

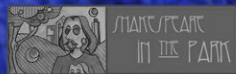


King Lear

By William Shakespeare

July 5-21, 2018

Peck Pavilion at the Marcus Center
for the Performing Arts



FreeShakespeareInThePark.org

Welcome to the largest free, professional, outdoor theatre event in Wisconsin.

2018 marks our 9th season. Around 20,000 people have experienced Milwaukee's own Shakespeare in the Park since we began with *The Tempest* in 2010. The only thing more mind-boggling for us is that next year will be our 10th. Stay tuned for a big celebration. In the meantime,

This program tells a story...

Welcome to the masterful tragedy of *King Lear*. The story is on the stage and in your hands. This program tells the tale of...

What?

Shakespeare's brilliantly crafted poetry and prose tell stories that are timeless. Examples of the less-than-constructive choices and conflict in *King Lear* continue to happen today. On the other hand, the sentence structure is 450 years old, so let us help. Within, you will find a synopsis of the play, the characters, and their relationships.

How?

What process and perspectives drove us from our first conversation about producing *King Lear* to the final performance?

Who?

This is by far the largest story element. Simply scan the lists of names. The visual length alone is staggering. Scan it again and see who pops up. There are a lot of philanthropic organizations, businesses and individuals throwing in to make this happen for everyone. It's amazing and humbling.

You already know **When** and **Where** because you're here.

Why?

Theatre changes lives, but don't take our word for it. The magic of the internet will quote you chapter and verse from exhaustive studies about theatre's power to create positive changes in people. The best articles use words like catharsis and transformative. These are the reasons we do it.

What story will you create next?

What does Shakespeare in the Park mean for you?

What can it do for your fellows?

Today?

Tomorrow?



Optimistically,
Susan Scot Fry
Executive Director and Founder

"Nature" in *King Lear* and in Shakespeare**ML Cogar, Dramaturg, Assistant Director and Producer**

"Thou, Nature, art my Goddess: To thy law my services are bound": So Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester's treacherous second son, confides to us early in *King Lear*. Although the character is a notorious deceiver, here, Edmund speaks a great truth not only about the play, but also about producing and performing Shakespeare. Many of us seek or are bound to what we perceive to be the "natural" way of doing or engaging with Shakespeare, but what *is* nature/natural in Shakespeare? To what degree must that nature be preserved? To what degree *must* that nature be subverted so a 400-year old story will speak to us here and now? Theater companies answer that question in a variety of ways, and the answers reveal much about a company's ethic and vision for artists and audience. The same is true for us here.

The concept of "nature" is a living presence in *King Lear*—the number of references to animals, natural phenomena, and human/societal nature in the play surpasses the number of such references in any of Shakespeare's other works. But in this play, definitions of nature are just as contradictory as those beyond the play. In *Lear*, a key part of the push-and-pull between rival factions is held in conflicting definitions of nature. For *Lear*, Gloucester, Kent, and other figures representing the tale's establishment/older generation, "nature" means "order"—they believe the traditional power structures in their society are, in fact, reflective of nature, the will of the gods, and the relative merits of those who hold power and those who lack it. For many of the characters representing the younger generation, however, "nature" means "impulse"—the passions and vices that drive people to act against or beyond the confines of established order. This push-and-pull about what might seem to be a simple word drives the play's conflict, much as the contradictory forces of tradition and innovation drive contemporary Shakespeare.

In exploring the push-and-pull between definitions of nature in *Lear*, specifically, and Shakespeare production in general, Milwaukee's Free Shakespeare in the Park strives for a "middle-path practice"—not a watered-down compromise, but a powerful hybrid that draws on past wisdom, and opens rehearsals to collaborative artistic exploration and shapes productions to speak directly to the people in our own community right now. As Peter Brook, an acclaimed director of Shakespeare, commented recently, "Plays only exist in the present—that is why we talk about *presenting* a play." To do that job, we prioritize communicating with our audience, much as it seems Shakespeare did.

Negotiating "Nature" in Our Production Process

That explains the ethic of our process. Here's how that ethic worked in practice on *King Lear*. Before rehearsals began, as production dramaturg, I excavated the source texts used by Shakespeare to construct the play, as well as the most "authoritative" texts of the play—in the case of *King Lear*, that means not only the familiar First Folio (1623), but also Quarto 1 (1608) and Quarto 2 (1619). I noted where the texts align, where they conflict, and how those choices affect the nature of each text (for example, the heavily sociopolitical Quarto 1 versus the relationship-centric Folio version). After conversations with our director, the remarkable Lisa Gaye Dixon, I decided to use the Folio as the core text, but to draw some phrasing options and a "cut" scene from Quarto 1 to focus our production on the more human side of the story, as she advised.

Once the "rehearsal cut" of the script was ready, I reviewed core scholarship and prepared a first-rehearsal presentation about the play, its text(s), its context, and its production

history to ground our process in the wisdom of the past. Lisa then led to a 3-day table work session, building on that foundation to connect individual performers to the text as we discussed core questions, found patterns of expression or behavior in characters, and tracked the development of those characters along the arc of the play.

Next, Lisa got the play up on its feet, opening space for actors to explore how the language calls them to move, to reason, and to affect one another in the story. Intensive scene work followed, focused on telling the story more clearly to our audiences, regardless of whether this would be the first or fifteenth time they've seen *King Lear* performed. Through it all, we thought about *you*, the audience: your experiences, your concerns. As you see, a starting focus on the "first-order *nature*" of tradition both bolsters and gives way to the "second-order *nature*" of innovation, derived from active rehearsal and individual actors' discoveries.

