joseph Jefferson Award, Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, Suzi Bass, Ovation, Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration. Mr. Rosenthal is a professor and the design department chair at Northwestern University.

FABIO TOBLINI (*Costume Designer*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: Debut.

BROADWAY: *Romeo and Juliet* (Richard Rodgers Theatre). **OFF BROADWAY:** *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Batboy the Musical*, *The Divine Sister*, *Pip's Island* (Skylight Modern Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Sherlock's Last Case* (Huntington Theatre Company); *Born Yesterday* (American Players Theatre); *Sense and Sensibility* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (The Old Globe); productions with Guthrie Theater, Hartford Stage, Alley Theatre, Resident Ensemble Players, Long Wharf Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Ford's Theatre, Studio Theatre. **OPERA:** Santa Fe Opera,

Wexford Festival Opera (Ireland), Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Nationale Reisopera (Netherlands), Salzburger Landestheater (Australia), Gotham Chamber Opera, Portland Opera. **AWARDS:** Craig Noel Award nomination (2015), Connecticut Critics Circle Award nomination (2015), Connecticut Critics Circle Award (2012, 2016), Irene Sharaff Young Master Award (2008), Lucille Lortel nomination (2001). Mr. Toblini is currently working with choreographer Ib Andersen on a new production of Stravinsky's *The Firebird* at Ballet Arizona. www.fabiobtolini.com

GREG HOFMANN (*Lighting Designer*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Nell Gwynn*, *Peter Pan - A Musical Adventure*, *Schiller's Mary Stuart*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Ride the Cyclone*, *Road Show*; Short Shakespeare! productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*. **CHICAGO:** *Elf The Musical*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Hairspray*, *Oklahoma*, *The Who's Tommy* (Jeff Award), *Mary Poppins*, *Annie*, *42nd Street* (Paramount Theatre); *The Game's Afoot*, *Les Misérables* (Jeff Award nomination), *Oliver!* (Drury Lane Theatre); *A Loss of Roses*, *Vieux Carre* (Raven Theatre); *Sweeney Todd*, *Pal Joey*, *Tick Tick Boom!* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Wonderland* (Chicago Children's Theatre). **OFF BROADWAY:** *Ride the Cyclone* (MCC Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Ride the Cyclone* (A Contemporary Theatre); *Marjorie Prime*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Silent Sky*, *Sons of the Prophet* (Forward Theater Company); *American Girls Revue*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Music Lesson*, *Anne of Green Gables* (Children's Theater of Madison); *Permanent Collection* (Madison Repertory Theatre). **EDUCATION:** MFA, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Mr. Hofmann has also designed over fifty productions for Cedar Fair amusement parks across the country.

JESSE KLUG (*Lighting Designer*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *Madagascar*, *Pericles* (Jeff Award nomination), *Seussical*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Cadre* (CST, South Africa, Edinburgh, Vancouver), *Othello: The Remix* (CST, international tour), *Murder for Two*, *How Can You Run with a Shell on Your Back?*, *The Three Musketeers*. **CHICAGO:** Marriott Theatre, Goodman Theatre,

Broadway in Chicago, Victory Gardens Theater, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Paramount Theatre, Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Northlight Theatre. **OFF BROADWAY:** *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Lucille Lortel Award nomination, Henry Hewes Award nomination); *The Screwtape Letters* (Westside Theatre, national tour); *Romulus* (Guggenheim Museum); *The Hourglass* (New York Musical Festival). **REGIONAL:** Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Old Globe, American Players Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, The Geffen, Asolo Repertory Theater, Shakespeare Theatre Company. **AWARDS:** Jeff Award winner, nineteen-time nominee.

KEITH THOMAS (*Composer/Musical Director*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Love's Labor's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **REGIONAL:** *Julius Caesar* (Helen Hayes Award, Shakespeare Theatre Company); *The Tempest* (The Old Globe); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Three Sisters*, four productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Cherry Orchard* (Guthrie Theater). **INTERNATIONAL:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Stratford Festival, Dublin); *King Lear*, *Mother Courage*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Henry IV Part 1*, *Cymbeline*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *As You Like It*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Little Women*, *Macbeth* (Stratford Festival); *The Donnelllys*, *Innocence Lost* (National Arts Centre of Canada). **FILM/TV:** *King Lear*, *Mordecai Richler—Last of the Wild Jews* (Bravo, CBC).

