

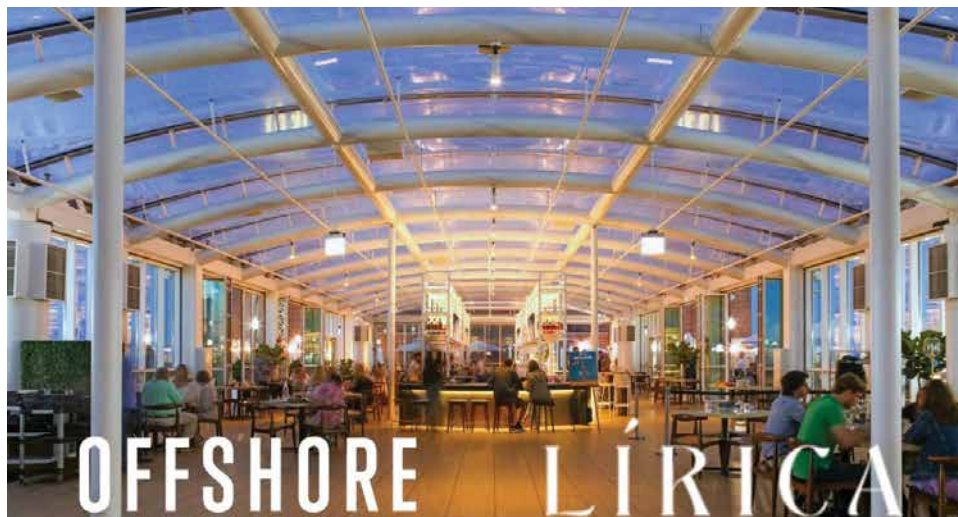
CHICAGO **SHAKESPEARE** THEATER

one ring to rule them all
one ring to bring them all
and in the shadow
of the great tree
under the pale moon
one ring to rule them all
one ring to bring them all
and in the shadow
of the great tree
under the pale moon

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

a
MUSICAL
TALE

BASED UPON THE BOOKS BY
J.R.R. TOLKIEN



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Welcome to the American premiere of *The Lord of the Rings*!

We are so proud to be able to bring this reimagining of Tolkien's magical, mystical, and thrilling journey to Chicago. Under the direction of Paul Hart with his brilliant team of creatives and our Chicago cast, this production represents the beginning of a summer of theatrical adventure at Chicago Shakespeare Theater as we add to the many events and celebrations happening throughout the city. Navy Pier, with the lake glistening in the sun, is the perfect place to escape into a world of fantasy and magic in *The Yard*.

Shakespeare's influence on Tolkien has been well documented, so if you enjoy *The Lord of the Rings*—do think about returning to see *Henry V* or Shakespeare's magical odyssey *Pericles* which comes to Chicago Shakespeare from the Royal Shakespeare Company, as they visit our city for the first time in thirty years.

We were thrilled to see some of our work celebrated at this year's Tony Awards. This event reminded us that non-profit theater plays such an essential part in new work development and the creation of theatrical excellence, not just at CST but at theaters all over the United States. This work often finds its way to Broadway and beyond. Your part in being here to enjoy any of our shows at the beginning of their journey is what makes our ambition possible, as we seek to create memorable events that linger long after the lights have dimmed. Our production of *The Lord of the Rings* will be heading to Auckland, New Zealand when it closes here, and it's with huge pleasure that we create it for you first in Chicago.

Have a wonderful time, and we hope to see you back again soon in one of our other theater spaces—if not all three!