What should you expect once the show begins? An original version of an age-old story, with beautiful language, clear storytelling, and compelling characters. What you *won't* see is a copy of someone else's production or an attempt to recreate what it was like to see this play at its first court performance in 1606. We rehearse, we refine, and we renegotiate Shakespeare to tell a story that will speak to you, if you grant the time to listen.

For hundreds of years, this play was considered unperformable, its story far beyond what audiences could bear on an emotional level. Let's find out together how it plays here and now. Milwaukee 2018, meet William Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

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King Lear

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Lisa Gaye Dixon
Co-Directed and Dramaturgy by ML Cogar
Rebekah Heusel * – Production Stage Manager

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

James Pickering* as King Lear

Libby Amato as Cordelia Understudy, Knight 2, Gloucester's search party, Servant

J.T. Backes as the Duke of Burgundy (suitor for Cordelia) and Curan

Bob Balderson as Cornwall's Messenger, Lear's Knight

Ryan Cappleman as the Duke of Cornwall (husband of Regan)

Zachary Dean as Gloucester's Servant, Lear's Soldier

Mohammed ElBsat as the Doctor, France, and Lear's Soldier

Ibraheem Farmer as French Messenger, Lear's Soldier, Herald

Danielle Levings as Knight 1

Bryce Lord as the Earl of Kent (a nobleman loyal to Lear) and as Caius
(the disguise he takes after being banished)

Emmitt Morgans as the Duke of Albany (husband of Goneril)

Tom Reed* as Edgar (Gloucester's elder son) and Poor Tom
(the disguise he takes after fleeing)

David Sapiro as Oswald (Chief Steward for Goneril)

Robert Spenser* as The Fool (Lear's Jester)

Malkia Stampley* as Cordelia (King Lear's youngest daughter)

Jacque Troy as Goneril (King Lear's eldest daughter)

Jonathan Wainwright* as Edmund (Gloucester's illegitimate son)

Samuel White as the Earl of Gloucester (father of Edgar and Edmund)

Kat Wodtke as Regan (King Lear's middle daughter)

THE CREW

Ron Scot Fry.....Artistic Director, Set Designer, Production Manager,
and Fight Director
Christy Seibers..... Costume Designer
Colin Gawronski..... Lighting Designer
David Greenberg.....Sound and Soundscape Designer
Matt Norby & Stephanie Mendoza..... Props
Desiree Stypinski..... Assistant Stage Manager
Rick, Matt, and Debbie..... Our much loved IATSE Stagehands
Linda Freund.....Scenic Charge
Katy Lane & Colin Gawronski.....Set Construction
John Hassig..... Marcus Center Director of Programming
George Batayias..... Marcus Center Technical Director
Michael Warren..... Marcus Center Theatre Manager
Susan Fry..... Executive Director
Christie Manussier.....Communications Director

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers
in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract.

Lies that lead to a maelstrom of madness and the destruction.

Lear, the aging king of Britain, decides to step down from the throne and divide his kingdom evenly among his three daughters. First, however, he puts his daughters through a test, asking each to tell him how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan, Lear's older daughters, give their father flattering answers. But Cordelia, Lear's youngest and favorite daughter, remains silent, saying that she has no words to describe how much she loves her father. Lear flies into a rage and disowns Cordelia. The king of France, who has courted Cordelia, says that he still wants to marry her even without her land, and she accompanies him to France without her father's blessing.

Lear quickly learns that he made a bad decision. Goneril and Regan swiftly begin to undermine the little authority that Lear still holds. Unable to believe that his beloved daughters are betraying him, Lear slowly goes insane. He flees his daughters' houses to wander on a heath during a raging thunderstorm, accompanied by his Fool and by Kent, a loyal nobleman in disguise.

Meanwhile, a nobleman named Gloucester also experiences family problems. His illegitimate son, Edmund, tricks him into believing that his legitimate son, Edgar, is trying to kill him. Fleeing the manhunt that his father has set for him, Edgar disguises himself as a crazy beggar and calls himself "Poor Tom." Like Lear, he heads out onto the heath.

When the loyal Gloucester realizes that Lear's daughters have turned against their father, he decides to help Lear in spite of the danger. Regan and her husband, Cornwall, discover him helping Lear, accuse him of treason, blind him, and turn him out to wander the countryside. Cornwall receives a fatal wound and dies. Gloucester ends up being led by his disguised son, Edgar, toward the city of Dover, where Lear has also been brought.

In Dover, a French army lands as part of an invasion led by Cordelia in an effort to save her father. Edmund becomes romantically entangled with both Regan and Goneril, whose husband, Albany, is increasingly sympathetic to Lear's cause. Goneril, assisted by her toady lackey Oswald, and Edmund conspire to kill Albany.

The despairing Gloucester tries to commit suicide, but Edgar saves him by pulling the strange trick of leading him off an imaginary cliff. Meanwhile, the English troops reach Dover, and the English, led by Edmund, defeat the Cordelia-led French. Lear and Cordelia are captured. In the climactic scene, Edgar duels with and kills Edmund; we learn of the death of Gloucester, the Fool; Goneril poisons Regan out of jealousy over Edmund and then kills herself when her treachery is revealed to Albany; Edmund orders the execution of Cordelia; and Lear enters with Cordelia's body, searching for a last breath from his beloved daughter's body and...