CHRISTOPHER M. LAPORTE (*Sound Designer*)

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Peter Pan - A Musical Adventure*, *Macbeth*, *Madagascar*, *Sense and Sensibility* (associate sound designer), *Shakespeare in Love* (associate designer). **CHICAGO:** *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *Hard Times*, *Life Sucks*, *Treasure Island* (associate, Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Parade*, *Trevor* (associate designer, Writers Theatre); *Indecent*, *Fun Home* (associate designer, Victory Gardens Theatre); *Radio Golf*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *The Belle of Amherst* (Court Theatre); *You for Me for You* (Sideshow

Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** *Indecent* (Arena Stage); *Vietgone, Lookingglass Alice* (associate designer, Denver Theatre Center); *Twisted Melodies* (Center Stage Baltimore); *Sense and Sensibility* (associate sound designer, Old Globe Theatre).

RICHARD JARVIE (*Wig & Make-up Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Nell Gwynn, Peter Pan – A Musical Adventure, Macbeth, Mary Stuart, Red Velvet, The Taming of the Shrew, Madagascar, Shakespeare in Love, Love's Labor's Lost, King Charles III*; Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*; Short Shakespeare! productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the inaugural season of Chicago Shakespeare on Navy Pier. **CHICAGO:** Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Drury Lane Theatre Oakbrook; twenty-eight years with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, eleven as the wig master and make-up designer. **REGIONAL:** Alliance Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Guthrie Theater (wig master). **OPERA:** Atlanta Opera, San Francisco Opera, Hawaii Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Saint Louis Opera; the Spoleto Festivals of Charleston, South Carolina, and Italy. **INTERNATIONAL:** Tom Patterson Theatre in Stratford, Ontario.

JOE CHVALA (*Choreographer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut **REGIONAL:** Guthrie Theater, Ordway Music Theater, Walker Art Center, Minnesota Opera, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, Alpine Theatre Project, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Park Square Theatre, History Theatre, Jacob's Pillow, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater, Theater Mu. **DANCE:** twenty-seven years as Flying Foot Forum founder and artistic director; over thirty new works; national and international touring. **FILM:** *Smitten, Split Rock Shuffle*. **TELEVISION:** TPT's *MNOriginal*. **AWARDS:** Ivey and Sage awards. **FELLOWSHIPS:** National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, Jerome Foundation.

KEVIN GUDAHL (*Verse Coach*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *The Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Tug of War: Civil Strife, Julius Caesar, A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It, Timon of Athens, Macbeth, King Lear, Henry VIII, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2, Troilus and Cressida, The Comedy of Errors*. **CHICAGO ACTING:** Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Writers Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Drury Lane Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater. **INTERNATIONAL ACTING:** five seasons with Stratford Festival; Canadian Stage; Donmar Warehouse; Royal Shakespeare Company (Chicago Shakespeare tour). **FILM ACTING:** *While You Were Sleeping, Home Alone III, The Poker House*. **TELEVISION ACTING:** *Chicago Fire, Crisis* (NBC); *Boss* (Starz); *Empire, The Chicago Code* (FOX); *Early Edition* (CBS). Mr. Gudahl is a multiple Jeff Award recipient.

DEBORAH ACKER (*Production Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Twenty-nine seasons. **CHICAGO:** *Puddin' 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); *A... My Name is Alice* (Ivanhoe Theatre). Ms. Acker has production managed extensively throughout Chicago, and has also provided lighting designs for: the Apollo Theatre, Candlelight Dinner Playhouse, Chicago Shakespeare's Team Shakespeare, the Museum of Science and Industry, *Some Like It Cole* (tour), *Pump Boys and Dinettes* in Branson, Missouri.

