

# The Quill

The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival Newsletter • Summer 2012

## SUMMER 2012



### Much Ado About Nothing

July 11 – August 5



### Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

July 19 – August 5



### The Tempest

June 20 – July 15



### Sweeney Todd

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

June 13 – July 1



### King John

July 25 – August 5

#### Children's Shows:

### Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs

June 1 – August 4

### Shakespeare for Kids

July 25 – August 4

## Ciao Italia! Much Ado About Nothing

Director James J. "Jim" Christy has directed more than 20 Shakespeare productions for companies including PSF, Utah Shakespeare, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, and the Virginia Shakespeare Festival. He ran the Summer Shakespeare Festival at Villanova for 10 years. He has also directed *King Lear* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* at Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre and *The Merchant of Venice* at People's Light and Theatre Company in Malvern, Pa.

PSF audiences may remember his production of *Othello* (1996) with Michael Tylo as Iago, and more recently, his productions of *Twelfth Night* (2008) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (2010). At the time of the interview in mid-March, Christy was in rehearsal with Philadelphia playwright Bruce Graham on a new play, *The Outgoing Tide*, at the Philadelphia Theatre Company. Christy is also a veteran director of new plays and there are often many benefits for a director who can look at a classic play like *Much Ado About Nothing* with the same fresh eyes as a new play process.

As the sun set, Philadelphia's "Avenue of the Arts" lit up and dramaturg Heather Helinsky sat down for coffee with Christy to discuss *Much Ado*. She notes, "What became obvious to me immediately is that Jim's acumen for developing a new story with a living playwright complimented his incisive analysis of a play written in the 1590s."

#### Heather Helinsky: Why is every production a response to another production, especially with Shakespeare?

**Jim Christy:** It's the tradition of the performance of Shakespeare. While we can always say that his plays are universal, the play needs to be made specific every time you do it. If you don't know the tradition or totally disregard it, you lose a lot of the wisdom and the rich history of the play. I don't have the prejudice that all conservative productions are necessarily bad and all experimental productions are necessarily good. I've seen some tremendously good traditional productions and some perfectly awful experimental productions. My bent is to test the text and find the modern relevancy. I think that unless a director creates a context that grabs people in some way, you're not doing your work. The play's original context of Shakespeare's time is gone and never will come back—it was that moment in cultural history.

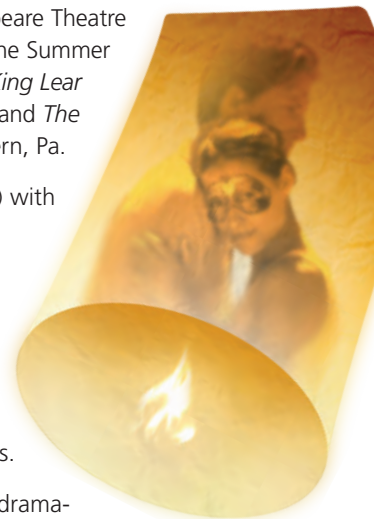
#### What productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* have you seen that have influenced you?

In 1972, I saw A.J. Antoon's *Much Ado About Nothing* at the New York Public

Theatre Shakespeare in the Park with Sam Waterson and it was absolutely glorious. It was a sentimental sweetheart, ragtime period production and (the soldiers) were returning from the Spanish American war. The characters of Dogberry and Verges became Keystone Cops and it was very charming.

I also saw director Franco Zeffirelli's production at the Old Vic set in Italy in the 1890s. The production had all kinds of garish Italian colors and a hysterical satirical look to it. I am taking my inspiration from Italy as well, but I'm placing it in the world of post-World War II with a touch of early Fellini. I'm hoping my production will have that beat-up but interesting look Italy always has, yet I also want to emphasize the idea of rebirth after destruction.

At the beginning of *Much Ado*, the men have just returned from a war. In my staging, World War II is essentially over, but there are still some fascists out there—like Don John who is conquered and taken prisoner by his brother Don Pedro.



## Notes from the Producing Artistic Director

In actor training, the first few years are usually spent facilitating the process of an actor having complete access to the fullness of who they are. This includes voice and movement work that is aimed at the actor's instrument (themselves) becoming fully available to the demands of acting. This phase of the process prepares the actor to do what many actors do: play themselves well. They need to be able to do so truthfully, convincingly. Many actors develop careers doing just that, and most of the time, playing themselves is what they are hired to do. Type casting.



Patrick Mulcahy

It is in the later years of actor training that the more complex process of transformation is usually addressed, the art and craft of behaving truthfully in the circumstances and character (personality) of someone perhaps very much unlike themselves, and perhaps in a time and place unlike any they have known directly. Transformation in film and television have the advantages those media offer.

Part of what makes live theatre exhilarating is seeing the transformation right before our eyes. We are physically in the same room. In many cases, you see an actor on stage in a role at PSF that requires completely different behaviors than the last time you saw him or her and different still than those you observe when you meet him or her in the lobby afterwards.

Offering productions in rep magnifies this transformative excitement for both actor and audience. The roles of Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* are not the same, but the same actress—Eleanor Handley—will play them both, often in the same day.