Edward Hall
Artistic Director
Carl and Marilynn Thoma Chair

Kimberly Motes
Executive Director

NEW
SEASONAL
MENU

CHEF ART SMITH'S



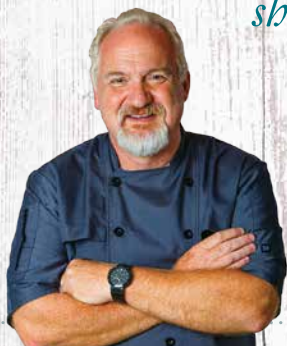
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Chicago's own celebrity chef Art Smith is a familiar face on the national food scene. He has a wonderful collection of successful restaurants in the US, and has enjoyed cooking for past presidents along with a myriad of celebrities. Now, Chef Art is bringing some of his most beloved recipes to the iconic Navy Pier, where his goal is to reunite friends and family, no matter the size or distance, and bring people back to the table.

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About CST

A Regional Tony Award recipient, Chicago Shakespeare Theater produces a bold and innovative year-round season—plays, musicals, world premieres, family productions, and theatrical presentations from around the globe—alongside education programming for students, teachers, and lifelong learners, and engagement with communities across the region.

Founded in 1986, the Theater has been celebrated and honored with numerous awards for artistic excellence. Chicago Shakespeare is the city's leading presenter of international work and has toured its own productions to five continents. The Theater is also dedicated to welcoming the next generation of theatergoers through robust educational programming and productions for all ages.

A national leader in the field, the Theater's arts-in-literacy programs support the work in classrooms across the region for tens of thousands of students each year by bringing complex texts to life onstage and through professional learning opportunities for teachers.

As a nonprofit organization, Chicago Shakespeare is, at its core, about people: connecting audiences and artists, partnering with teachers and students, and sharing with friends and neighbors. It is in this spirit that the Theater upholds its commitment to be an increasingly diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible organization. The Theater strives to engage today's artists and audiences in active and critical conversations with the work of its namesake, William Shakespeare.

Located on Chicago's iconic Navy Pier, Chicago Shakespeare's campus features the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare, and the Thoma Theater Upstairs. Onstage, in classrooms and neighborhoods across the city, and in venues around the world, Chicago Shakespeare is a multifaceted cultural center—inviting audiences, artists, and community members to share powerful stories that connect and inspire.

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Chicago Shakespeare Theater is proud to recognize the sustaining partnership of our Season Sponsors, whose visionary support ensures that we live out our artistic mission for audiences today and for generations to come.

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HAMLET

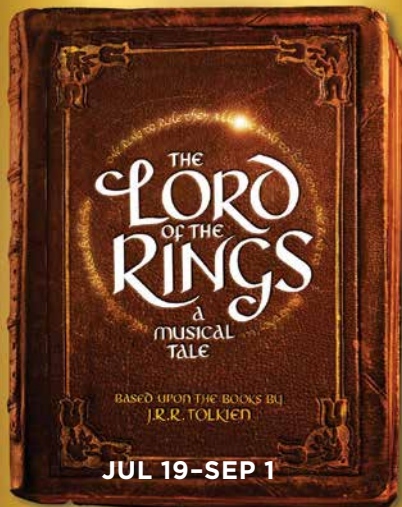


MAR 13–23

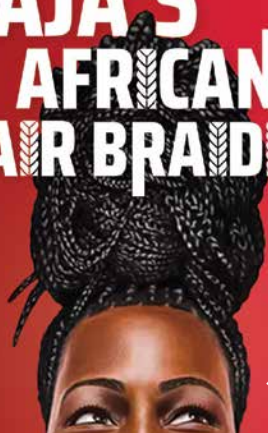
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CHICAGO **SHAKESPEARE** THEATER

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Artistic Director
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KIMBERLY MOTES
Executive Director

by special arrangement with **Kevin Wallace & William Bennett** for
Kevin Wallace Productions, Middle-earth Enterprises, GWB Entertainment,
Tim McFarlane, People Entertainment Group, and The Watermill Theatre

presents

THE LORD OF THE RINGS A MUSICAL TALE

Based on the books by **J.R.R. TOLKIEN**

Book and Lyrics by **SHAUN McKENNA** and **MATTHEW WARCHUS**

Music by **A.R. RAHMAN, VÄRTTINÄ,** and **CHRISTOPHER NIGHTINGALE**

Original Orchestrations by **CHRISTOPHER NIGHTINGALE,**
A.R. RAHMAN, and **VÄRTTINÄ**

