



For Immediate Release

Chicago Shakespeare Theater Announces 2015/16 Season

Celebrating Shakespeare's 400-year legacy

Barbara Gaines' landmark six-play Shakespeare history cycle, *TUG OF WAR*

Reimagined Classics

THE TEMPEST infused with magic from Teller

David Ives' cheeky romp *THE HEIR APPARENT*

Jonathan Munby directs Dion Johnstone in *OTHELLO*

SHORT SHAKESPEARE! brings *TWELFTH NIGHT* to families and students

World Premiere of The Q Brothers' *MADSUMMER*

Rachel Rockwell Directs New Musical

RIDE THE CYCLONE highlights new work development

Chicago Shakespeare Summer Productions

Disney's *THE LITTLE MERMAID* on Navy Pier

Free CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARKS tours

SHAKESPEARE'S GREATEST HITS to Chicago neighborhoods

Chicago—March 25, 2015—Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and **Executive Director Criss Henderson** announce today the line-up of the **2015/16 Season**, including innovative reimaginings of the classical canon, new work developed at CST and the first installment of Gaines' ambitious Shakespeare history cycle. Anticipating **Shakespeare 400**, the international celebration of the playwright's four-hundred-year legacy in 2016, the season honors Shakespeare's spirit of inventiveness and audacity.

Crowning the season is Barbara Gaines' landmark Shakespeare history cycle, ***Tug of War***.

An examination of wars both foreign and domestic through the perspectives of kings and common men, two extraordinary productions traverse the multi-generational narrative of six Shakespeare history plays. Premiering in Spring 2016, ***Tug of War: Foreign Fire*** incorporates ***Edward III***, ***Henry V*** and ***Henry VI, Part 1***; in Fall 2016, ***Tug of War: Civil Strife*** takes the stage with ***Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*** and ***Richard III***. With productions as large in scale as the subject matter, this bold enterprise offers fresh insight into the playwright's timeless wisdom regarding conflict and its consequences.

Chicago Shakespeare launches the 2015/16 Season with Larry Yando as Prospero in Shakespeare's ***The Tempest***, adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller (of the legendary duo Penn & Teller), who also contributes astonishing feats of magic. Next is celebrated American playwright David Ives' whip-smart ***The Heir Apparent***, based on Jean-François Regnard's comic masterpiece, under the direction of Tony Award® winner John Rando. Following a yearlong development at CST, a refreshingly offbeat new musical from Jacob Richmond and Brooke Maxwell, ***Ride the Cyclone***, makes its Chicago debut under the direction of Jeff Award-winner Rachel Rockwell. The season continues with a gripping ***Othello*** staged by renowned British director Jonathan Munby and featuring Dion Johnstone from Canada's Stratford Festival in the title role. The annual **Short Shakespeare!** production brings Shakespeare's work to family and student audiences with CST's first abridged production of ***Twelfth Night***, adapted and directed by Kirsten Kelly. The Q Brothers return to CST in their newest hip-hop collaboration, ***Madsummer***—based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

This summer, Chicago Shakespeare continues its commitment to engage audiences of all ages with **Disney's *The Little Mermaid***, directed and choreographed by Rachel Rockwell. Touring to 18 neighborhood parks across the city, **Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks** presents a music-infused mash-up of Shakespeare's most memorable scenes and characters—***Shakespeare's Greatest Hits***, adapted and directed by Geoff Button.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater's 2015/16 Season Calendar

(at press time)

Disney's

The Little Mermaid

July – August, 2015 | CST's Courtyard Theater

music by Alan Menken

lyrics by Howard Ashman and Glenn Slater

book by Doug Wright

based on the Hans Christian Andersen story and the Disney film

directed and choreographed by Rachel Rockwell

with musical direction by Roberta Duchak

This summer, families will venture under the sea with Ariel and her aquatic friends to the tune of one of Disney's most beloved classics. Chicago Shakespeare's newly adapted 75-minute production of **Disney's *The Little Mermaid*** is based on the full-length Broadway musical and staged by Jeff Award-winning director and choreographer **Rachel Rockwell**. Featuring the Academy Award®-winning song "Under the Sea," children and adults alike will delight in the dazzling production and unforgettable music following Ariel's adventure to find true love—and her voice. Each performance features special opportunities for audiences to interact with the actors for one-on-one conversations and photos.

Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks

Shakespeare's Greatest Hits

July – August, 2015 | Free performances in neighborhood parks throughout Chicago

by William Shakespeare

conceived by Barbara Gaines

adapted and directed by Geoff Button

Chicago's favorite summer tradition, **Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks** brings ***Shakespeare's Greatest Hits***, free for all to audiences in 18 **Chicago Park District** parks throughout the city. In this Chicago Shakespeare original, Shakespeare's most memorable characters and scenes come to life, mashed-up with a score of today's popular music. From *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* to *The Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It*, audiences will experience a lively medley of Shakespeare's thrilling stories. Affirming the Theater's commitment to Chicago communities, Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks tours to neighborhood parks on the city's south, west and north sides in partnership with the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, **Boeing** and production sponsor **BMO Harris**. Tour dates and park locations to be announced.

The Tempest

September – November, 2015 | CST's Courtyard Theater

by William Shakespeare

adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller

songs by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan

choreography by Matt Kent, Pilobolus

Shakespeare's enchanted island is transformed in this inventive production from **Aaron Posner** and **Teller** (of the legendary duo Penn & Teller), who also contributes astonishing feats of magic. **Larry Yando** returns to Chicago Shakespeare following his iconic performance in last season's *King Lear* to take on the role of the vengeful and mysterious Prospero, who conjures a storm shipwrecking his old enemies on the island. This classic tale of revenge is reimagined as a traveling tent show of trickery and amazement—underscored

by haunting ballads from the inimitable **Tom Waits** and **Kathleen Brennan**, and featuring choreography by the pioneering dance collective **Pilobolus**. In a production full of “such stuff as dreams are made on,” sorcery gives way to the inclinations of the heart.

NEW MUSICAL

Ride the Cyclone

September – November, 2015 | Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare

book, music and lyrics by Jacob Richmond and Brooke Maxwell

directed and choreographed by Rachel Rockwell

with musical direction by Doug Peck

Part comedy, part tragedy and wholly unexpected, ***Ride the Cyclone*** is a wildly imaginative new musical with a refreshingly offbeat twist. The lives of six teenagers from the Uranium, Saskatchewan chamber choir are cut short in a freak accident aboard a roller coaster called the Cyclone at the Wonderville Traveling Fairground. The fair’s mechanical fortune-teller Karnack invites the teens to tell their stories of lives interrupted—and offers them the chance to come to terms with their fates. At once quirky and smart, edgy and beautiful, this irreverent new musical directed and choreographed by **Rachel Rockwell** ultimately reveals the resilience of the human spirit in spite of senseless tragedy.

CHICAGO PREMIERE

The Heir Apparent

December, 2015 – January, 2016 | CST’s Courtyard Theater

by David Ives, adapted from *Le Légataire Universel* by Jean-François Regnard

directed by John Rando

From **David Ives** comes the cheeky romp ***The Heir Apparent***, based on **Jean-François Regnard**’s comic masterpiece and directed by Tony Award® winner **John Rando**. Another hilarious retooling of a classic from the acclaimed playwright takes the stage at Chicago Shakespeare after his critical and popular successes with *The School for Lies* (2011) and *A Flea in Her Ear* (2006). Young Eraste seemingly has it all—good looks, a beautiful fiancée and the prospect of a sizable inheritance from an elderly uncle. There’s just one snag: the uncle won’t die and he has bequeathed his entire fortune to someone else. Hilarious rhyming couplets and contemporary slang abound in this deliciously off-color tribute to *commedia dell’arte*, bringing seventeenth-century bawdiness into the twenty-first.

Othello

February – April, 2016 | CST’s Courtyard Theater

by **William Shakespeare**
directed by **Jonathan Munby**

With the launch of **Shakespeare 400** celebrating four centuries of the playwright's legacy in 2016, renowned British theater artist **Jonathan Munby** directs actor **Dion Johnstone** from Canada's Stratford Festival in the title role of Shakespeare's **Othello**. Both return to Chicago Shakespeare after collaborating in Munby's 2013 production of *Julius Caesar*. Othello is the unequalled hero of his age—a fearsome leader, respected citizen and devoted husband. But he is also an outsider whose success has created enemies driven by envy and prejudice. Shakespeare's intimate tragedy excavates the most universal of human emotions: passion in love—and jealousy.