Many of our patrons raved about the experience last year of seeing one production at the matinee, going to dinner, and then seeing the other rep production in the evening performance: same cast, different play. How will Jo Twiss' performance as Big Mama differ from her Antonia in *Much Ado*? And how will her Big Mama differ from the last time she played the role—on Broadway opposite Ned Beatty? How will

*continues on page 11*

## Actors in Rep, 2012

When PSF introduced rep last season—with a company of actors performing in two different plays alternating performances—one key ingredient couldn't be known until both curtains were raised: how would the audience respond?

In a word: delighted. Survey comments included:

"ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT! I enjoyed seeing the actors in different roles and I liked the way the sets were coordinated."

"The set designs and costuming were incredibly creative—excellent. The performances were beyond expectations—truly enjoyable. The production and direction were exceptional."

"We enjoyed both plays...in different weeks. Seeing the same actors in different roles is always interesting, as we have found with some of the actors coming back year after year. We're getting to feel like they are old friends!"

Old friends and new make up the rep cast this summer. Jo Twiss—Mrs. Bennet and the Player Queen in last season's *Pride & Prejudice/Hamlet*—returns as Antonia in *Much Ado* and Big Mama in *Cat*. Eleanor Handley, who made her PSF debut last year as Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors* and Emilia in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, will play Beatrice in *Much Ado* and Maggie "the cat" in *Cat*.

PSF newcomer Joe Vincent will play two patriarchs: Leonato, the mayor of Messina, in *Much Ado*, and the famed Big Daddy in *Cat*. No stranger to Shakespeare festivals, Vincent's career includes a combined 28 years at the Oregon, California, Old Globe, Alabama, and Orlando Shakespeare festivals.

PSF also welcomes Larry Bull, Rob Kahn, and Carey Van Driest, who all have extensive New York and national theatre credits, along with television and film work.

Anthony Reimer comes to PSF for the first time since performing as member of the 2007 WillPower tour of *Macbeth*. And Zack Robidas, whose PSF credits include *Othello* (2006), *The Winter's Tale* (2007) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (2007), returns to play Claudio. ■



Jo Twiss, Antonia/  
Big Mama



Eleanor Handley  
Beatrice/Maggie



Rob Kahn  
Benedick/Gooper



Anthony Reimer  
Dogberry/  
Rev. Tooker



Joe Vincent  
Leonato/Big Daddy



Larry Bull, Don  
Pedro/Doc Baugh



Carey Van  
Driest, Ursula &  
Verges/Mae



Zack Robidas  
Claudio

## DAYTIME TELEVISION STAR TO PLAY BRICK

Daytime television star Tom Degnan is taking on the role of Brick Pollitt in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Best known for playing Joey Buchanan in *One Life to Live*, Degnan also portrayed young Harry in the 2009 film *Handsome Harry* with Jamey Sheridan and Steve Buscemi. Born in nearby Bucks County, Pa., Degnan appeared in *As the World Turns* as Adam Munson, *Law and Order*, *The Good Wife*, and *White Collar*.

Degnan will also play the villainous Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

"Tom came to us recommended by our Emmy-nominated PSF alum Marnie Schulenburg and had the right stuff for Brick. Apparently, one can't turn on a television without seeing him: the other day I did just that and there he was," says Patrick Mulcahy, producing artistic director.



Tom Degnan



# CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

An American Classic • JULY 19 - AUGUST 5 • MAIN STAGE

By James Michael Evatt

When Tennessee Williams was asked to name his favorite among his own plays, he might have chosen exalted American classics *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Glass Menagerie*—but he didn't.

He named *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1955, *Cat* was a great critical and financial success. The original production ran on Broadway for nearly 700 performances and major New York revivals in 1974, 1990, 2003, and 2008 confirm the play's appeal to successive generations of theatregoers.

And of course the play was adapted for the screen in 1958 and won the Academy Award for Best Picture. The 1958 film features a young Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman, and—revisiting the role he created on Broadway—Burl Ives as Big Daddy. The MGM film was hugely successful and made Williams financially secure for the rest of his life.

Like many of his plays, the source for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is one of his own short stories. Williams' "Three Players of a Summer Game" appeared in *The New Yorker* in November 1952. The action in "Three Players" is ignited by a simple game of croquet and follows a man's battle with alcohol, his wife, and his mistress. The man, Brick Pollitt, begins a summer affair with a young widow. His wife, Margaret, expertly plays the game until she conquers her husband, who is left with only the bottle to console him. A few years after "Three Players" was published, Williams wrote a first draft of the play that was to become *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* called *A Place of Stone*, and eventually he wove it into one of the best known and critically acclaimed dramas in the American canon.

Set in a stately mansion on a vast cotton plantation, a young ex-athlete, Brick Pollitt, and his wife Maggie the Cat battle the darkness of a failing marriage. During a birthday party for his father, the plantation owner Big

Daddy, Brick attempts to drink himself into a stupor while rejecting Maggie's attentions.

Brick's brother Gooper, and sister-in-law Mae work to gain the inheritance from Big Daddy, who is unknowingly dying of cancer. They have set up camp at the family mansion with their growing swarm of children as a way to gain the approval of Big Mama, and in turn, control of the estate.



During a conversation with his father, the source of Brick's alcoholism is revealed—guilt over a close friend's death and the vacuum left in the absence of the one true relationship in his life. The weakness that stems from this guilt provides the tragedy of the play.

