



2017 Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival

Planning is Underway

Batten down the hatches! All ashore, that's going ashore! What better title for the Shakespeare Festival to bring to the Grand Valley Lakers than *The Tempest*. The festival welcomes back Curt Tofteland, who was the Resident Scholar in 2009 presenting on his work developing the Shakespeare Behind Bars program and screening the film documenting that work. He returns for 2017 as guest director for our Mainstage production of *The Tempest*, which, interestingly, is the play that the prisoners were performing as showcased in the Shakespeare Behind Bars documentary. Since moving to Michigan, Curt has continued his work, founding a Shakespeare Behind Bars program at the Ernest C. Brooks Correctional Facility in Muskegon. More details about Curt and his



phenomenal work is available at <http://www.shakespearebehindbars.org/>.

The Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival production of *The Tempest* will feature a mixture of student and local guest actors in a vibrant and imaginative production. The play gives the aged and wronged former Duke of Milan, Prospero, exiled to this strange island,

an opportunity to confront those villains from the past who overthrew him when they are shipwrecked by the titular storm. But is the play an opportunity for revenge or redemption? There's also the developing love story between Prospero's daughter Miranda and Ferdinand, one of those shipwrecked. Added in to it all is great magic done by Prospero with the aid of the mysterious air spirit, Ariel, who Prospero commands. One of Shakespeare's final plays, our production of *The Tempest* will be a production not to be missed.

Along with *The Tempest*, the festival will include our touring show Bard to Go. The ensemble piece that features six actors and a stage manager will perform *The Wonder of Will*. We will also look forward to welcoming another visiting scholar and a Greenshow production, both still to be named. We look forward to having you join us and also see our newly constructed facilities (bricks were being laid today as this was being written) that we will find a way to show off for the festival. See you then!



PAC News

On Friday, April 29, 2016, the Board of Trustees signed off on a \$20 million Performing Arts Center expansion project, which is set to be completed in August 2017. "The facility is designed to address some demanding issues both within the theater and music programs," James Moyer, associate vice president for facilities and planning, told trustees.

The 44,000 square feet addition will bring GVSU's Theatre and Music programs into the regional spot light. Among the new facilities will be a 150 seat Black Box theatre, new theatre lab classroom and rehearsal spaces, new costume, dressing room, and makeup spaces, additional instructional classrooms, offices, a redesigned theatre shop as well as a new lobby and meeting area.



The fourth bi-annual Shakespeare Pedagogy and Performance Conference held in Allendale and in downtown Grand Rapids October 7-9, 2016, continued to successfully expand offerings from earlier years. An additional half-day of sessions, a bonus plenary speaker, and local teacher scholarships generously provided by CLAS contributed to a dynamic event. As in the past, Michigan teachers earned State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECHs) by participating. The conference kicked off on October 7

with the first plenary presentation by Professional Dramaturge Dr. Martine Green-Rogers, who spoke about Oregon Shakespeare Festival's "Play On!" Translation Project. Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company provided a thoughtful conference wide workshop before Professor Emeritus Phyllis Rackin's keynote contributed to a diversity of perspectives spanning decades of her Shakespeare scholarship. In between presenter sessions on October 8, Stratford's Festival Director of Education Andrea Gammon enlightened conference goers

with a second plenary session, presenting on lesson plans and outreach with Canadian children. The Saturday of the conference ended with a lively Pigeon Creek production of *The Tempest*. 78 registrants enjoyed paper presentations and workshops from artists and educators who came in from across the United States, Canada, and Great Britain before the conference wrapped up on October 9 with a screening of the documentary "Still Dreaming." The conference committee plans on continuing to grow the event when it is offered again in 2018.





2016 Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival

The 2016 Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival was most eventful, enjoyable, and rewarding. We hope you were able to enjoy it with us. The season began with a lot of anxiety as it was a year in transition. Last spring, Grand Valley finalized plans for an immediate renovation to the Performing Arts Center that left the green room, dressing rooms, costume shop, and a big portion of the lobby demolished. With the costume shop relocated to our only rehearsal space, rehearsals were moved to a temporary room created out of what will be an extension to the lobby. As excited as we were for the changes, the transition was quite a challenge. But, as is always the case, the show MUST GO ON and it did! We held our annual festival complete with our Mainstage production of *Measure for Measure* directed by Roger Ellis, our biannual Shakespeare Festival Conference on Pedagogy and Performance with guest keynote scholar Phyllis Rackin, a new concept Bard to Go featuring a

condensed production of a single play, *Macbeth*, our Greenshow production of the Elizabethan satire *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and our WillPower summer camp.

Measure for Measure featured several local actors returning to perform with Grand Valley student actors. Christopher Weaver performed Duke Vincentio, Grand Valley theatre and Shakespeare Festival alum Kyle Westmaas played The Provost, and Gary Mitchell played Escalus. The production featured a more modern setting for this rather dark, near tragic comedy.

The Greenshow, which is usually a light, rather interactive piece in renaissance dress, did not disappoint this year. Grand Valley Theatre and Shakespeare Festival alum Kyle Walker returned to direct another fun and energetic production, this time Beaumont and Fletcher's rarely seen *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* satirized theatre itself in a production that was performed for the conference, for the general public, and for the annual Renaissance Faire.

WillPower had to be shortened to just a week because of space issues with the demolition and construction, but camp and the show went on much to the delight of those young campers who participated.

In all, despite the bumps and challenges of being under construction, the festival proved that as always, where there's Will, there's a way, and that way is here at our annual festival.



In Bollywood Shakespeare has found many admirers, who have turned his plays and stories into Bollywood blockbusters. Veteran Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah once said, "The roots may look lost, but every big story in the Hindi film industry is from Shakespeare."

Bard-to-Go

Bard-to-Go has continued its 15-year tradition of bringing Shakespeare into the communities of Michigan and around the globe, but this year it features a twist! Rather than a thematically related compilation of scenes, Bard-to-Go has been presenting an exciting, fast-paced, condensed version of *Macbeth*. Each of the six actors play multiple roles, often needing to switch costumes in a matter of seconds. The production was well-received by more than 2,000 students at eleven western Michigan schools last fall. The tour will culminate May 2-4 when the group performs at three bilingual schools in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



COMING UP ON 25 YEARS!

The 2018 Shakespeare Festival will also mark the 25th Anniversary since the Festival was founded. The Shakespeare Festival Committee has

already been planning for months to celebrate the event in a big way. GVSF has commissioned an all-alumni play project that includes an original alumni-written script, and a week of performances by Festival alumni in the new black box theatre. Plans are also set for an Alumni Picnic, with free babysitting while parents attend a

matinee performance of *King Lear*. There will be a glorious full-color souvenir booklet of 25 years of Festival history; and of course, the opening night reception will be hosted as usual by Festival Theatre alumni into the wee hours. Be sure to check for dates of the 2018 events, to be announced soon.

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