ELISE HAUSKEN (*Assistant Stage Manager, through December 23*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Schiller's Mary Stuart, Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream, CPS Shakespeare! The Taming of the Shrew*. **CHICAGO:** *The Minutes, Linda Vista* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Crazy for You* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Arcadia, Isaac's Eye, Days Like Today, Hedda Gabler, The Old Man and the Old Moon, The Liar, Sweet Charity, Hamlet, A Little Night Music, Hesperia* (Writers Theatre); *The Apple Family Plays* (TimeLine Theatre Company). **EDUCATION:** BA in theatre and English literature, Northwestern University. During the summer, Ms. Hausken is the production manager at Ravinia Festival.

HANNAH WICHMANN (*Assistant Stage Manager, beginning December 26*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Nell Gwynn, The Little Mermaid*. **REGIONAL:** Paramount Theatre, Mercury Theater, 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, White Heron Theatre Company, Anchorage Ballet, PCPA Theatrefest. **EDUCATION:** MFA in stage management, University of California San Diego.

BOB MASON (*Artistic Associate/Casting Director*) is in his nineteenth 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; *Ride the Cyclone* (CST, MCC, Fifth Avenue/ACT), directed by Rachel Rockwell; *Rose Rage: Henry VI, Parts 1, 2, and 3*, directed by Edward Hall; and *The Molière Comedies*, directed by Brian Bedford. He directed and co-created *Shakespeare Tonight!* with Beckie Menzie, as part of Shakespeare 400 Chicago. 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.

PATRICIA MCCORKLE, CSA, KATJA ZAROLINSKI, CSA- MCCORKLE CASTING, LTD. (*New York Casting*) **BROADWAY:** 55 productions, including: *Amazing Grace, On the Town, End of the Rainbow, The Lieutenant of Inishmore, The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Amadeus, She Loves Me, Blood Brothers, A Few Good Men*. **OFF BROADWAY:** over 60 original productions, most recently: *Clever Little Lies, Dr. Ruth, Stalking the Bogeyman, Freud's Last Session, Tribes, Our Town, Almost Maine, Driving Miss Daisy*. Over fifty theaters across the country have been, or are currently being, cast by Ms. McCorkle (and company), including Guthrie Theater (sixteen seasons), George Street Theatre (fourteen seasons), Baltimore Center Stage, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Barrington Stage Company.

FILM: over 60 feature films, including: *Senior Moment, Year by the Sea, Child of Grace, Premium Rush, Ghost Town, Secret Window, Tony and Tina's Wedding, The Thomas Crown Affair, The 13th Warrior, Madeline, Die Hard III, School Ties*. Recent television and digital media projects McCorkle Casting have accumulated include: the Planned Parenthood web series *Talkin' About*; *Twisted* (ABC Family); *Humans for Sesame Street*; *Californication* (Emmy Award nomination); *Max Bickford, Hack* (CBS); *Strangers with Candy, Barbershop; Chappelle's Show*.

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, 5th Avenue/ACT, upcoming at Alliance Theatre), *Sense and Sensibility* (CST, Old Globe), *Cadre* (co-director) (CST, Johannesburg, Grahamstown, Edinburgh, Vancouver), *Othello: The Remix* (CST, London, Germany, Edinburgh, South Korea, New York), *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, Murder for Two* (CST, New York), 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 former president of the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre.



BARBARA GAINES

(Artistic Director/
Carl and Marilyn
Thoma Chair) founded
Chicago Shakespeare
Theater, where she
has directed nearly
sixty productions of

Shakespeare's plays. Honors include:
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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*). Ms. Gaines has directed at the
Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-
on-Avon, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and
The Old Globe in San Diego. As the
cornerstone production of Shakespeare
400 Chicago, the 2016 international
celebration of Shakespeare's legacy, she
created a world premiere Shakespeare
history cycle, *Tug of War*, including the
rarely staged *Edward III*. Ms. Gaines
received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters
from the University of Birmingham (UK),
the University Club of Chicago's Cultural
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CRISS HENDERSON

