

We're celebrating 25 years!

GRAND VALLEY  
  
 Shakespeare Festival

It was 25 years ago that Ty Warner first launched Beanie Babies while the Space Shuttle Endeavour launched on its 5th mission to repair a defect in the Hubble Space Telescope. American scientists also created the first human embryo clones, and the first Jurassic Park movie was in theaters. And of course, the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival was founded, producing its first play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one year later.

Grand Valley's student body has doubled since 1993, but as of 2017, the Festival continues to be the most heavily attended show on the stage of the Louis Armstrong

Theatre each year. In addition to its Michigan audiences, GVSF has reached audiences in China, the Dominican Republic, Canada, Italy, the Czech Republic, and the Caribbean.

To honor the Festival's silver anniversary and the upcoming production of *King Lear*, the theme for 2018 is "A Silver Coronation." There will be merchandise celebrating this milestone including cards, shirts, pins, a commemorative book, and even a promotional video featuring past alumni who were involved.

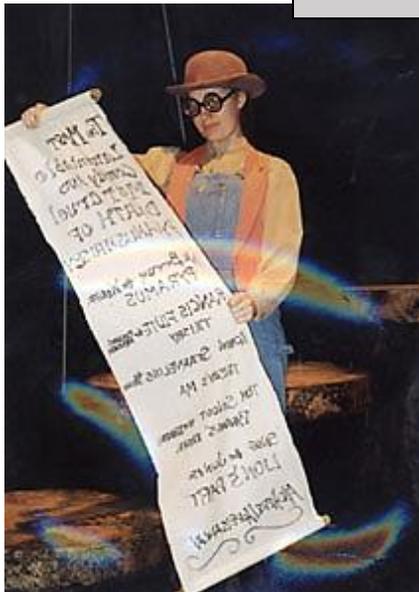
Thank you to everyone who has been a part of the Festival through the years. Here's to the next 25!



**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival Events**

- *King Lear* plays September 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm; Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm; with student matinees on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.
- **Biannual Performance and Pedagogy Conference**, "My Crown is My Heart, Not on my Head" will be from Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. It includes a **Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Performance** (Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30), paper sessions, and teacher workshops. As a part of the **annual Scholar presentation**, the **Conference Keynote Address by Folger Guest Scholar, Michael LoMonico**, will be Friday September 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm and is free to the public.
- The **Alumni Show, Defy the Stars**, will be on Wednesday Oct 3 at 7:30, on Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm, and on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. In addition, the **Alumni Picnic** (with babysitting included) will be on Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- **Bard to Go** tours on October 12, 19, 26, November 2, with a public performance on November 3.
- Annual **Greenshow** on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00pm and at the GV Renaissance Festival.
- **Bard Beyond Borders: An International Shakespeareance**, featuring global Shakespeare companies' performances, will be in Dec. 2018, Feb 2019, and April 2019.

THEN & NOW



(Kathy McIlheny as Snug, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1994.)



(Atis Kleinbergs, as Prospero, and Seth Burton, as Caliban, *The Tempest*, 2017.)

## A Look at Last Year

The 24<sup>th</sup> season of the annual **Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival** was eventful as always, but there were some new and exciting wrinkles—most importantly, space renovations came to an end, and the newly named **Thomas J. and Marcia J. Haas Center for the Performing Arts** was opened! The new space meant our 2017 Festival enjoyed an expanded lobby, new rehearsal spaces, a new and much larger costume shop, new green rooms and dressing rooms, and more.

The Festival featured the return of **Festival Guests John F. Andrews and Curt Tofteland**. Andrews was GVSF's very first Resident Scholar, and his public presentation and class visitations delighted the many in attendance. Tofteland, founder of Shakespeare Behind Bars and well-known freelance theatre artist, returned to direct our **mainstage production of *The Tempest***. With its arresting trio of Ariels, on-stage cello music (by acclaimed faculty member Pablo Mahave-Veglia), myriad guest actors, and magical sets and costumes, audiences (including over 1400 secondary students) enjoyed the thrill of live Shakespeare.



*The Tempest*, with its opening shipwreck, served as a reminder to what was also a tragically tempestuous summer with storm after storm as well as earthquakes devastating many areas. As a small gesture, the Festival donated 5% of *Tempest* ticket sales to the American Red Cross.

**Bard to Go** brought the Bard himself back to life for *The Wonder of Will: This is Your Afterlife*. BTG performed a record number of times, including venues at ArtPrize (as a featured entry), at Loosemore Auditorium for GVSU Charter Schools, at GVSU Family Weekend, and at the Shakespeare in Paradise Festival, in Nassau, the Bahamas—plus BTG's regular 4-week tour to Michigan-area schools.

The 2017 Festival also included **Greenshow performances** at Family Weekend and the Grand Valley Renaissance Faire of Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, deftly directed and adapted by alumnus Kyle Walker. We also screened the documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars* with a discussion by Tofteland; offered **Shakespeare specialty workshops** and an abbreviated session of **Will Power-The Shakespeare Camp for Kids**; finally concluding with the **Annual Awards Ceremony** for the student competition in writing, visual arts, and performing arts.