In his memoirs, Williams writes that *Cat* adheres to the characteristics of a classical tragedy known as "Aristotelian unities." These were derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*—the Greek philosopher's attempt to codify art scientifically. The unities, which were further delineated by neoclassicist Castelvetro in the 16th Century, are:

**The unity of time** – a play should exist in a single, shortened, linear timeframe. In *Cat*, the entire action is the same as the play's duration, and the action of each act follows directly after the one that precedes it.

**The unity of place** – a play should exist in only one physical space and accurately depict physical geography. In *Cat*, the entire action happens in one space with no set changes.

**The unity of action** – a play should follow one action in a clear line. Williams indicated that the action of his play was more about magnitude of theme than plot. What is happening is subservient to how and why.

"Wouldn't it be funny if that were true?" This final line in the published version reflects the main theme of the play—the mendacity of life.

The characters juxtapose how this mendacity, this untruthfulness, manifests itself. Maggie, Mae, and Gooper use deceit and manipulation to fulfill their unmet desires, whether physical or financial. While Big Daddy, Big Mama, and Brick live their lives in denial and avoidance of the truth. The mature couple denies the seriousness of Big Daddy's physical ailments, while Brick uses alcohol to suppress his guilt and to numb himself to the pain of his past.

The self-destruction of alcohol was not a foreign experience to Williams. The author spent years struggling with addiction to alcohol and barbiturates, which ultimately claimed his life.

In the play, alcohol becomes a catalyst for the action as Maggie attempts to use her husband's abuses to her advantage. She has accepted the mendacity of life, and in contrast to her husband's avoidance, tries to exploit life through physical comforts. The play becomes a seduction, as Maggie states, "nothing is more determined than a cat on a hot tin roof—is there?" ■

# A Dramaturg's Musings on *King John*

By Heather Helinsky

**K**ing *John* once reigned among actors and audiences as a play that inspired towering performances. The play begins in the middle of a family meeting with John, his mother Queen Eleanor, and an ambassador from France. We learn quickly that Constance, the widowed mother of Prince Arthur, has turned to the King of France claiming her son's divine right to rule England in place of John.

Family meetings often portend family drama. Though the French envoy warns that his King will fight to install Arthur to rule England, King John responds:

"Here have we war for war,  
and blood for blood,  
Controlment for controlment—  
so answer France."

Once Shakespeare squares that plot away, John mentions—in almost an offhanded way—that the war will be paid for by the church clergy, laying the groundwork for a more complicated historical plot in King John's reign involving the Pope (no spoilers here).

What follows is a baffling scene: a younger brother claims that he deserves his father's inheritance because, on his deathbed, his father told him that his elder brother Philip is a bastard. Queen Eleanor notices Philip's resemblance to her older son—the deceased King Richard the Lion-hearted—John's predecessor to the throne. The Queen urges Philip to forget his claim and join her in battle. More family drama!

Before the Bastard joins his new family and goes off to war, he gets a long scene and soliloquy not just defending illegitimate children, but also celebrating his fortune.

It troubles many scholars, critics, and actors that the title character, King John, barely has a moment onstage alone while his nephew has soliloquies and asides like *Hamlet*. Why would a playwright give major speeches to this character when the historical King John had such an action-packed, fascinating, violent reign—a reign that could easily provide fodder for several plays?

There's another clear pattern that

emerges in the play. As the King of France and King John battle over Constance's claim that her son is the rightful ruler of England, the elements of fire and water become central to their arguments. It could be for a simple, scenic reason—France and England are separated by a large body of water. King John asserts England's political independence from France's interference:



"This tragedy is one amongst Shakespeare's dramas, which requires, in representation, such eminent powers of acting, that it is scarcely brought upon the stage, but when a theatre has to boast of performers highly gifted in their art."

— Elizabeth Inchbald, actress and playwright, 1808

France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?

Say, shall the current of our right run on?  
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,  
Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell  
With course disturb'd even thy confining shores,  
Unless thou let his silver water keep  
A peaceful process to the ocean.

Conversely, the Bastard, from his vantage point, speaks of fire when realizing these watery words of kings will lead to war:

"Ha, Majesty! How high thy glory tow'rs  
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!"

Imagery of nature contrasts political views. These plays were meant to be performed for a class-stratified audience of varying levels of education, from the groundlings to the emerging merchant class to the court nobility. As the arguments between King Philip of France, King John,

and Constance continue, more images of fire and water, land and sea, and wind and earth help these royals make their case for the divine right to rule England.

Still, this play does not fit neatly into the box that early critics wanted it in—asserting that all good plays followed the rules of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Shakespeare notoriously crams 17 years of King John's reign into one play's plot. Alexander Pope famously degraded and banished large passages of the play to the margins of his 1725 Shakespeare edition deeming *King John* not worthy of genius.

*King John* was once revered as a play that every great actor and actress wanted to master. And audiences loved them for it. One group of literary ladies from the late 1700s known as "the Bluestockings" raved after seeing *King John*: "Shakespeare seems to have had the art of the Dervish in the Arabian tales, who could throw his soul into the body of another man, and be at once possessed of his sentiments, adopt his passions, and rise to all the functions and feelings of his situations."

