

The Quill

The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival Newsletter • Fall 2006

2007
Season

June to August

The Taming of the Shrew

by William Shakespeare

The Winter's Tale

by William Shakespeare

Amadeus

by Peter Shaffer

The Mystery of Irma Vep

by Charles Ludlam

Winnie the Pooh

by A.A. Milne

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LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

PSF's 15th Anniversary Season in Review



Christopher Patrick Mullen as Touchstone, Marnie Schulenburg as Celia, and Lauren Lovett as Rosalind in *As You Like It*. Photo by Lee A. Butz.

by Catherine Pressimone

"Isn't it wonderful to see talent? And hear it, and share it, and get all of your emotions involved in it?"

Thus remarked a woman, smiling ebulliently, as she exited a performance of *My Fair Lady*. Her words encapsulate the energy that radiated throughout the 15th anniversary season of the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival at DeSales University—the passion that united audiences and artists, making it the most successful season in PSF's history.

The numbers are one telltale sign of the summer's accomplishments. Audience attendance increased notably, and the Festival finished out the season "in the black" for the first time in several years (see sidebar on page 4).

And then there are the productions.

PSF fluently ran the gamut in its sampling of theatre's finest. The season opened with Anthony Shaffer's thriller *Sleuth*, directed by Jim Helsinger; the play's unceasing twists kept audience members on the edge of their state-of-the-art seats in the Arena theatre. "Even those who've seen the play or movie version will be surprised at the alacrity and deft delivery in this charming, jewel-like production...All in all, a jolly good show," cheered Paul Willistein of *The Bethlehem Press*. (And thanks to all who attended for "Keeping the Secret.")

First to appear on the Main Stage was Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, a blithe romp through the Forest of Arden directed by Russell Treyz. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* called it "a straightforward presentation that lets anybody, Shakespeare maven or novice, enjoy the show." Featuring

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NOTES FROM THE PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

A defining moment. Can a season as complex as ours have one? One hundred and seventy six performances including the *Green Show*, six productions, nearly 30,000 patrons, 130 artists and artisans, twelve months and thousands of hours of planning, rehearsing, building. Can a single moment capture it all?

There would be many contenders from year fifteen. The moment we choose the season sets all the wheels in motion.

Then the moment the right actor, director, or designer says "Yes, I'm available and I can't wait to get started.

Can you send me the script?" There are moments in early design meetings between directors and designers, "ah-ha" moments that spark ingenuity and passion, and lead to sketches, then renderings and models, and eventually to visual art made responsive theatrical environment.

Then there are the late night meetings (early morning, really) after technical rehearsals when we have to make hard decisions about cutting this, or changing that. And then the moment in the morning when, after far too little sleep, everyone gets back to the strange and wonderful business of making theatre.

You as audience members no doubt have your own list; the moments that stay with you, that you talk about, share with others. The moments that you reflect on, and those that seem to have chosen you as a place to resonate for a time, or a lifetime.

For me, on the night of our Gala, I was certain that the defining moment for the season would be presenting to our great friend, Lee Butz, a page from history, a page touched by the hand that shook that hand that shook the hand that wrote these plays: an actual rare First Folio page (1623) from *Henry IV, Part II*, framed next to a photo of Falstaff taken by Lee the year before.

Presenting this award will always stand as a highlight of my career, given the perfect match between Lee's immeasurable support for the Festival and the incalculable

importance of the first published collection of Shakespeare's works.

But, to my surprise, the defining moment for me: the night the lights went out and the veil between the worlds fell. When the opening performance of *My Fair Lady* was interrupted by a violent storm and long power outage, plunging the stage into absolute darkness, we were all reminded, all who were lucky enough to be there, why we have been coming to the theatre for more than 2,500 years.

To say yes.

To say yes when we could have said no. Yes to knowing ourselves, to seeing each other, yes to the mirror held to nature so that we might see what we've been missing. The actors said yes in finishing the rest of the play without the right sets or lights. The audience said yes in remaining long past the scheduled time without orchestra or moving air in the theatre.