With gratitude to Sparknotes

The Four Houses of the Kingdom of Lear, their colors, and connections

HOUSE OF LEAR – Purple Banner

- **King Lear** – Ultimate ruler who divests his kingdom by half to daughters Goneril and Regan. Disowns his loyal daughter Cordelia when she refuses to fawn and flatter. Quickly realizes that he has gravely mistaken his belief in Regan and Goneril's lies; wanders into a raging storm and goes mad. Is ultimately reunited with Cordelia as they both are imprisoned and condemned to be executed by Edmund.
- **Cordelia** – King Lear's youngest daughter. Disowned then married to the King of France. Returns to save her father from madness and ruin.
- **The Fool** – The conscience of the king. In witty banter, the Fool is the only person to always tell the truth to the king.
- **Earl of Kent** – Loyal follower who is banished for defending Cordelia. Disguises himself as a commoner, Caius, joins the King's retinue and continues to help Lear.
- **Duke of Burgundy** – a suitor for Cordelia who disavows his suit once she's been disowned by Lear.
- **Knights**

HOUSE OF GLOUCESTER – Blue Banner

- **Earl of Gloucester** – Nobleman, loyal to King Lear. Tricked by Edmund into believing that his son Edgar wants to kill him. Flees to help Lear, is captured by Regan and Cornwall...
- **Edgar** – Gloucester's legitimate son and heir. Betrayed by Edmund, he disguises himself as Poor Tom and helps both Lear and his father. Duels with Edmund in the end and...
- **Edmund** – Gloucester's illegitimate son. His plans wreck ruin and devastation. Seduces both sisters and is a catalyst in their suicides. Under the guise of rallying Cornwall and Albany to fight against an invasion by France, he has Gloucester and the Fool executed. Imprisons Lear and Cordelia and condemns them to execution. Duels with Edgar in the end and...
- **Servants**

HOUSE OF ALBANY – Red Banner

- **Goneril** – King Lear's eldest daughter and holder of ½ of the kingdom. She and Edmund plot to overthrow her husband. Her affair with Edmund generates such intense jealousy that she poisons her sister, Regan. Commits suicide.
- **Duke of Albany** – Goneril's cuckold husband. Is wary of her desire for power.
- **Oswald** – Goneril's fawning and clever servant. She entrusts him to stand by her and assist in all her machinations.
- **Herald**

HOUSE OF CORNWALL – Green Banner

- **Regan** – King Lear's middle daughter and holder of ½ of the kingdom. She and her husband relish the misery they cause. She is poisoned to death by her sister Goneril.
- **Duke of Cornwall** – Regan's husband and equally power hungry and debauched.
- **Curan** – Servant of Cornwall horrified by the blinding of Gloucester.
- **Messenger**

Plus...

The Kingdom of FRANCE – Navy and Red Banner

- **King of France** – husband to Cordelia. A true and virtuous gentleman.
- **Cordelia** – Becomes part of the Kingdom of France after she is disowned by her father, King Lear. Returns to England to save her father from madness and ruin. Is imprisoned by Edmund and condemned to be executed.
- **Doctor** – Cares for the ailing Lear and encourages Cordelia to help her father heal.
- **Messenger**

Win Great Prizes! Play the Shakespeare Selfie Contest. Here's how...



To enter, take a picture of yourself at Shakespeare in the Park and post it on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with **#ImAtSitP18**

That's it.
You're automatically entered to win the daily selfie contest.

PS. You do have to have your privacy settings on public, or we won't be able to see that you entered.

PPS. Sorry – no photos that include cast members. Union rules.



Lisa Gaye Dixon - Director

Lisa Gaye Dixon is pleased to make her Milwaukee directing debut for Shakespeare in the Park. In the past, she

has been seen on the stages of The Royal Shakespeare Company and The Globe Theatre in London, Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf in Chicago, as well as Illinois Shakespeare and Milwaukee Shakespeare. She has also been seen regionally at The Kitchen Theatre, The GEVA Center in New York, Lost Nation Theatre in Vermont, The Attic Theatre in Detroit and Performance Network in Ann Arbor. She has performed her own original work *My Case is Altered: Tales of a 21st Century Roaring Girl* in Salem, Oregon, and balance professional work as an actor and director, whilst continuing as a member of the faculty of University of Illinois Department of Theatre at Urbana-Champaign.



ML Cogar - Asst. Director and Dramaturg

ML Cogar (“Anything nerdy. Anything wordy.”) is one of the founding producers

of Shakespeare in the Park. She is the company dramaturg, researching and adapting each script for Shakespeare in the Park and assisting directors. She was thrilled to direct *The Winter’s Tale* (2014) and to co-pilot *Julius Caesar* (2016). ML teaches writing at Alverno College and loves to work side-by-side with writers and actors as they develop and interpret text. ML lovingly thanks Ron, Susan and her life partner of 27 years, Tom Reed, for being the rock-spines of SitP, her glorious children for being the sublime soul behind every thought, and her Milwaukee neighbors for being open to experience, to each other, and to us.

CAST



Libby Amato as Cordelia Understudy, Knight 2, Gloucester’s search party, and Servant

Libby is delighted to return to Optimist

Theatre this summer. She was previously seen in Optimist’s productions of *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. Other recent productions include *Top Girls* (Renaissance Theatreworks); *Constellations* (All In Productions); *Bell, Book & Candle* (Milwaukee Entertainment Group); and *Little Gem* (Milwaukee Irish Arts). She sends her love and thanks to Beth Amato, an extraordinary woman.



J.T. Backes as the Duke of Burgundy and Curan

J.T. is honored to be making his Optimist Theatre debut.