While we may not be as familiar with this play today, *King John* certainly stirred 18th and 19th century audiences, evidenced by letters and diaries

whose authors swooned over the players.

When Jane Austen stayed in London to proofread *Sense and Sensibility*, her first wish upon arrival was to see *King John* at Covent Garden, but the performance was canceled and changed to *Hamlet* at the last minute. Austen voiced her disappointment in missing actress Sarah Siddons' acclaimed portrayal of Constance: "I should particularly have liked seeing her in Constance, and could swear at her with little effort for disappointing me."

Austen and her contemporaries wanted to see *King John* not only for Siddons' star turn as a grieving mother. Siddons also delivered an unprecedented level of seriousness and brought social respectability to her acting. In *King John*, Constance exits the play in Act III, yet Siddons did not treat her role like a minor part of the plot. "Whenever I was called upon to personate the character of Constance, I



never, from the beginning of the play to the end of my part in it, once suffered my dressing room door to be closed, in order that my attention might be constantly fixed on those distressing events which, by this means, I could plainly hear going upon the stage, the terrible effects of which progress were to be represented by me.”

In the 1800s, it was unusual for an actor to stay in character while waiting for an entrance. Often, actors would stand to the side of the stage, bored, in full view of the audience, waiting for their grand entrance. Siddons took what many would consider a flaw of the play—the brief appearance of a strong female role—and used it to her advantage, mesmerizing her fans and advancing the development of the art.

While charismatic performers of the 18th and 19th Century kept *King John* in the repertoire, it became a less produced play after World War I. The harshness of modern warfare turned the audience off to the plays that the Romantics adored. Actors like Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud found *Henry V*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear* better vehicles to speak to their generation; *King John* was left behind. By 1987, theatre historian J.C. Trewin put a call out for *King John* revivals, “since when allowed to speak for itself, *King John* has often been an exciting night.”

Revisiting the play, I can’t agree more with Trewin. And what could be more exciting at PSF than to have actors Greg Wood and Susan Riley Stevens in the roles of King John and Constance battling over the fate of England?

Wood sees the challenge of playing a title character without a moment on stage alone. “There’s no clear hero in the play. There’s no one to root for. John is the protagonist, but unlike Richard III, Henry V, and Hamlet, he has no soliloquy in which to reveal his inmost thoughts. No way to communicate directly with the audience.”

Stevens revels in the opportunity to make Constance a real, complex, and multi-dimensional person who happens to speak beautiful, expressive verse. “I don’t think in all of Shakespeare there is any more elegant or heartbreaking speech regarding grief than hers as she talks about Arthur’s death,” she says. “I think we all want to know who these larger-than-life monarchs were in their most private moments, and thanks to Shakespeare, we have an extraordinary glimpse of Constance as a woman and mother.”

While Constance historically has been a popular and powerful royal, Wood realizes that King John’s historical reputation is that of a villain because of stories like Robin Hood and Ivanhoe.

“I have to play Shakespeare’s John. Historical facts may help my understanding of certain things, but ultimately I only have what Shakespeare has written.”

The play’s structure is curious, but why should we expect anything else? King John is a brother or uncle with similar DNA to so many other characters in the canon of plays published in the First Folio of 1623. Yet, like our own brothers or uncles, can you expect *King John* to behave like other members of the Folio’s family? So let’s enjoy the uniqueness of *King John* and the opportunity to enrich our expectations of what makes a “Shakespeare play.” ■

Heather Helinsky, dramaturg, also contributed the cover story for this issue. Read more about her on page 8.

<sup>1</sup>Aristotle’s *Poetics* are outlined on page 3 in the feature on *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

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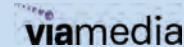
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FESTIVAL HOST



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# Shakespeare Valley: PSF Linny Fowler

By Patrick Mulcahy,  
PSF Producing Artistic Director

No one is born loving Shakespeare. Someone introduces us to it. Indeed, several introductions may be necessary. I remember reading *Romeo and Juliet* aloud in high school, unimpressed, even irritated at being assigned to read Mercutio. The first time I read *Hamlet* as a student, all I could decipher was who died. (It read: “he dies.”) Two introductions; no connection yet. But after several more, it clicked. The experience I was missing? Live performance.

For some students, the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival’s Linny Fowler WillPower Tour is an introduction to Shakespeare. For others, it nurtures and reinforces a budding interest in the world’s most exquisite vehicle for expressing thought, feeling, and the depth and complexity of human experience. For all, WillPower provides a rich and distinctive experience of engagement. It deepens understanding, and fosters a student’s awakening sense of the tremendous power of language. It converts the fear of powerful words into a sense of adventure. At its best, it turns “no” into “yes.”

Since 2000, WillPower has reached more than 100,000 students in dozens of counties in and around Pennsylvania, particularly in the Lehigh Valley, introducing them to both the poignancy and penetrating insights of Shakespeare and to live, professional theatre.

One of the joys of my position, in addition to personally overseeing the WillPower workshop development, is visiting a school with the tour each year with Linny Fowler, a PSF board member and Lehigh Valley philanthropist who has dedicated her time and resources to this endeavor. We usually share a meal with some of the student participants.

In recent years, it has been my privilege to do so in a school with a very high percentage of at-risk students. We build audiences in many different ways, but we build community one person at a time.