The stagehands said yes as twenty of them used their flashlights to, as they always do, illuminate the magnificent, yet nuanced work of the actors. The woman in the front row said yes when I handed her a flashlight and said, "if anyone up there talks, shine this on them." And collectively, the gathered community said yes to communion, to recognition of the other's presence, vulnerability, courage, and yes to the magical transactions that are unique to the theatre.

The lights went out, and we illuminated each other. I will never forget the night that the divisions between actor, character, technician, and audience vanished, revealing the essence of what we do: healing separation.

Next summer, we will create new moments, perhaps some that you will never forget. Until then, enjoy, as I will, the treasured memories of our 15th anniversary season.



Patrick Mulcahy
Producing Artistic Director



Mulcahy



As *Iago*, Ian Merrill Peakes "is a little playful, a lot maniacal and has a charm that's as magnetic as it is disgusting," wrote Howard Shapiro in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Photo by Lee A. Butz.

SEASONS CHANGE

Shakespeare Unleashed, a new play in progress written by PSF's Producing Artistic Director Patrick Mulcahy, is being rescheduled for its debut in a future season. "I'm enjoying the process of developing this work," Mulcahy says. "I will enjoy it a little longer."

The Mystery of Irma Vep by Charles Ludlam will replace it in the 2007 season.

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The Gala as Gallery

PSF Honors Lee Butz with Will Shakespeare Award



Lee A. Butz addresses gala patrons. Photo by Phil Stein

by Lisa Higgins

In breathtaking clarity of nearly life-size proportions, twenty-plus photos of PSF productions by Lee Butz created a gallery in the DeSales University Center for the annual Gala on June 24, 2006.

The images – captured over the course of the Festival’s 15 years – stood as testament to the artistry of a man who has worked quietly and patiently behind the scenes at PSF for its entire history, not only behind the lens.

The dramatic décor served as an appetizer for the main course: the presentation of the Will Shakespeare Award to Lee in honor of his exceptional contributions to PSF.

Presented to Lee by PSF’s Producing Artistic Director Patrick Mulcahy, Founder Gerard J. Schubert, OSFS, and Board President Paul Domalakes prior to a performance of *As You Like It*, the award was cloaked in mystery until its astonishing unveiling: an actual page from Shakespeare’s First Folio, framed along-

side one of Lee’s favorite photographs— a photo of Falstaff taken during the 2005 production of *Henry IV, Part 1*.

The pure beauty and ingenuity of the award caused the audience to express a collective gasp. The page from the First Folio separated Shakespeare from that moment by less than six degrees.

As *The Morning Call* reported, Mulcahy explained to the audience that: “In 1623, about seven years after Shakespeare’s death, actors from his company gathered most of his plays, about half of which had never previously been printed, and took them to a printer who agreed to publish them. Only about 700 copies were printed, and it came to be known as “The First Folio.” Without it, many of Shakespeare’s works, including *As You Like It*, would have been lost.

“It’s considered by some to be the most important book published in the English language,” Mulcahy said. “It’s a wrestling match between that and the King James Bible.”

“I was completely overwhelmed,” Mr. Butz told *The Morning Call*. “It was so inspirationally put together. It was just astonishing.”

Directly benefiting PSF’s intern program, entitled “Shakespeare’s Apprentices,” the Gala was attended by 300 guests and included a cocktail hour, dinner and dessert, and silent auction, including theatrical props, costumes, and signed memorabilia.

Gala attendees included State Senator Patrick M. Browne, State Representative Karen Beyer, Lanny Fowler, Dave and Monica Willard, Dr. Elliot Sussman and Nancy Cromer Grayson, Steve and Michelle Wogaman, Dr. Karen and Antonio Angello, Paul Wirth and Linda Lapos Wirth, Shelley Brown Nigito and Dan Nigito, Mike and Michelle Pessina, and Don Spieth and wife Lleyana Boylan.