(Executive Director)
is the executive director
of Chicago Shakespeare
and has produced
the Theater's past
twenty-nine seasons.
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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. He oversaw the Theater's move to
its home on Navy Pier in 1999 and led the
recent development of The Yard at Chicago
Shakespeare. In 2016 he spearheaded
the citywide, yearlong celebration of
Shakespeare's legacy, *Shakespeare 400
Chicago*. Mr. Henderson has garnered
multiple honors, including: the 2013 Cultural
Innovation Award from the Chicago
Innovation Awards; Arts Administrator of
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the Kennedy Center; recognition in *Crain's
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Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres
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Mr. Henderson has served on the boards
of directors of the League of Chicago
Theatres and Arts Alliance Illinois, and for
many years as president of the Producers'
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Mr. Henderson is director of DePaul
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Stuart Sherman, who contributes this essay, is a professor of English at Fordham University and the author of *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660–1785*.

Spoiler alert: like most romantic comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ends in marriages: of Theseus, Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons; and of the two couples for whom the course of true love has not till now run smooth.

At the wedding feast Duke Theseus, reflecting on the wild night in the woods that has led up to these nuptials, melds madness, love, and art into a radiant reckoning that in many ways sums up the play:

*The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.*

All three figures, Theseus is saying, are governed by imagination. As he goes on to explain, they each in their different ways see things that are not there: the madman dwells inside his hallucinations; the lover beholds in the beloved virtues and beauties that s/he does not actually possess; the poet revels in worlds that s/he has created from scratch—in the artistic power that can give “to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name.”

Here near play's end, Shakespeare makes it easy for us to match up each of Theseus's categories with the passionate, hapless, often adorable characters we've been observing in action for a couple of hours: the quartet of lovers, lost in both the forest and their own roiling emotions, subject to forces beyond their control (parental disapproval, amorous elixirs). The temporarily lunatic Titania, Queen of the Fairies, driven so mad by a drug as to fall in love with Bottom the Weaver, half-ass, half-human, who crazily enough accepts her ardors as though they were his by natural merit. And—strangest match of all—the “poet” Peter Quince, carpenter and amateur playwright, who has come up with a script based on the tragic myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, to be rehearsed by his fellow tradesmen, and performed



(if they're lucky enough to get the gig) at the wedding feast that rounds out Shakespeare's larger play.

It's in the last of these categories—the poet as maker of something out of nothing—that Shakespeare conducts his most intricate maneuvers. The link between lovers and madmen, after all, is long familiar: it's been a staple in love poems and pop songs for centuries. In *Midsummer*, it's forged primarily through supernatural enchantments: in the love-potion wielded by the fairy Puck, eager, airborne, and intermittently inept.

By contrast, Shakespeare presents the endeavors of the “poet”—the labors of Peter Quince and his companions—as anything but magical, as a matter of sweat and fears, of massive perspiration and minimal inspiration. Rehearsing *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the Athenian woods, these would-be players fret endlessly about how to shape their show's impact: how to prevent the women in the audience from being too frightened by the lion; how to make the moonlight convincing; how to help the spectators understand that a spackled human will impersonate a wall. For them, “imagination” is equal parts apprehension (fear of things going wrong) and ingenuity (tactics

Shakespeare presents the endeavors of the ‘poet’—the labors of Peter Quince and his companions—as anything *but* magical, as a matter of sweat and fears

for making things go right). When Puck, their amused but unseen onlooker, dubs them “rude mechanicals,” the phrase makes two points: not only that in ordinary life these men labor with their hands, but also that here and now, before our eyes, they are working out the “machinery” of theater, the moves and mechanisms that make it work, as if drawing up the blueprints for the very first time.

Their naiveté makes them easy to love. We playgoers know the conventions of the playhouse so deeply that we tend to take them for granted. To watch those rules worked out and worked over anew, by baffled mortals intent on doing their theatrical best, is a piquant privilege.

That privilege, Shakespeare goes on to show, can entail delicious obligations of its own. When, at the wedding feast, Hippolyta worries that Quince's amateurs in their ineptitude will embarrass themselves and move their audience to nothing but ►►

ridicule, Theseus suggests to her a gentler, more capacious way of watching plays: "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them." Even the best performers ("this kind") are merely shadows (imperfect images, faint echoes), both of the characters they portray and of the perfection that their own performances might theoretically attain in some ideal world of perfect playacting. Hence, both the best players and the worst need our compassionate, cooperative imaginations to offset the shortfalls intrinsic to human imperfection.