Looking these young people in the eye, shaking their hands, hearing their stories, and thanking them for welcoming us to their school has become my favorite, and in some cases, the most disarming and beguiling event of the year. We produce tragedies.



Kimberley Wong and Brandon Meeks in the 2011 tour of *Romeo and Juliet*.

They live them. At least some of them do. Nothing is more gratifying than their reports of how Shakespeare’s art resonates with them, how his ability to frame an argument inspires them, and how the characters, relationships, and events reflect back to them truths of their existence, and in doing so, create for them a sense of shared experience.

A sense of belonging is a fundamental human need. British writer and philosopher Roger Scruton observes that art and beauty

bring us into an experience of not only aesthetic pleasure, but also the sense that a world that makes room for such things also makes room for us. Belonging. My ultimate goal is for each student to discover through the WillPower experience aspects of her own being and sense in herself her connectedness to the larger human community and to a world that makes room for her.

As a recipient of community, corporate, and foundation support, PSF has the opportunity to make the introduction to students

## WillPower by the Numbers .

- Since the beginning of the tour in 2000, WillPower has served 110,665 students in 141 schools in 40 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, as well as students in New Jersey and Delaware.
- Last year, *Romeo and Juliet* reached 10,365 students from 28 schools and 6 homeschools in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, logging 2,886 miles.
- This fall, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* tours October 3 through November 2.

Contact Jill Arington at [jill.arington@pashakespeare.org](mailto:jill.arington@pashakespeare.org) or 610.282.9455, ext. 9, or visit [www.pashakespeare.org/willpower](http://www.pashakespeare.org/willpower).



# er WillPower Tour Scores with Students



Caitlin Kinsella and Ed Swidey in the 2007 tour of *Macbeth*.

in schools that would have had no other chance at a live, professional production of a Shakespeare play. In particular, WillPower is among a prestigious group of less than 40 theatre companies nationwide to participate in the National Endowment for the Arts “Shakespeare for a New Generation” program. The NEA grant has allowed PSF to expand into the farther reaches of Pennsylvania, providing the necessary funding for travel and overnight expenses for the WillPower company.

However, most of the students we reach are much closer to home, and we aim to turn the Lehigh Valley—Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton—into *Shakespeare Valley* for the young people in this community.

As school districts face difficult budget decisions, community, foundation, and corporate support becomes more and more important. We hope you will join with us in supporting this endeavor. ■

“I want to go home and start reading it so I can make connections in my mind and make it my own. I can’t wait to find my favorite Shakespeare play!”

—Student, *Macbeth*,  
Somerset Area Senior High School

## Foundation Calls on Community to Support WillPower

A local foundation is anonymously asking the community to join it in supporting PSF’s Linny Fowler WillPower Tour. The foundation has made a three-year commitment in support of WillPower and will match gifts from individuals and the corporate community.

“The foundation’s directors realize the difficult budgeting decisions most school districts are facing and want to ensure that students are able to experience and continue to experience WillPower performances and workshops in their schools,” says Deb Walter, director of development. The foundation will match gifts designated for WillPower made by new Festival donors and will also match increases from current Festival donors who choose to include WillPower in their Festival giving—up to a total of \$5,000 in each of the next three years.

To make a contribution to PSF’s Linny Fowler WillPower Tour, call Deb Walter, at 610.282.9455, ext. 6, or e-mail at [debra.walter@pashakespeare.org](mailto:debra.walter@pashakespeare.org).

## .. And In Review

**“We loved the performance but the workshops were the star of the trip. Organization was outstanding and all actors were consummate professionals. I cannot sing the praises of the program enough!”**

—A teacher from St. Mary’s Area High School in Elk County, Pa.

**“Within the first ten minutes of the play, you guys made me understand the beauty of Shakespeare.”**

—Student, *Hamlet*

**“This was my first Shakespeare play that I’ve gotten to watch, and it was the greatest thing I have ever seen.”**

—Student, Somerset Area Senior High School



Messina's going to be an Italian town with an old-time duke. They're on hard times in the modern world.

I'm using music that evokes Nino Rota<sup>1</sup> and having a song composed in his style. This will allow the dancing in Act II to be lively and sexy. I plan to incorporate a clown theme from Fellini's *8 1/2* to help the character of Dogberry.

**You're also a director of new plays, so when you say, "help with the character of Dogberry," do you mean there's a problem with that character or a larger dramaturgical problem that your production concept will have to resolve?**

Both. One thing I am borrowing from the A.J. Antoon production is when the guys come home from the war at the beginning of the play, there will be a little Italian band—a welcome home committee of sorts, including Dogberry and Verges. So we've seen them and maybe they'll be around in scene changes. There will already be a zany layer to the production from the beginning, instead of having these characters appear two-thirds of the way through. When they show up it won't be, 'Who are those guys?' but 'Oh, those guys, now what are they about?'

*Much Ado About Nothing* is a wonderful play—with a significant challenge for the director in Act IV during the wedding scene. Part of what's interesting is that the play is funny and yet there's a semi-serious dramatic plot. Claudio's denunciation of Hero (in that scene) always requires a solution so he doesn't feel clueless to me, like he's an utter idiot. In the movie directed by Kenneth Branagh, for example, Claudio's played as a mooncalf: a young, pretty guy who really is a good guy—but who vilifies (his fiancé) Hero on her wedding day for no particular reason.