Auction Delivers Fun for All

Searching for adventure, theatrical memorabilia or a variety of dramatic opportunities, patrons attending PSF’s Gala supported PSF by bidding on a distinctive variety of silent auction items. The auction raised funds earmarked for *Shakespeare’s Apprentices*, PSF’s intern program that provides education and mentorship for students from DeSales and other universities.

For the adventurous, the auction block included a week’s stay at a 1,000-year-old Tuscan villa donated by PSF Board Member Joan Moran, a stay at a resort condo in North Carolina donated by Board Member Jay McFadden and his wife Blair, and a luxurious respite closer to home donated by the Crowne Plaza in Allentown.

PSF costume designer and DSU alumna Lisa Zinni, whose day job is associate costume designer for the hit musical *Rent*, donated a basket of *Rent* collectibles, including items autographed by the Broadway cast.

On another note, PSF Sound Designer Matt Given won a select library of the original cast albums from Broadway musicals spanning the past 40 years.

PSF Producing Artistic Director Patrick Mulcahy donated a private 90-minute session of public speaking coaching, which was purchased by Board President Paul Domalakes and given to his high school daughter.

A nationally acclaimed artist, PSF Board Member Ben Marcune donated a landscape portrait of the winner’s home. Lee and Dolly Butz welcomed the opportunity to have their domicile so rendered.

The opportunity to party with *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs* proved too enticing to pass up for PSF Volunteer Guild member Mary Ann Kelly and her husband Vince – especially since their son was in the cast.

Mark Thy Calendar
GALA 2007
Saturday, June 2

A Number of Successes

by Lisa Higgins

When your business is Shakespeare, the definition of success equals more than how the numbers add up at the end of the season.

Success is the audience's joyful hush of recognition when Greg Wood begins Jaques famed "All the world's a stage" soliloquy. Success is when a high school senior sees her first ever professional production of a play. Success is when a thunderstorm knocks out the power – and the shows do go on.

Yet, by every accounting, PSF's 15th anniversary season met or exceeded its goals. Revenues from ticket sales increased 35 percent over the 2005 season and set a new record. The Festival's 135 performances of five plays were attended by 29,730 patrons, a 14 percent increase over a year ago. Despite the national trend, the number of household subscriptions sold increased 15 percent to 1,308. And for the first time since 2000, the Festival has a modest annual operating surplus.

"Unquestionably, this was our most successful season ever, both artistically and financially," says Producing Artistic Director Patrick Mulcahy. "The productions received universal praise from critics and patrons alike.

"More and more patrons approach me in the lobby to tell me that they drive from Virginia, New York, etc., to see our work because of the quality and level of professionalism, and more and more artists working at PSF for the first time share with me the wonderful reputation the Festival has within this industry.

"The artists at the Festival were deeply proud to be a part of it, given the caliber of the work in their own production, as well as the other productions they saw at the Festival," Mulcahy says.

New marketing strategies were implemented, as well as programs that provide low-cost or complimentary tickets to organizations representing underserved populations. In the three seasons since 2003 when the current management team assumed leadership, the Festival has increased attendance by nearly 50 percent.



Top Photo: The 'Ascot Gavotte' scene gave costume designer Lisa L. Zinni an opportunity to explore the limits of black and white. Left Photo: Carl N. Wallnau, on staircase, as the mystery writer Andrew Wyke. Bradford Cover, seated, played Milo Tindle, who was in love with Wyke's wife. Photos by Lee A. Butz

Inquirer praised *Othello*, directed by PSF newcomer Fontaine Syer, as being "everything you want in *Othello*—and everything a Shakespeare festival should be able to give you." A spare, symmetrical set in the intimate Arena Theatre made a uniquely ideal backdrop for Shakespeare's complex tragedy. After almost every performance, an audience member would remark that it was, perhaps, the best production they had ever seen at PSF.

Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* debuted in Center Valley this summer, and what a debut it made! On its stormy opening night, fifteen minutes from the finale, the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts experienced a power outage. As *Othello* finished its performance next door under the eerily fitting glow of emergency lights, the PSF staff gathered flashlights and performed the rest of the musical on a stationary set, accompanied by a rehearsal piano that had been wheeled onstage. At the finale, the audience leapt to its feet and applauded passionately.