## 2017 Bard to Go Cast Travels to Nassau for the Shakespeare in Paradise Festival

“The icing on the cake for me was, not surprisingly, the international leg of the tour to Nassau (The Bahamas). The time we spent there was special to not only all of us as a group, but to each of us individually. I had the privilege of seeing some of my castmates experience their first steps outside of the country, their first time seeing the ocean, feeling the ocean wash over their feet, tasting, hearing, feeling a different culture wash over them like the Bahamian waves under the Bahamian sun on a Bahamian afternoon with a cast of their closest friends. Not only the travel, but the opportunity to perform and see performances in this other culture made the trip absolutely unforgettable. I'll never have the words to describe the gratitude I have to the Festival at large for this opportunity.” Parker Ykimoff, cast member (pictured left)



## A Look at This Year

### *King Lear*: “Men must endure / Their going hence, even as their coming hither.”

**A** play that requires passion from its audience as well as its actors, *King Lear* has been called “the mountain” among Shakespeare’s plays, the high peak of both effort and reward. The Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival Company is excited to bring *King Lear* to the stage in our 25th Anniversary year. *Lear* inspires us to live up to the challenge of this masterwork by creating a play that is still relevant to our time. This tragedy speaks to the heart of the human predicament and to the great social questions that continue to define our times as they did Shakespeare’s: How does a new generation emerge from the shadow of the old? How do the failures of one generation continue to reverberate in the next? How responsible is our society for the welfare of its most

vulnerable members, and how will we be judged if we neglect them? The big questions that artists help us explore—gender and identity, social justice and the nature of human bonds—all of these are raised in this play. So perhaps on our darkest days, when we need to ask the ultimate question, when nihilism beckons and we feel with blinded Gloucester, that “like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport,” *King Lear*, by its very size and grandeur, and the effort it requires of us, helps us see hope in the human condition. Perhaps by the strength of our effort to endure the trauma and absorb the beauty of this tremendous play, we can at the end be inspired to live a more meaningful life as we endeavor to “speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.”



### Shakespeare Theatre Association 2018

**G**rand Valley Shakespeare participated at the annual conference of the Shakespeare Theatre Association on Jan 17-20. This event, hosted by Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, included companies that ranged from small festivals with tiny budgets to large, multi-million-dollar theatres such as American Shakespeare Center and Canada’s Stratford Festival. Attendees came from as far as the Czech Republic, Argentina, and the Bahamas.

There were many outstanding conference sessions on academic and performance topics, such as performing Shakespeare in translation, and using original Folio editions as a tool to understand the text. One session even discussed “political” Shakespeare, including the backlash New York’s Public Theatre experienced after the production of the controversial “Trump” *Julius Caesar* last summer.

The best part, however, was the opportunity to see both old faces and new and to help keep GV Shakespeare as a significant part of the wonderful worldwide coalition of Shakespeare producers.

### Shakespeare Festival Honorary Board Takes the Tour and Looks Forward

**T**he Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival Honorary Board met in the fall in the new Thomas J. and Marcia J. Haas Center for the Performing Arts to learn about the new facility and help form the plans for the 25th anniversary Festival in 2018-2019. The potential of the new facility was apparent to all, and it was a special delight to welcome Marcia Haas to the board. We said goodbye to previous Board members: Tim Cusack, Patricia and Gilbert Davis, Laura Salazar, Ruth Stegman, Bruce Tinker, and Wendy Wenner.

Many from the board were also able to attend a second meeting on the Pew Campus to brainstorm ways to increase audience engagement with the Festival and make the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary not only special for audiences, alumni and students, but to also strengthen the Festival’s sense of mission going forward. Faculty members noted the creativity and perspective the board members bring to the discussion. Special thanks to all current Board members: Dan Balfour, Paul Collins, Marcia Haas, Tom Harryman, Shelley Irwin, Don and Nancy Lubbers, Simha Magal and Vandana Pednakar-Magal, Gary Mitchell, and Mary Beth Quillan.





## Will Power Day Camp Completes Its 7th Summer

The Will Power Day Camp, a creative drama camp which engages elementary school students with Shakespeare's plays, held its 2017 summer session at Grand Valley with a group of second through sixth graders.



The Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company, a touring company based in West Michigan, provides teaching artists for this camp, which has become a regular program of the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival. For the 2017 camp session, teaching artists Angela Boyle, Francis Boyle, and Katherine Mayberry worked for one week with a group of ten campers. With activities focusing on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the group read and acted out scenes from the play; participated in language and movement games; drew their own costume and prop designs; learned beginning stage combat; and gave a final presentation to family and friends.

Because the Performing Arts Center was in the final stages of construction during the summer, the 2017 camp session took place at the Niemeyer Honors College. For the summer of 2018, the Shakespeare Festival looks forward to holding Will Power camp sessions in the brand-new theatre facilities of the Haas Performing Arts Center. **This year's camp will take place June 25-29 and July 9-13**, with campers in grades K-2 meeting from 9 a.m. to noon, and those in grades 3-6 meeting from 1-4 p.m. For further information about 2018 Will Power sessions, please email Karen Libman at [libmank@gvsu.edu](mailto:libmank@gvsu.edu).



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