And since, for Shakespeare and his audience, the word "kind" also meant "Nature," life on earth, Theseus's pronouncement echoes wider: the imaginative compassion we bestow on bad actors, we should bestow on muddle-minded humanity as well. Theater provides a micro-model for human empathy. If all the world's a stage, we would do well to look kindly on our fellow-players.

Theater provides a micro-model for human empathy. If all the world's a stage, we would do well to look kindly on our fellow-players.

Theseus speaks the words; Hippolyta lives their truth. As she watches poor Pyramus, poorly performed, lament the death of his beloved, the hitherto cynical Queen of the Amazons finds herself moved not to laughter but to tears: "Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man." Bottom the Weaver, playing Pyramus with a mix of overweening confidence and underwhelming finesse, has snagged the heart of a second queen.

As well he might. When Theseus averred that madmen, lovers, and poets are "of imagination all compact," he means both that all three figures are "entirely composed" of imagination (and of little or nothing else); and that by dint of their condition, they are intrinsically united in a league (a compact) grounded in shared temperament and experience.

By the end of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, too, Shakespeare has managed to increase that league's membership many times over. The fairies, literally made of and by imagination, throughout his play operated as audience, at once involved and aloof: they have treated the befuddled as objects of empathy, and as rich sources of entertainment. And we, watching the fairies monitor the mortals, who in their turn watch Quince's play, occupy the outermost circle of observation and delight.

In effect, the rude mechanicals and Shakespeare, the master craftsman who created them *ex nihilo*, have reacquainted us with the workings of our own imaginations: of how we think and feel when, in watching a play, we collaborate with playwright, players, and all the mighty mechanicals behind the scenes (designers, crew, etc.) to make something spellbinding out of nearly nothing.

In the end, Theseus's ample compact encompasses us too. The best in our kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse if imagination amend them. ■

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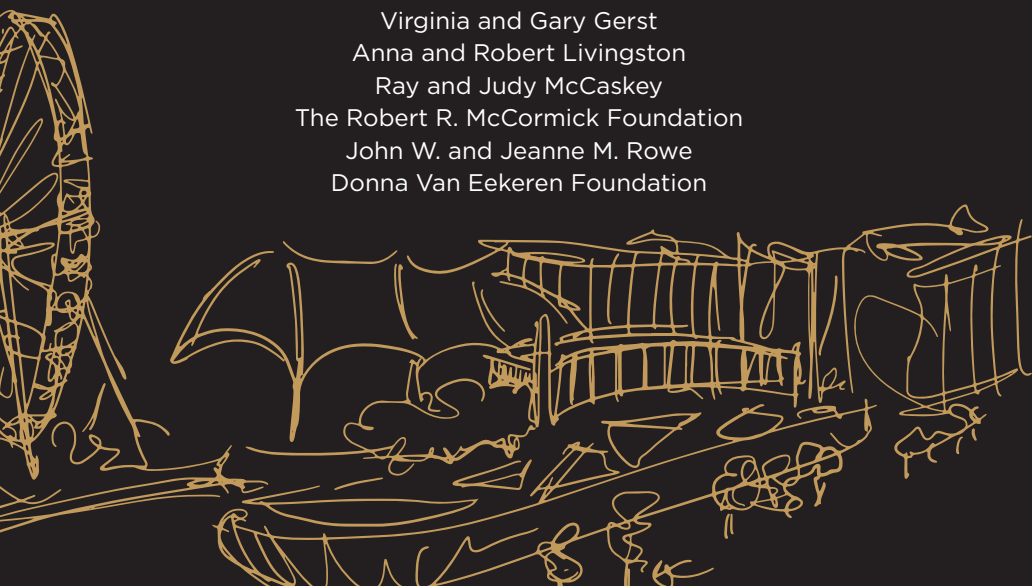
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