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high-energy wrestling, screwball comedy, song and dance, and of course, plenty of romance, this truly was a production for everyone. "I don't even like Shakespeare," remarked a patron, after seeing *As You Like It*. "And I loved this show!"

The second half of the season was every bit as enthralling as the first. Howard Shapiro of *The Philadelphia*

Guild on the Go: Volunteering Behind the Scenes

by Tim Walling

After the sets were disassembled, the costumes stored, and the company dispersed for another year, it was a joy for the administration of the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival to look back on the past season with great admiration and gratitude for the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the members of the Volunteer Guild.

Nearly 190 members strong, “the Guild,” as it is affectionately called by its friends, served as the welcoming front line to almost 30,000 patrons who walked through the doors at the Labuda Center for the Performing Arts. Between greeting patrons, taking tickets, and ushering folks to their seats, the Guild ensured that every person who walked into the theatre would have an enjoyable experience at PSF.

“We focus on trying to provide the best service to every individual that visits PSF,” says Mary Bongiorno, Guild president. “It’s a lot of work, but very fulfilling.”

Souvenirs and refreshments, two key components to every successful event, are completely managed by PSF’s Guild. And

this year, the Guild discovered an impressive variety of Shakespeare memorabilia. If you had any doubt that there wasn’t a rubber ducky modeled after the Bard himself, there is, and the Guild had it! If you ever wanted to woo that certain someone, the t-shirt with the “Top Ten Pick-up lines” proffered the perfect Shakespeare line to charm your love.

“With a little bit of luck,” says Kathi Moyer, souvenir chairperson for the Guild, borrowing a line from the musical smash hit of the season, “terrific house management, none of the rain from Spain, and many great volunteer sales people, souvenirs had a good season.”

Refreshments also offered something for every taste. Home-made cookies were enjoyed by people of every age group—from the young children coming to see *Snow White* to those attending *Othello*.

With 15 seasons successfully completed, and many more to come, the Guild looks to next season, and the future. “I would like to see the Guild take a more proactive role in making the PSF experience unique,” explains Bongiorno. “Guild

members have many talents, are knowledgeable about the theatre, and are dedicated to the success of PSF.”

While the Guild is most active in the summer, new members are welcome at any time of the year. People from all walks of life are members, but they all have one thing in common: a genuine love of the theatre. As one of the volunteers noted, “After the season is over, I go through a withdrawal.”

“The Guild is an important part of the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, and much of our success is attributed to them. We are truly grateful for all the time, talent, and enthusiasm that they have given to PSF,” says General Manager Casey William Gallagher.

Many thanks go to the Guild for a wonderful season! Bravo!

Curious to find out how you can be a member of the Guild? For information about joining the Guild, please contact Tim Walling at 610-282-WILL, ext. 8.

Tim Walling is PSF’s management associate and serves as staff liaison to the Guild.


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Support PSF With Your Membership

By now, you should have received your membership brochure for PSF's 2007 season. If not, please call 610-282-WILL, ext. 2, and we'll drop one in the mail for you. As *your* not-for-profit, professional theatre company, PSF relies heavily on corporations, foundations, and most importantly—our members—to support *almost half* of the Festival's overall income.

Become a member, and receive various forms of recognition and benefits, depending upon your level of giving. Here's how you can help ensure the future of the area's leading professional theatre company:

- Make a gift by mail, by returning the pledge card from our yearly membership appeal.
- Make single, semi-annual, or quarterly installments on a gift.
- Make a gift by phone. Call 610-282-WILL, and make a credit card pledge.



- Donate online! Simply log on to www.pashakespeare.org and click **Support PSF**.

- Make a matching gift (check with your company's human resources department to find out if your employer will match your gift to PSF).

- Make a planned gift (charitable gift annuities, life income gifts, wills, and bequests); speak with your attorney or financial advisor about the advantages of planned giving.