Recently, seen in *Flyin’ West* (Bronzeville Arts

Ensemble); he will be reprising the role of Frank Charles this fall in Chicago. Productions include: *Lovabye Dragon, Big Fish* and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer™: The Musical*. (First Stage). Directing credits include *Nate the Great: The Musical* and *The Girl of the Limberlost* (First Stage Foundry); and *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Soulstice Theater). He has also worked with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and Windfall Theater. JT earned his BFA in Musical Theatre from Viterbo. www.jtbackes.com.



Bob Balderson as Cornwall’s Messenger and Lear’s Knight

Bob is delighted to be returning to Optimist Theatre, having appeared last in *Much*

Ado About Nothing. A 1993 intern at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, he received an MFA in Acting from Binghamton in New York. Credits include *The Visit*, *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Christmas Carol* (MRT), both WI and TX Shakespeare Festivals; Washington, D.C.; Detroit; New York; in Milwaukee with Boulevard Ensemble, Windfall, Sunset Playhouse, Milwaukee Opera Theatre and the Feast of Crispian, an all military veteran company. Upcoming is *Danceworks on Tap* in August.



Ryan Cappleman as the Duke of Cornwall

Ryan is a quadruple threat based in the Milwaukee area, and is now tackling the great William Shakespeare!

As Resident Education Music Director at Skylight Music Theatre, he has performed in *Urinetown*, *The Hot Mikado*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Hair*, choreography for *Urinetown*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Pirates of Penzance* (a Footlights Award-winner), and asst. music dir. for *Annie*. Other credits include First Stage, Northern Sky Theatre, Milwaukee Opera Theatre. Next up: choreography for *Pippin* (UW—Waukesha), piano and narrator in *Billy Bishop Goes to War* (Third Avenue Playhouse), and choreographing *Hairspray* (Skylight). All of my love to husband, Gio.



Zachary Dean as Gloucester's Servant, Lear's Soldier

Zachary is ecstatic to be making his debut with Optimist Theatre! A Milwaukee based actor;

Zachary has worked with Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Theater RED, Boulevard Theatre, Windfall Theatre, Off the Wall Theatre, Sunset Playhouse, and many more. Favorite roles were played in *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, *The*

Adams Family Musical, *Coraline The Musical*, *Anything Goes*, *1776*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Thanks for supporting Milwaukee's Free Shakespeare in the Park and this talented group of artists! www.zacharydean.com



Mohammed N. ElBsat as the doctor, France, and Lear's Soldier

Mohammad is ecstatic to be working again with Optimist Theatre after *Much Ado About Nothing*

last summer. Acting credits include *U/S The Who & The What* (Milwaukee Rep); *Back of the Throat* (Next Act); *By Jeeves*, *The Metromaniacs*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Death Takes A Holiday*, *City of Angels*, *Prin*, *The Petrified Forest*, *Omnium Gatherum* and more (Windfall Theatre); and *Dr. Faustus* (Off the Wall Theatre). Thanks to Optimist Theatre for the opportunity, the cast and crew for their amazing talent, his family and friends for their love and support and Mohammed welcomes his nephew Aadeb to the world.



Ibraheem Farmer as French Messenger, Lear's Soldier, Herald

Ibraheem is making his Optimist Theatre debut and is honored to be a part of the incredible

King Lear cast. He is a 2017-18 season First Stage Academy Teaching Artist Fellow and was last seen as Anthony in *I And You* (Next Act Theatre). Ibraheem is a proud graduate of Grambling State University where some of his credits include: Emmett Till in *The State of Mississippi* and the *Face of Emmett Till*, Leland Cunningham in *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and Bo Decker in *Bus Stop*. Ibraheem credits his continued success to God, hard work, and the love and support of family and friends.



Danielle Levingas as Knight 1

Danielle is delighted to be a part of *King Lear!* She is an Actor/Educator/Director based in Milwaukee with a

Master of Arts in Theater from Kansas State University. She has recently worked with Renaissance Theaterworks, Kohl's Wild Theater, Cooperative Performance and Bard and Bourbon. When not performing, Danielle is a Teaching Artist with First Stage's Education Department and Academy. Many thanks to Lisa and the Optimist team for their brilliant work! For Lota June.



Bryce Lord as the Earl of Kent / Caius

Bryce returns to Optimist Theatre after a break of several years, having last appeared in OT's production of *As You*

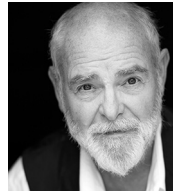
Like It. Credits include *Lettice and Lovage* (Renaissance Theaterworks); *Sunday in the Park with George*, *The Barber of Seville*, *White Christmas*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Anything Goes*, and *Lady, Be Good* (Skylight Music Theater); *The Happy Elf*, *Witness*, and *Honk!* (First Stage Children's Theater); and many shows with Milwaukee Shakespeare, Bialystock and Bloom, Windfall Theatre, and others. He has directed and choreographed numerous productions for Sunset Playhouse, Waukesha Civic Theatre, Boulevard Ensemble and others. By day, he is the Associate Director of the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management at UW—Milwaukee.



Emmitt Morgans as the Duke of Albany

Emmitt has been fortunate to appear in shows with numerous local theatres, such as Skylight Music Theatre,

Renaissance Theatreworks, Florentine Opera, Windfall Theatre, Lake Country Playhouse, Bard & Bourbon, Soulstice Theatre, Phantom Cicada, and he is a company member with Kohl's Wild Theater. Emmitt would like to thank the *King Lear* cast and crew for making it such a great experience, Jocelyn for putting up with him daily, and "The 'Rents" for all of their continuing love and support.