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& Costume Design

SIMON KENNY

Lighting
Design

RORY BEATON

Original
Sound Design

ADAM FISHER

Chicago
Sound Design

NICHOLAS POPE

Projection
Design

GEORGE REEVE

Puppet
Design

CHARLIE TYMMS

Original
Puppet Direction

ASHLEIGH CHEADLE

Chicago
Puppet Direction

LINDSEY NOEL WHITING

Original Fight Direction

DANI McCALLUM

Chicago Fight & Intimacy Direction

RACHEL FLESHER

Associate Director

CHRISTA HARRIS

Casting

BOB MASON

Production Stage Manager

DAVID CASTELLANOS

Music Supervision & Orchestrations

MARK ASPINALL

Music Direction & Music Programming

MICHAEL McBRIDE

Choreographer & Movement Direction

ANJALI MEHRA

directed by **PAUL HART**

ASSOCIATE PRODUCTION SPONSOR **Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee New Work and Education Outreach Fund**

The performance runs 2 hours and 35 minutes plus a 15 minute intermission.

The Original Production of *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Matthew Warchus, opened at The Princess of Wales Theatre (Toronto) on the 23 March 2006. Its first London performance was at The Theatre Royal Drury Lane on 19 June 2007.

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Company

Legolas

Gandalf

Gollum

Frodo Baggins

Merry

Bilbo Baggins/Steward of Gondor

Rosie Cotton

Aragorn

Samwise Gamgee

Voice of Treebeard

Gimli

Pippin

Saruman/Elrond

Arwen

Boromir

Galadriel

Ensemble

JUSTIN ALBINDER*

TOM AMANDES*

TONY BOZZUTO*

SPENCER DAVIS MILFORD*

EILEEN DOAN

RICK HALL*

SUZANNE HANNAU

WILL JAMES JR.*

MICHAEL KUROWSKI*

JOHN LITHGOW*

IAN MARYFIELD*

BEN MATHEW

JEFF PARKER*

ALINA TABER*

MATTHEW C. YEE*

LAUREN ZAKRIN*

JOEY FAGGION

MIA HILT

JAMES MUELLER

JARAI MUSGROVE

HANNAH NOVAK

ADAM QUTAISHAT

LAURA SAVAGE*

BERNADETTE SANTOS SCHWEGEL

ARIK VEGA*

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance: **Andrew Bosworth** for *Gollum, Bilbo Baggins/Steward of Gondor, Saruman/Elrond, Ensemble*; **Joey Faggion** for *Ensemble*; **Suzanne Hannau** for *Ensemble*; **James Mueller** for *Ensemble*; **Hannah Novak** for *Ensemble*; **Luke Nowakowski** for *Samwise Gamgee, Merry*; **Jeff Parker*** for *Gandalf*; **Adam Qutaishat** for *Ensemble*; **Laura Savage*** for *Galadriel, Ensemble*; **Bernadette Santos Schwegel** for *Ensemble*; **Ty Shay** for *Frodo Baggins, Merry, Ensemble*; **Carter Rose Sherman** for *Arwen, Rosie, Ensemble*; **Kelan M. Smith** for *Ensemble*; **Tommy Thurston** for *Aragorn, Boromir, Gimli*.