Please consider a gift to PSF, and help support a vital community resource, unique to our region. *Thank you—your generosity is much appreciated!*

Giving Levels

Lord Chamberlain's Society: \$2,500 and up

- A private dinner party for 8 with the Producing Artistic Director before a performance
- All "Revelers' Company" benefits

Rose Society: \$1,000 to \$2,499

- 4 tickets to one opening night performance and Meet-the-Artists champagne reception
- All "Revelers' Company" benefits

Swan Society: \$500 to \$999

- 2 tickets to one opening night performance and Meet-the-Artists champagne reception
- All "Revelers' Company" benefits

Forest of Arden Society: \$250 to \$499

- 2 half-price tickets to one production
- All "Revelers' Company" benefits

Revelers' Company: \$100 to \$249

- 2 tickets to *Winnie the Pooh*
- Bard Card for discounted concessions and souvenirs
- All "Players' Company" benefits

Players' Company: \$50 to \$99

- Recognition in Festival program
- Advanced mailing of ticket brochure
- Festival newsletter

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The rest of the run went on without a hitch—but with a story that will live long in PSF lore.

Other season highlights include a largely sold-out run of *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs*, great turnouts for the outdoor *Green Show*, and a silent auction at the Gala that raised funds for *Shakespeare's Apprentices*, PSF's career-building intern program. Attendance at pre-show "Chats," which give patrons the opportunity to discuss the play with members of PSF's artistic staff in advance of the performance, and post-show "Meet the Actors" sessions nearly doubled from last year, ranging from thirty to eighty patrons on a given night.

"We cultivated a wonderful new dynamic with our audience this summer," observed Patrick Mulcahy, Producing Artistic Director. "PSF is reaching out in many directions, so people are coming to

see our productions from Philadelphia, New York, and from states far and wide, in addition to our core Lehigh Valley audience. Families are seeing Shakespeare together. In the lobby, you can hear people discussing the plays with great emotion and enthusiasm. I believe that this season has been a harbinger of more good things to come."

The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival is certainly continuing to look ahead, as was evidenced by another treat this summer: the early announcement of the 2007 Season. Says Mulcahy, "We're very excited. It is an exceptional, diverse selection of plays, and we wanted everyone to share in our anticipation."

A 2005 DeSales alumna, Catherine Pressimone served as house manager for PSF. She is currently earning her master's degree in dramaturgy at the State University of New York, Stony Brook.



PSF Partners with Allentown Art Museum

On guard! As part of the Allentown Art Museum's exhibit, *Knights in Shining Armor: Myth and Reality, 1450-1650*, PSF will present 'Sword Play.' A live demonstration with real swords, *Sword Play* will be performed as part of 'Art After Hours' on May 10 at the museum. The *Knights* exhibit runs January 28 through June 3, 2007. Visit www.allentownartmuseum.org.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES: WillPower Tour Meets State Education Standards



Matthew Skrinicosky and Julie Ferrell in the 2005 WillPower tour of *Romeo and Juliet*. Photo by Lee A. Butz.

by Lisa Higgins

How many state education standards fit in one Shakespeare tour?

In the past, it may have seemed self-evident that students would benefit from attending a professional production of a Shakespearean play. Not so anymore. Every state has created standards that must be taught and documented. As an in-school assembly or off-campus field trip, PSF's Linny Fowler WillPower tour must clearly meet defined curriculum standards.

To identify how the fall WillPower tour meets a variety of standards, PSF develops and publishes an extensive study guide, which is sent in advance to teachers who schedule the tour. And in that study guide lies the answer to the standards question: Pennsylvania, six. New Jersey, ten.

PSF's tour this fall features *Hamlet*, and its accompanying 24-page study guide provides a wealth of information in a teacher- and student-friendly format. Researched and written by Erin Mullen, who is also directing the production, it contains an overview of William Shakespeare and the play, as well as specific classroom activities and exercises—all developed to address specific standards.