Short Shakespeare! Twelfth Night

March – April, 2016 | CST's Courtyard Theater

April – May, 2016 | on tour to schools around the region

by **William Shakespeare**
adapted and directed by **Kirsten Kelly**

Shakespeare's romantic comedy is designed to immerse students, young audiences and families alike in the playwright's timeless work in this 75-minute abridged production adapted and directed by **Kirsten Kelly**. A pair of shipwrecked twins set into motion a tale of mistaken identity and unlikely love. Separated from her brother Sebastian, the quick-thinking Viola adopts a male disguise and enters the service of the handsome Duke Orsino—only to find herself in the middle of a triangle of unrequited love. After each public performance on Saturdays, the actors remain on stage for a question-and-answer session, then join the audience in the Lobby for conversations and photos.

NEW SHAKESPEARE HISTORY CYCLE

Tug of War: Foreign Fire

King Edward III, Henry V and Henry VI, Part 1

May – June, 2016 | CST's Courtyard Theater

Tug of War: Civil Strife

Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3 and Richard III

September – October, 2016 | CST's Courtyard Theater

by **William Shakespeare**
adapted and directed by **Barbara Gaines**

Inspired over decades of exploring the canon, Artistic Director Barbara Gaines unveils her landmark six-play Shakespeare history cycle, ***Tug of War***. This ambitious undertaking explores Shakespeare's battle-scarred history plays from the perspectives of both kings and common men—revealing the playwright's wisdom on war, both foreign and domestic, and its very human consequences. The multi-generational narrative unfolds over two installments: in Spring 2016, ***Tug of War: Foreign Fire*** incorporates the oft-disputed ***Edward III, Henry V*** and ***Henry VI, Part 1***; in Fall 2016, ***Tug of War: Civil Strife*** takes the stage with ***Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*** and ***Richard III***. Each installment is approximately six hours including several intermissions and a brief meal break. With a production as large in scale as the subject matter, this bold enterprise offers fresh insight into the playwright's brilliance.

WORLD PREMIERE

Madsummer

Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare

created and directed by GQ and JQ

a hip-hop adaptation of William Shakespeare's ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***

developed with Rick Boynton

Creators of international sensations *Othello: The Remix* and *Funk It Up About Nothin'*, the **Q Brothers** have captivated audiences around the world, from South Korea to Abu Dhabi to Poland—and now return home to Chicago with the world premiere of their newest collaboration, ***Madsummer***. This fired-up, hip-hop adaptation forged by the Q Brothers with CST Creative Producer **Rick Boynton** takes inspiration from the original genius lyricist: Shakespeare. Sharply rewritten over original beats with the Q Brothers' signature comedic touch, the crew takes on the mismatched lovers and mischievous sprites of Shakespeare's popular comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for an unforgettable, high-energy performance experience.

For information on purchasing tickets, visit the Theater's website at

www.chicagoshakes.com or call the CST Box Office at 312.595.5600. Chicago

Shakespeare Theater offers a broad selection of affordable tickets providing opportunities for a wide-range of audiences to interact with the Theater. Patrons can purchase subscription packages with low-priced, preview series and discounted family subscriptions; accessibly-priced, family productions; discounts for groups and tickets and young professionals for as little as \$20.

ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) is a leading international theater company and the recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award®. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Barbara Gaines and Executive Director Criss Henderson, CST is dedicated to creating extraordinary production of classics, new works and family programming; to unlocking Shakespeare's work for educators and students; and to serving as Chicago's cultural

ambassador through its World's Stage Series. Through a year-round season encompassing more than 650 performances, CST attracts 225,000 audience members annually. One in four of its audience members is under eighteen years old, and today its education programs have impacted the learning of over one million students. CST is proud to take an active role in empowering the next generation of literate, engaged cultural champions and creative minds.

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