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Production Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant Stage Manager

Production Assistant

DAVID CASTELLANOS*

DREW DONNELLY*

MICHAEL GEORGE*

SHANNON GOLDEN*

TUESDAY THACKER

*denotes member of Actors' Equity Association.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Dialect and Vocal Coach
Associate Lighting Designer
Associate Projection Designer
Dance Captain/Assistant to the
Choreographer and Movement Director
Fight Captain
UK Production Manager
Scenic Build and Painting
Lothlórien Ring
UK Props Supervision
UK Automation
UK Engineering
UK Cloths

UK Welding
Additional Scenic Work
Original Title Treatment Artwork

SUSAN GOSDICK
WILL ELPHINSTONE
IAIN SYME
LAURA SAVAGE*

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Song List

Act I

Prologue (Springle-ring)
The Road Goes On
Isengard
The Cat and the Moon
Flight to the Ford
The Song of the Traveller
Star of Eärendil
Lament for Moria
Across the Bridge of Khazad-dûm
Lothlórien

Act II

Ent Moot
The Siege of the City of Kings
Now and for Always
Gollum's Song
The Song of the Traveller (Duet)
Wonder
The Final Battle
Epilogue (Farewells)
Finale

Profiles

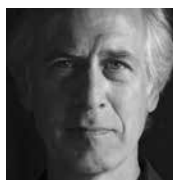


JUSTIN ALBINDER

(*Legolas*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut.
CHICAGO: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Marriott Theatre).
OFF BROADWAY:

Jersey Boys (New

World Stages). **TOUR:** *Jersey Boys* (2nd National Tour). **REGIONAL:** Phoenix Theatre Company, Mason St. Warehouse, Little Theatre on the Square, Cider Mill Playhouse, Hangar Theatre. **INTERNATIONAL:** Norwegian Cruise Lines, The Jersey Tenors, Uptown Boys Live. **FILM:** *The Cathedral*. **EDUCATION:** BFA in acting, Ithaca College. justinalbinder.com



TOM AMANDES

(*Gandalf*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut.
CHICAGO: *At Home at the Zoo*, *Cynical Weathers*, *Working Magic* (Victory Gardens Theater);

Othello, *The Mystery Cycle*, *Candida*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *The Beggar's Opera*, *What the Butler Saw* (Court Theatre); *Free Advice from Prague*, *The Courtship of Carl Sandburg* (Northlight Theatre); *Falstaff and Hal*, *Season's Greetings*, *A Life*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *Translations* (Body Politic Theatre). **LOS ANGELES:** *Celestial Events*, *The Cult of Love*, *A Species Native to California* (IAMA Theatre). **FILM:** *Saving Lincoln*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Brokedown Palace*, *A Million Little Pieces*, *Lucky*, *Billboard Dad*, *Grounded*. **TELEVISION:** *Perry Mason*, *From the Earth to the Moon* (HBO); *Promised Land*, *Scandal* (ABC); *The Terminal List* (Amazon); *Unbelievable* (Netflix); *The Magicians* (Syfy); *Parenthood* (NBC); *Everwood* (Warner Brothers); *The Untouchables* (Paramount). **EDUCATION:** Goodman School of Drama, The Theatre School at DePaul University.



TONY BOZZUTO

(*Gollum*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: *The Taming of the Shrew*.
CHICAGO: *Cat's Cradle*, *Whose Body* (Lifeline Theatre); *The Internationalist*

(Steppenwolf Garage); *American Journalero*

(Teatro Vista); *Skin Tight*, *Late Company* (COR Theatre). **FILM:** *Man of Steel*, *Animator*. **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *Boss*, *Crisis* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** MFA in acting, Hillberry Theatre at Wayne State University. **AWARDS:** 2009 and 2024 Joseph Jefferson Award nominee. Bozzuto is Co-Owner and Head Carpenter at The Build: Chicago.