For instance, one exercise titled, "Hamlet's Trial," suggests: "Imagine that

Hamlet has been put on trial for murder and has pleaded insanity. Separate the class into four small groups, one for the defense, one for the prosecution, one for a jury and one for the judges." This meets PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities 9.3 "Critical Response – Knowledge, Application" and 9.4 "Aesthetic Response – Knowledge, Recognition, Integration, Skills."

Individual assignments include having students write diary entries as one of the play's characters.

"Two Sides of Every Story" provides a list of statements a teacher can use to open a debate that encourages students to use examples from their own lives as well as the text of *Hamlet* to support their side of the case. The statements include: Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend is difficult; Revenge is appropriate; There is no such thing as a perfect family and There is no way to know if a person is truly 'crazy.'

Set in the present time, the production "is designed to give young people a fresh view on a classic work by combining classical elements with contemporary sensibilities, similar to the way Wynton Marsalis brings his unique creative values to Bach," says Ms. Mullen. "*Hamlet* is not about 'those people back then,'" she says. "Yes, it is about a Danish royal family, but I don't think we are to focus on the history or tragedy alone. I want to focus on the person of Hamlet. I want the production to be as accessible as possible to the students."

The full day tour curriculum includes both a performance of *Hamlet* and workshops led by actor/teachers that directly engage the students. The WillPower tour runs October 11 through November 10. This is the second year in a row that the tour has sold out. For information, contact Sally Reith at 610.282.WILL, ext. 2, or e-mail psf@desales.edu.

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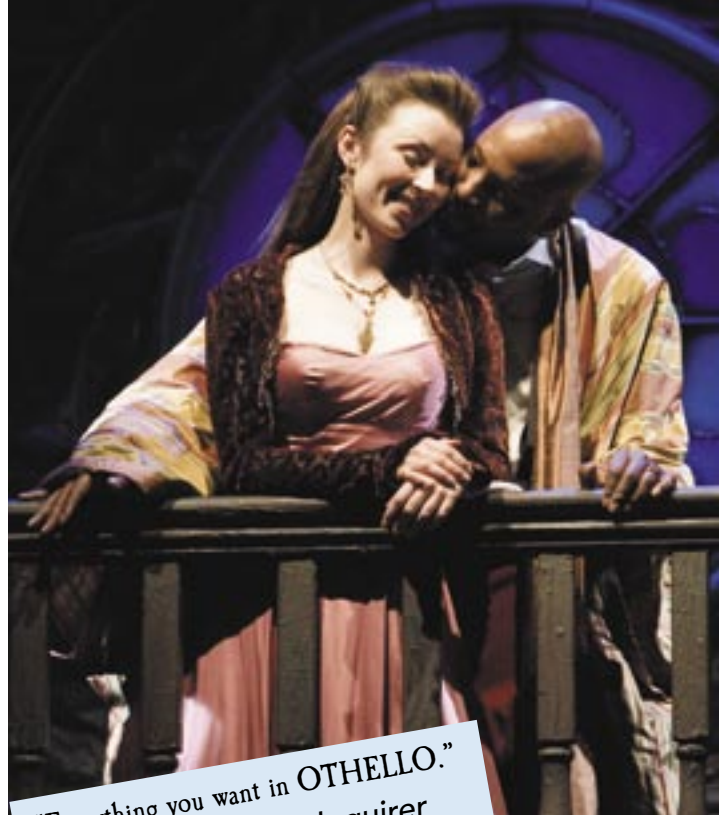
**"ALL THE WORLD'S
A STAGE."**

*Greg Wood as Jaques in
As You Like It.
Photo by Lee A. Butz*



**"If all the world's indeed a stage, PSF's
production of AS YOU LIKE IT is a
merrily spinning globe." The Morning Call**

*James Martinez as Orlando and Lauren
Lovett as Rosalind in As You Like It
Photo by Lee A. Butz*



**"Everything you want in OTHELLO."
The Philadelphia Inquirer**

*Vanessa Ballam as Desdemona and
David Alan Anderson as Othello.
Photo by Lee A. Butz.*