James Pickering* as King Lear

Jim Pickering, a founding member of Optimist Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park, has been acting and directing in

and around Milwaukee for 45 years. Jim is an associate artist with Milwaukee Rep, where he was a member of its Resident Acting Company for 38 of those years. Among his favorite roles there are Candy in *Of Mice and Men*, Richard Harkin in *The Seafarer*, and, of course, Ebenezer Scrooge in fourteen iterations of *A Christmas Carol*. He has had the pleasure of acting at many other local venues, including Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Next Act Theatre, In Tandem Theatre, Alchemist Theatre and Renaissance Theatre Works. He is also a veteran of several seasons at both American Players Theatre and Door Shakespeare. Jim portrayed Prospero in *The Tempest* back in SITP's inaugural season, and his most recent appearance with the company was as Dogberry in last summer's *Much Ado About Nothing*. A former Trustee of the Ten Chimneys Foundation, he is a resident of Bay View with his wife, actress (and certified massage therapist at Still Massage) Tami Workentin, his stepson Edan Ness, and their two dogs, Joxer and Frankie. Jim recently narrated the Emmy Award-winning documentary *The Making of Milwaukee*.



Tom Reed* as Edgar / Poor Tom

Tom Reed is one of the founding members of Free Shakespeare in the Park His appearances include Caliban in *The*

Tempest, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, the title role in *Macbeth*, Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, and Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Tom directed or co-directed *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, and last year's fun and frolicking *Much Ado About Nothing*. In his other lives, Tom is the manager of Team Certified Sports, a professional boxing organization, and the Chair of Creative and Performing Arts at Alverno College. Tom has directed numerous productions at Alverno and in Milwaukee, and has performed on stages locally and nationally. Recently, competing against over 800 entries from around the world, Tom won Best Actor at the 2017 Milwaukee Short Film Festival. He could not have accomplished any of this without the love and support of his wife, the love of his life, fellow founder ML Cogar. Tom thanks fellow founders Ron and Susan Scot Fry for their talent, friendship, support, and loyalty; and a special thanks to Lisa Gaye-Dixon for her guidance and keen director's eye. Peace and Love to all who support Equality, Art, and Humanity.

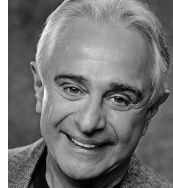


David Sapiro as Oswald and Fight Captain

David Sapiro is thrilled to be making his debut with Optimist Theatre! He has most recently been seen as Bernie in

Sexual Perversity in Chicago (Alchemist Theatre). Other credits include Roland in *Constellations* (All In Productions); Porter Milgrim in *Deathtrap* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); Cliff in *Luna Gale* (Renaissance Theaterworks); and John in *A Life in the Theatre* (Alchemist Theatre). He will next

appear as Burl Sanders in *Sanders Family Christmas* (Acacia Theatre) this November. David is indebted to his family for their love and support, and to God for His grace and mercy.



Robert Spencer* as The Fool

Robert Spencer is delighted to make his Optimist debut in *King Lear*. He appeared on Broadway in *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Enter Laughing*, *Via Galactica* and *Sextet*. Off-Broadway: *The Fantasticks*, *Sing Muse*, *Manhattan Arrangement* and *Goodbye Tomorrow*. Robert has acted and directed at theaters around the country, including 14 seasons at American Players Theatre, playing roles including Shylock, Polonius, Capulet and Feste. He has performed at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber, Next Act, In Tandem, Skylight, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, First Stage, Children's Theatre of Madison, Madison Rep. and Milwaukee Shakespeare, Prospero in *The Tempest*. Mucho love to Michael and Lady B.



Malkia Stampley* as Cordelia

Malkia returns to Optimist after playing Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Actor, singer, voiceover artist

and producer, native of Milwaukee, she received her formal training at Marquette University, Skylight and the Milwaukee Rep. She co-founded Bronzeville Arts Ensemble. Recent productions include: *Doubt* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre); *The Color Purple*, *Dreamgirls*, *A Christmas Carol* (Milwaukee Rep); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Manhattan Shakespeare); *Crowns* (Skylight); *Good People*, *Learning to Stay* (Forward Theater); *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Welcome to Bronzeville*, *Holes*, *A Midnight*

Cry and Rudolph: The Red-Nosed Reindeer (First Stage); *Dreamgirls* (St. Louis Black Repertory); *Black Nativity*, (Congo Square Theatre); *Raisin* (Court Theatre) among many others. Awarded the Woodie King Jr. Award for Best Supporting Actress for f Lorrell in *Dreamgirls*. Malkia twice toured Japan and Taiwan, performing music from *The Lion King* and other Disney classics. Malkia has a recurring role on Showtime's *The Chi* and has been seen on tv's *Empire*, *Chicago PD*, *Shameless* and the upcoming film, *Native Son*.



Jacque Troy as Goneril

Jacque is thrilled to return to Optimist Theatre after appearing in their inaugural production of *The Tempest* as Antonio.

Jacque has appeared in many of Milwaukee's finest theatres. Favorite shows include: *Witness* (First Stage), *The Front Page* (Milwaukee Rep.), *Spinning Into Butter* (Renaissance Theatreworks), *Duet for One* and *Bus Stop* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre). She treasures her work as a theatre educator, where she teaches and performs Shakespeare in Jamaica and Sierra Leone...and Ghana in December. Very special thanks to Tom and ML for including me in my favorite Shakespeare play. And to the endlessly talented and generous Jim Pickering, who calmed a much younger version of myself, who stood frightened in the wings.