There is in the world of *Much Ado* a patriarchal machismo complex; your status with the other males is dependent on the virtue and faithfulness of your woman. Even Leonato, who is a good father, turns on his daughter in the most vicious, awful way. I want that scene, if possible, to have some truly appalling power, so I plan to emphasize the importance of that machismo in the

world of the production. And Italy's association with the tradition of male honor will help that.

**Since you're working on a new play right now, if *Much Ado About Nothing* were a new play, what would you say to the playwright?**

(Laughs.) I would say: "Bill, would you look at Act IV and find an even better way to introduce that conflict and to play it through? The Hero/Claudio plot hints at wonderful possibilities. I'd like you to give them a bit more."

What the scene in Act IV does lead to, which is brilliant in its own way—you know there's always someone saying that Shakespeare has a defect, but there's never a defect that isn't a manifestation of some other level of brilliance—is a scene between Beatrice and Benedick where, in the middle of a declaration of romantic love, Beatrice asks him to kill Claudio. As a love scene, it's one of the most charming and heart-stopping scenes ever written. Shakespeare throws these things together and there's a chemical reaction.

**Yes, however it does thematically make this a play about loyalty and friendship. As Claudio says in Act II: "Friendship is constant in all other things/Save in the office and the affairs of love."**

Well, it makes me think of last year's PSF production of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* right away. There are these brothers who deeply love each other and would kill for each other, but the moment they both fall in love with the same girl, they hate each other forever. It's a hideous male trope. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, there is friendship and even ease across social boundaries. The Prince is chummy with the soldiers like Benedick and Claudio, who are immediately under him. As an aristocrat, he's not aloof. Don John is aloof, but he's that way

for another reason. Of course, being military bonds them all; you hear this from soldiers who are off at war now.

While friendship is celebrated in this play, friendship is also very fragile when it comes to the point of honor. And the point of honor is always dependent upon competition between men. Harmony depends on everyone accepting his or her place in the hierarchy. I thought about this a lot when I was directing *Anthony and Cleopatra* in Pittsburgh. Octavius emulates Anthony and loves Anthony and looks up to Anthony... and has to kill Anthony. Male rivalry and male friendship are weirdly interconnected. If you can find a truce in the rivalry, you'll have a great time. But there's always the possibility of a fault line.

**That's true for the men. In this play I don't think Beatrice and Hero are rivals in any way. In fact, Beatrice puts Benedick's love to the test by demanding he kill Claudio to defend Hero.**

Well she has to, because Beatrice is part of this male system and she has to protect her cousin's honor. Beatrice is saying Hero's honor is just as important as Claudio's and perhaps that's more of a progressive point of view in this macho society: that a female wronged has as much right as a male wronged.

**As we were talking about responding to other productions, what I am hearing from you is that other productions made choices that helped you recognize certain storytelling challenges in the play that you have to reckon with in your production.**

When I looked back at a DVD of Antoon's production, it's so warm and full of feeling that I just loved it again. Yet I don't want to do that sentimental a production. Fellini's Italy will give me tartness, but also the clowning and celebration of life.

**I also find your concept parallels Elizabethan attitudes towards Italy as an "other place." For them, Italy was a more deviant culture, and so setting the play in Italy for the Elizabethans meant that the plot could push the boundaries of what was culturally acceptable. For example, in Act II at the masked ball there are all those undertones of what you can get away with on a night of revelry by masking your identity. That's**

## *Much Ado* ABOUT *Nothing*

JULY 11 - AUGUST 5  
MAIN STAGE



the “other” wicked world of Italy, not England.

Right, social identities that are so defined in hierarchy are allowed in a carnival world to be let go. I’m hoping that the actors will find it fun and liberating.

I think another thing that tends to happen with *Much Ado* is that it turns into a ‘style comedy’ where everyone is ‘very very British and brittle’ and the sexual tension between Beatrice and Benedick gets downplayed. At the same time, I don’t want to vulgarize it.

**Beatrice is able to get her digs in at Benedick, calling him “the Prince’s jester” perhaps because they are outside the social norm at a masked Italian ball.**

Beatrice is a unique character in Shakespeare’s canon as a woman who is so confident in her own consciousness that she can play any way she wants. Unlike Rosalind in *As You Like It*, instead of giving Beatrice a nice looking wrestler, Shakespeare gives her Benedick, and Benedick gives her a hard time as the bad-mouther of love. Rosalind is an out-cast; Beatrice is in society and manages in society. Beatrice can handle the Duke of Arragon when he proposes to her and she tells him very elegantly to get lost. Beatrice and Benedick are portrayed as matched equals by Shakespeare. I am hoping to bring that forward with an emphasis on the hot temper in the play. ■

Heather Helinsky is a freelance dramaturg with an MFA from A.R.T./Moscow Art Theatre Institute for Advanced Theatre Training at Harvard and a BA in theatre from DeSales, class of 2001. In the fall, she will be a visiting assistant professor of dramaturgy at Carnegie Mellon University.