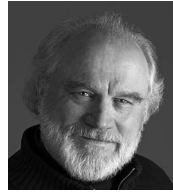


Jonathan Wainwright* as Edmund

Jonathan is very happy to be back with Optimist this summer, after having so much fun playing Don John in last year's

Much Ado About Nothing. He's been seen as Ebenezer Scrooge the last two years in *A Christmas Carol* (The Rep) after four

years in Bob Cratchit's shoes, Austin in *True West* (Third Avenue Playhouse), George in *Of Mice And Men* (Milwaukee Rep), Tim in *The Good Father* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre) -- where he worked opposite his wife Laura Gray, and Caliban and Mercutio with beloved Door Shakespeare. The mission of this wonderful company Optimist Theatre is important and inspiring, and he thanks them for letting him be a part of it, and to you all for supporting it.



Sam D. White as Gloucester

Sam is beyond honored to work with this illustrious cast in his debut with Shakespeare in the Park. He's been an actor,

director and playwright for more than 40 years and is elated to return to Milwaukee. Credits include InTandem, Chamber Theater and Theatre Tesseract. He has worked with almost every company in Madison including Forward Theater, Madison Ballet, Children's Theater of Madison and Madison Rep. His love of Shakespeare kindled during three seasons with WI Shakespeare Festival. He most recently played Sir John Falstaff in the *Henry the Fourth, Part 1* and as both Dukes in *As You Like It* (Madison Shakespeare). Other roles include Prospero in *The Tempest*, and Grave Digger in *Hamlet* (Madison's Strollers). Sam is a founding member of Forward Theater, currently serves on its Advisory Company and is the 2015 Silver Medal winner in the "Local Actor" category of Madison Magazine's "Best of Madison."



Kat Wodtke as Regan

Kat Wodtke is excited to return to Optimist, where she appeared as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Margaret in *Much Ado*

About Nothing. Kat calls Wisconsin home and has had performed with Renaissance

Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, First Stage, and Forward Theater Company, among others. Kat has also performed with Perseverance Theatre and Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre in Alaska. Other favorite Shakespeare roles include Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and Hermia/Starling/Khaytsoo in a multilingual *Midsummer* (performed in Gwich'in, Tlingit, Yup'ik and English). Kat teaches for the Milwaukee Rep, Arts@Large, and the Milwaukee Public Library.

CREW



**Rebekah Heusel* -
Production Stage
Manager**

Rebekah is thrilled to be returning to Optimist Theatre after working on *Much Ado*

About Nothing last summer. Other credits include *Holmes and Watson* and *Always... Patsy Cline* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *The Merchant of Venice* (Compagnia de' Colombari); *Mary Jane and Cymbeline* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *The Little Mermaid, Jr.* (Children's Theatre Company); and *Blessing* (The Yale Institute for Music Theatre). Rebekah earned her BA in Classics and Theatre from Knox College and her MFA from the Yale School of Drama.



**Ron Scot Fry - Artistic
Director, Production
Manager, Set Designer,
Fight Choreographer**

Ron is the Founding Artistic Director for Optimist Theatre,

Producer and founder of Shakespeare in the Park and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*, played Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* and Antigonous in *The Winter's Tale*.

Other recent work includes performing, directing, design, building and puppetry for Bronzeville Arts Ensemble, Children's Theatre of Madison, Alverno College, First Stage, Milwaukee Public Theatre, Theatre Gigante, Milwaukee Mask and Puppet Theatre and others. His one-man show *To Be! Shakespeare Here and Now*, has played for more than 85,000 people around the world, and he wrote and performed the title role in *Bloody, Filthy Shakespeare* at Teatro Goldoni in Florence, Italy. His vast gratitude cannot be contained in words, and includes a very special place for all his fellow Dreamers, especially his wife, Susan. www.ronscotfry.com

**David Greenberg - Sound and
Soundscape Designer**

David is a sound designer/composer from Plantation, Florida by way of Knoxville, Tennessee. He earned his BA in Theatre at the University of Tennessee Knoxville,

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where he worked on numerous Clarence Brown Theatre shows, including Assistant Sound Designer for the world-premiere of *The Open Hand* by Rob Caisley. His other recent works include *Barbecue* (Illinois Theatre), *A Winter's Tale*, *My Fair Lady*, *Henry IV, pt 1*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Arkansas Shakespeare). David is currently earning his MFA in Sound Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Colin Gawronski - Lighting Designer and Production Assistant

Colin is very excited to return to Optimist this year. He is master electrician in the Studio Theater at Skylight, and works extensively with Danceworks. Other credits include Milwaukee Chamber Theater, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, UWM Dance, Next Act, Chamber Theatre, Kohl's Wild Theater, PrideFest, Bard and Bourbon, and the Bronzeville Arts Ensemble. Colin has worked with Sacramento Music Circus, PA Shakespeare and Indiana and Chicago Fringe. Favorite productions include: *Secrets From the Wide Sky*, *Russian Transport*, *Frankie and Johnny*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Mauritius*, *In A Black Mood*, *Groesome Playground Injuries*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Lamps for My Family*. Give Love Always.

Katlyn Rogers Kelly – Stitcher and Wardrobe

Katlyn, a 2017 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran College, spends most of her time in piles of fabric. Credits include *Wayward Women* (TheaterRed); *The Cherry Sisters: Revisited*, *Proof* and *Ring Round the Moon* (WLC), collaborating with Marcee Doherty-Elst to recreate Disney villains and wardrobe for Optimist's *Julius Caesar*. She's so grateful to join the team once again for *King Lear*. Many thanks to Optimist as well as the cast and crew. A mio marito, grazie per il supporto, la pazienza e l'amore.

Estephanie Mendoza - Props Assistant

Estephanie graduated from Alverno college in 2011, where she met Susan and Ron Fry. She has been working with them

for nearly seven years on and off as a props assistant and running. The theater has been a passion of Estephanie's for as long as she can remember; she cannot be more grateful to Ron and Susan Fry for this amazing opportunity. Optimist Theater is like a second family to her. Break a leg!

Matt Norby – Props Designer

Matt has pursued his passion for props with a number of theaters in Milwaukee including Theatre Gigante, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and Milwaukee Youth Theatre. His passion for finding just about anything anyone on stage might need serves him well. Much love and gratitude to the love of my life, Veronica.

Christy Siebers - Costume Designer

Christy returns second time with Shakespeare in the Park. Local costume credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* (Optimist Theatre); *Tigers Be Still* (Alverno); *The Monarch: A Space Adventure* (Kohl's Wild Theatre); *Next to Normal*, *The Wild Party*, *Ordinary Days*, *Dogfight*, and *Little Shop of Horrors* (All In Productions); and *Any Given Monday* (Pink Banana). She has also worked with Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Milwaukee Chamber, Florentine Opera, and currently is the Wardrobe Mistress for the Milwaukee Ballet. Christy holds a BFA in Theatre Design Technology for Costume Design from UW—Stevens Point. Huge thanks to Optimist, friends and family, and John for love and support.

Desiree Stypinski - Asst. Stage Manager

Desiree has been working with Optimist Theater for two seasons. She currently attends Alverno College with a double major in Psychology and the Creative Arts in Practice. She has been involved in theater from a young age, starting as an actor in plays such as *Hamlet*; and has broadened her experience since attending college.

Christie Manussier - Communications Director

Christie's love for Shakespeare lies at the intersection of her passions for language

and for British history. Her first exposure to Shakespeare was a community college summer program for elementary school kids. That inoculated her against being intimidated by Shakespeare. Since 2014, she has performed a wide range of communications and development-related tasks for Shakespeare in the Park and has applied her grammar and writing nerdism into full-time freelance career in marketing, communications and as an all-around dragonslayer. Her deepest thanks go to her husband, Joseph, who is her rock, and to all the people whose effort, expertise and kindness make this production possible.

Susan Scot Fry - Executive Director

As the Executive Director for Optimist Theatre, Susan rarely comes out from behind a spreadsheet. Before Excel, Word and grant applications became a calling, she enjoyed 20 years of dramaturgy and acting in short Shakespeare, including Titania and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* and lots of original children's theatre. In 2008 she took a hiatus from the stage to come up with the idea for Shakespeare in the Park and get it on its feet. Susan came out of the office to be the bear in *A Winter's Tale* and Philostrate in *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream. A native of California who didn't know what a winter coat was when she moved to the Midwest, Susan also has over 24 years of festival and special event producing experience, 29 years of outdoor theatre experience. Free Shakespeare in the Park is her life's work and she owes everything to her brilliant husband, Ron, her puppy, Trystan and her BFF Char. Thank you for helping make dreams come true.

Other Key Crew and Staff Members...

- Katy Lane – Set Construction
- Linda Freund – Scenic Charge
- Genessee Spridco – Boots on the Ground Coordinator
- Our 2018 Milwaukee Public Schools Arts Interns Kaetryn Koneazny, Beatrice Low, Camara Stampley, and Zoe Lucas – Community outreach, Audience relations, Marcus Center KidzDays and other summer programming, administration, set construction, and much more
- And, everyone who has pitched in to pound a hammer, move a set, hand out flyers, etc.

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States, appearing under a Special Appearance Contract.



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Why is it free?

What happens when people come together for a shared experience like theatre? Theatre takes you outside yourself and, at the same time, makes for (sometimes uncomfortable) introspection. It's about conversations in the car on the way home from the play.

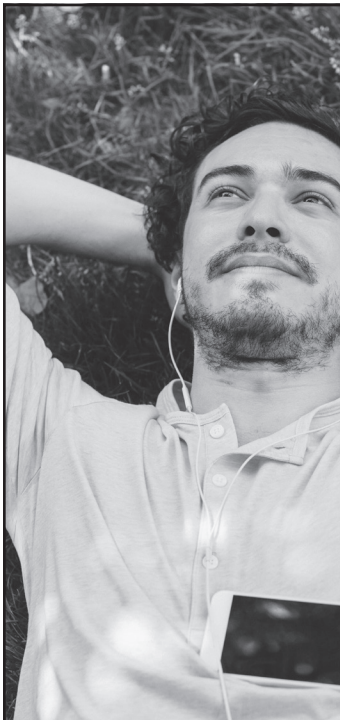
Shakespeare in the Park is free because every human deserves great art and these experiences. In Milwaukee, more than many cities, it's vital to have shared events and theatre is an excellent medium for creating crossroads. Shakespeare in the Park is attended by people from California to New York. On the home-front, in 2017, over 80% of our Milwaukee-based audience came from zip codes where the median income is less than 200% of the poverty level. Yes, we do read those surveys.

Would you have guessed that?

Have you attended before? Then, you made that happen. Did you donate? Then, you made that happen.

We're all in this together. That's why we do this.