<sup>1</sup>Nino Rota (1911-1979) was a renowned Italian composer of opera, ballet and orchestral works who also wrote film scores for leading directors of his time, including Federico Fellini and Luchino Visconti. He composed the music for two of Franco Zeffirelli’s Shakespeare films, and for the first two films of Francis Ford Coppola’s *Godfather* trilogy. He received the Academy Award for Best Original Score in 1974 for *The Godfather: Part II*.

**Snow White**, played by Leah Poyo, describes her dreams of adventure beyond the castle where she lives. On stage through August 4, the production has won accolades from parents and children alike.



Photo by Lee A. Butz.

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## The Gospel According to Saint Mark

Monday, July 23, 7:30 p.m.

Veteran actor, Emmy winner, and PSF regular Wayne S. Turney has enraptured audiences around the country for the past 25 years with his singular performance of *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. Well known to PSF audiences for his turns as Mr. Bennet, Polonius, and others, Turney breathes life into the character and words of St. Mark in the elegant cadences of the King James version. Turney is also appearing in *The Tempest* at PSF this summer.

An actor, director, playwright, and educator, Turney is a professor of theatre at DeSales University. In residence for 13 years at the Cleveland Play House, Turney performed in featured roles as varied as Custer and Scrooge. He was seen for nearly ten years every Saturday morning in Cleveland and other cities on the highly honored children's show *Hickory Hideout*, for which he served as staff writer and won an Emmy.

A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University with a BA in math and theatre, Turney accepted a commission in the United States Air Force in 1968 and became a SAC pilot at Reese Air Force Base, Tex. He served as a pilot of EC-135 Airborne Command Posts with the Third Airborne Command and Control Squadron for the next four years, during which time he directed a series of fund raisers for the POW-MIA fund, won several talent contests, and served as commander of *Tops in Blue* '72.

On separation from the service at the end of the Vietnam War, Turney spent three years at the famed Hilberry Repertory Theatre at Wayne State University, where he earned an MFA (and PhD ABD).

He is the author, translator, or adaptor of nine works, including a musical adaptation of Dickens' *A Cricket on the Hearth* and was co-founder, with his wife Rev. Harper Jane McAdoo Turney, of the Cleveland Actors Theatre Company.

Wayne S. Turney (left) as St. Mark and as Mr. Bennet (up right) in *Pride and Prejudice* at PSF last season. Jo Twiss, who played Mrs. Bennet, returns this season as Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and Antonia in *Much Ado About Nothing*.



## Victoria Clark – Live in Concert

Monday, July 30, 7:30 p.m.

Winner of the Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards for her luminous portrayal of mother Margaret Johnson in *The Light in the Piazza* on Broadway, Victoria Clark is a favorite among audiences and critics. *The New York Times*' Ben Brantley called Clark's work in *Piazza* "the best musical performance by an actress this season."



Equally at home on Broadway, in film, television, and on the concert stage, she starred as Mother Superior in the original cast of the hit Broadway musical *Sister Act*, garnered nominations for Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards, and she received the Drama League honor last year. She was among an elite group of featured performers in "Stephen Sondheim: The Birthday Concert held at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall," televised on PBS. Recently, she performed with the New York Philharmonic at Avery Fisher Hall.

Clark's recordings include her debut solo album, *Fifteen Seconds of Grace*, the original cast albums of *The Light in the Piazza*, *Titanic*, *A Grand Night for Singing*, and *Far From the Madding Crowd*; the new

Broadway cast albums of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* with Linda Eder; the soundtrack for *Cradle Will Rock*, and soundtracks of numerous Disney animated musicals.

Clark received a 2010 Drama Desk award for her portrayal of Gabrielle York in the Lincoln Center's heralded production of *When the Rain Stops Falling*. She also starred opposite Nathan Gunn in the staged concert production of *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall.

Victoria Clark (seated) and Kelli O'Hara from the Lincoln Center Theater's production of *The Light in the Piazza*. Clark's performance won her the Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle Awards. Photo by Joan Marcus.





Rob Kahn's Benedick be different than his Gooper? How will *One Life to Live* star Tom Degan's Brick be different from his Don John? There's only one way to find out.

In the meantime, we hope you either have enjoyed or are about to enjoy our Broadway headliners Dee Roscioli and William Michals in *Sweeney Todd*. Broadway performances—one third of the cost, free parking, no Lincoln Tunnel, no long drive home.

We've packed the casts of *The Tempest* and *King John* with a PSF all-star team. If you've been coming to PSF for some time, it may feel like a reunion, only better.

Another advanced challenge for an actor is a full-evening solo performance. Honestly, we don't teach that in actor training. It's perhaps the ultimate test for actors: to hold an audience rapt with just the scope and scale of their talent, artistry, and skill, and to do it alone. In addition to William's solo concert, Emmy-winner Wayne Turney will perform his one-man show, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, on July 23, and Victoria Clark will perform a concert featuring the sensitivity and grace that led to her Tony Award for best leading actress in a musical for *The Light in the Piazza* and her Tony nomination for *Sister Act*. Look for that exquisite performance on July 30.

Shakespeare, transformation, productions in rep, solo performances: these are the peaks artists scale so that we might see vistas through their eyes we could not otherwise imagine. Extraordinary experiences await you between now and August 5. Join us.