Love,
Susan Fry, Ron Fry, Tom Reed , ML Cogar
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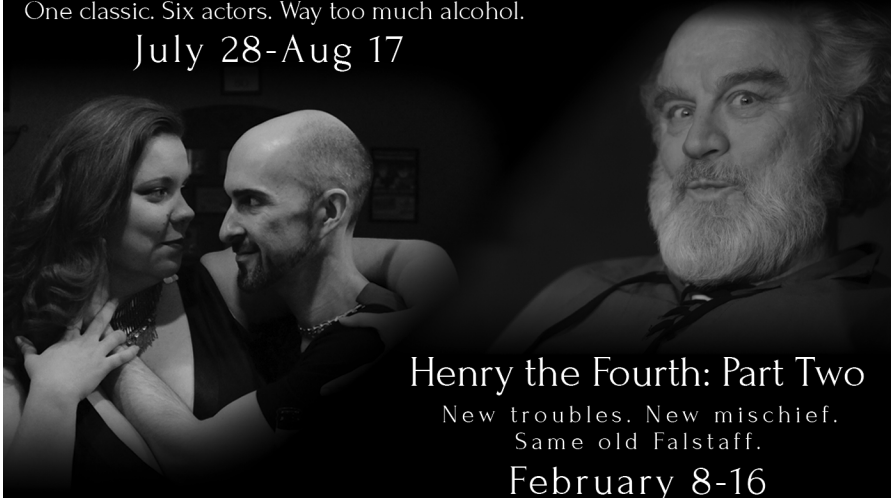
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This year, we add another element to our collaborative labor of love to showcase the skills and talents of two of our fellow theatre companies, Quasimondo Physical Theatre and Madison Shakespeare Company.

Please join us for these original pieces...

King Lear Dumb Show

By Quasimondo Physical Theatre



Quasimondo takes you on a journey through the medium of movement. They bring their exceptional talents and unique perspectives to an exploration of King Lear.

On the KidzStage near the riverfront on:

Friday, July 6th Saturday, July 7th
Friday, July 13th Saturday, July 14th
Friday, July 20th Saturday, July 21st

All performances are at 7:10 pm

King Leir, the True Story

By Madison Shakespeare Company



**MADISON
SHAKESPEARE
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Madison Shakespeare Company, in addition to sharing company member Sam White (Gloucester) with the Shakespeare in the Park cast, bring their pop-up playfulness to telling the 'true' story of King Leir – with an i. The

Shakespeare canon may have brought this story into our times, but the original tale significantly departs from his version. Madison Shakespeare kicks it out of the park.

Under the chestnut grove trees on:

Sunday, July 8th at 6:40 pm
Thursday, July 12th at 7:10 pm
Sunday, July 15th at 6:40 pm
Thursday, July 19th at 7:10 pm

Madison Shakespeare Company produces year-round. For a bard-fix, check out Sloshed *Anthony and Cleopatra* coming up in July and then *Henry IV part II* (with "Optimist Theatre's Sam White," ahem) in February 2019.

AKA, Suggestions for getting the most out of your Shakesperience...

1. Be actively and deliberately engaged.

- Shakespeare takes a little warm-up time for the ear. The words will come across more clearly to you after 10 to 15 minutes. You don't need to catch every word.
- Just like listening to a new song, the rhythms help you understand without picking up on all the lyrics.
- An actor's body movement tells you a lot. If character takes up a lot of physical space and another seems still and small, that is a clue to the difference in their personalities.
- Notice vocal sounds. If a character says something you didn't quite pick up, notice how the other character(s) react.
- Does a character's voice, movement, or behavior change? There's a reason. Try to figure it out!
- Shakespeare's characters tend to run in "packs." Figure out which characters go together. Notice how the "packs" change over the course of the play. (See The Four Houses article for clues.)
- You and your fellow audience members are all in this together. Shakespeare takes focus so minimize your cell phone, side conversations, and walking in and out, however...
- Audiences in outdoor theater are encouraged to react aloud to the story! Are you moved? Let's hear it!

2. Every Shakespeare production you ever see is a "cover."

- Notice the choices that artists make without expecting them to mimic other artists or productions. New artists doing a cover don't imitate others, and neither do Shakespeare productions.
- A production under 3 hours has had portions of the script cut. What you see is almost never what you would read, and you aren't likely to see the same version of the script twice. Ever.
- Summaries are good for the overall shape of a story, character names, or relationships, but productions may make choices that differ from a description of the entire play as written.

3. Theater is different from TV and film.

- We're used to film and TV using music to tell us what to *feel*, but in theater, the actors are our best clue.
- Film and TV use close-ups and camera pans to show us where to *look*, but the actors do that onstage.
- We're used to film and TV having absolute control of sound and silence to tell us what to *listen to*, but while the actors will do that to some degree, we must commit to focusing our own attention.
- In theater, nothing stops. There is no rewind.

4. Take it further and try something new.

- Every Shakespeare play begins with Act One Scene One. If you'd like to see how the play you're going to view has been "covered" by other theaters, go to YouTube, type in the title of the play, and then type *act one scene one*. Choose a couple of different clips and be amazed at how the actors, set, costumes, music, lighting, and audience seating environment can alter your experience of roughly the same script!
- After you've watched the scene a couple of times, think about how YOU would cast the roles with actors you know. Who could your favorite actor play? Why would s/he "match" that role? Thinking like a casting director can help you do more than just follow the story.
- Come see our productions more than once! Notice how a different audience and different environmental distractions change not only *your* experience, but also the *actors'* performances.