Patrick Mulcahy  
PSF Producing Artistic Director

Throughout the season, visit  
**PaShakespeare.org**  
to join our e-list  
for news, videos, and more

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# Shakespeare as a Friend for Life

More is better, say two PSF board members. Paul Domalakes and Linda Lapos have attended more PSF productions than they can count—and there are several productions they have enjoyed multiple times.

Domalakes, an attorney in Frackville, has only missed one production in PSF's 20-year history. "In the beginning, I felt it my duty as a board member to be at opening night, and then I wanted to come back to just enjoy the show, visit with friends in the show, and experience the Festival. I saw the original *Shrew* at least three times; two of the three *Hamlets* and the original *Midsummer* and both productions of *Othello* twice.

"It does seem I've seen *Twelfth Night* 12 times," he said.

Fearless fans of Shakespeare, Domalakes and his wife Patti "made a commitment to expose our children to good theatre and Shakespeare early, so we made PSF a family affair." One of his daughters attended *As You Like It* in 1996 when she was just four days old. Another daughter saw *Hamlet* at PSF as a pre-schooler and then repeatedly dragged her friends into the house to watch Mel Gibson's *Hamlet* video throughout the summer. At age 6, one daughter saw PSF's first production of *Othello* and "thoughtfully compared it to another production ten years later."

Lapos, a surgeon, bought tickets the first season, and "I was hooked immediately," she recalls. Lapos loves seeing new productions of the same plays. "For one thing, if you already know the basic plot, it is easier to get beyond the action, and instead think more about the characters and their motives and transformations.

"There always is anticipation—wondering how the director and cast will do something innovative to put a new twist on it. Shakespeare's plays are so deep, and in many ways ambiguous, that there is always an opportunity for a new insight or a different interpretation."

Domalakes agrees. He paraphrases Heraclitus, "You can never step into the same Shakespeare twice." He explains, "Any production of any theatrical piece will have intriguing differences, some imaginative and inspiring, others irritating. The Bard's plays don't just lend themselves, but really demand immersing yourself multiple times in layer upon layer of the reality of human psychology wrapped in elegant language. How the different actors and directors choose to unravel these mysteries is part of the whole experience."

He also enjoys how his appreciation of the value of a play changes as he himself changes. As he matures, he says the character of Hamlet "begins to exasperate me and Prospero intrigues me." His view of *The Taming of the Shrew* has changed from "an outdated misogynist's revel to a Christian parable of the power of humility to transform."

Lapos and her husband, Paul Wirth, delight in introducing new people to PSF. "It seems that even folks who are very sophisticated about the arts, or who are up on the Lehigh Valley scene are pleasantly surprised when they come to PSF for the first time. They are amazed by the high quality of the productions and the cast." ■



Paul and Patricia "Patti" Domalakes enthusiastically supported PSF from its earliest days. They are pictured here in front of the lobby showcard for PSF's very first production the summer of 1992, *The Taming of the Shrew*.



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## Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival in the News

### Arts Ovation Awarded to Mulcahy

The Allentown Arts Commission awarded “Outstanding Achievement in the Performing Arts” to Producing Artistic Director Patrick Mulcahy at its annual Arts Ovation event in May.

“The focus is on the individual who has had a major impact on the city of Allentown,” says Charles Kalan, event co-chair and vice president of the Arts Commission. “People in Allentown flock to the Festival—though the Festival is not located in the city, it has a major impact.”

Under Mulcahy’s leadership, PSF achieved record-breaking attendance in 2009 and 2011, increased its artistic programming and financial strength, and expanded its reach.

The Festival as an institution had previously received the award in 1997, which was received by PSF founder Fr. Gerard J. Schubert, OSFS.

The 24th annual Arts Ovation celebration also honored Lee A. Butz with the “Lifetime Achievement Award,” recognizing his photography of PSF productions, the publication of his book last year, *Majestic Vision: The Photography of Lee Butz at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival*, and for his many contributions to the quality of life in the Valley. The award is only the third the Commission has conferred.

### PSF to host Shakespeare Convention

“There’s a convention for *everything*,” a friend commented when PSF Managing Director Casey Gallagher posted on Facebook that he was attending the annual international Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA) conference. As treasurer

of STA, Gallagher had a leadership role in bringing the conference—which will be held in January—to PSF.

STA includes 120 member theatres from 40 states, the U.K., Australia, Italy, Canada, Germany, Poland, Brazil, and Hungary. An estimated 150 representatives will attend.

PSF is in good company as host. The conference was recently hosted by Shakespeare’s Globe in London, and in 2014, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada will host.

Established in 1991, STA provides a forum for the artistic, managerial, and educational leadership of theatres primarily involved with producing the works

of William Shakespeare. STA explores issues and methods of work, resources, and information; and acts as an advocate for Shakespearean productions and training.

It also helps bridge the gap between scholarship and production, and promotes better teaching of Shakespeare in schools.

The format of the conference runs the spectrum from panel discussions to speeches by notable figures in the field, workshops, performances, small gatherings, receptions, and a closing banquet dinner.

“STA is a source of inspiration and camaraderie,” says Gallagher, “and it is truly a great privilege to host our colleagues here at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival.” ■



“On the Green” at PSF features the welcoming ambiance of live harp and lute music, and the Shakespeare Café offers artisan sandwiches, salads, and desserts. Or bring your own picnic and cheer! Photo by Jenae Holtzhafer.