SPENCER DAVIS MILFORD

(*Frodo Baggins*) **CHICAGO**
SHAKESPEARE: Debut.
CHICAGO: *Billy Elliot* (Paramount Theatre); *Hello, Dolly!* (Marriott Theatre); *A Taste of*

Soul (Black Ensemble Theater); *Guys and Dolls* (Drury Lane Theatre). **BROADWAY:** *The Winslow Boy*. **TOURS:** *Billy Elliot*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. **WORLD PREMIERES:** *Buzz* directed by Emmy-winner Carrie Preston (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Con College* (River Rat Productions); *Nibbler* (Rattlestick Playwrights). **REGIONAL:** *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Fulton Theatre); *She Loves Me* (The Link Theatre); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); *Newsies*, *42nd Street*, *Camelot*, *Beautiful* (The Muny). **FILM:** *On Fire* (Fall 2024 release) starring William H. Macy. **EDUCATION:** MA in acting, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



EILEEN DOAN

(*Merry*)
CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Cambodian Rock Band* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play*

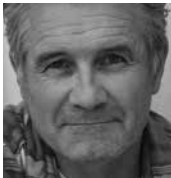
(Theater Wit); *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *Describe The Night* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** TheatreSquared, Coachella Valley Repertory Theatre, Hangar Theatre, Portland Stage, City Theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, George Street Playhouse. **TELEVISION:** *Night Sky* (Amazon). Doan is an independent singer-songwriter with music available on all streaming platforms.



JOEY FAGGION

(Ensemble) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** Henry in *Next to Normal* (Pop Up Productions). **REGIONAL:** Nick Bottom in *Something Rotten*,

The Tempest, *The Glass Menagerie* (Historic Owen Theatre); D'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers* (Burning Coal Theatre); Gabriel in *Miracle of Christmas*, *Queen Esther* (Sight and Sound Theatres). **EDUCATION:** Cert, Sight and Sound Theatre Conservatory. Faggion serves as Artistic Director for the Chicago-based theater company, Ceramic Goose.



RICK HALL (*Bilbo Baggins/Steward of Gondor*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Romeo and Juliet* *the Musical*. **CHICAGO:** The Second City Mainstage, The

Second City national touring company; *Pigboy* (Royal George Theater). **REGIONAL:** *Pigboy* (HBO Comedy Festival, Aspen, Co.). **FILM:** *The Thing Called Love*, *Three Fugitives*, *Holiday Holdup*, *The Premiere*. **TELEVISION:** *Seinfeld* (NBC); *KC Undercover*, *Good Luck Charlie* (Disney Channel); *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (HBO); *NCIS*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS); *24*, *Arrested Development* (FOX).



SUZANNE HANNAU

(*Rosie Cotton*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** The Robin in *The Secret Garden*, Lily in James Joyce's *The Dead* (Court Theatre). **FLUTE/**

ORCHESTRA: *The Matchbox*, *Magic Flute* (Goodman Theatre); *Die Kathrin* (Chicago Folks Operetta); *Juno* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *A Man of No Importance* (Pride Films and Plays). **EDUCATION:** BM and MM in flute performance, DePaul University. Hannau teaches flute and early childhood music education at the Music Institute of Chicago.



MIA HILT

(Ensemble) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Fun Home*, *The Revolutionists* (Madison Street Theater); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Big Noise Theatre);

This Is Not A Pipe (Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble). **REGIONAL:** *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Hoosier Shakespeare Festival); *Twelfth Night* (South Dakota Shakespeare Festival); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hair* (Nebraska Repertory Theatre); *Sherwood: The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Black Hills Playhouse). **EDUCATION:** BA in acting and BA in dance, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



WILL JAMES JR.

(*Aragorn*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **OFF BROADWAY:** George Washington in *Hamilton* workshop/reading (Public Theater); Ensemble/Charles

Lee in *Hamilton* workshop production (Public Theater). **TOURS:** Simba/Mufasa/Ed understudy in Disney's *The Lion King* (1st and 3rd National Tours). **REGIONAL:** Simba understudy in *The Lion King* (Mandalay Bay Theater, Las Vegas, NV); Curtis in *Dreamgirls* (The Phoenix Theater Company). **EDUCATION:** AMDA (Los Angeles, CA); Northeastern Illinois University (Chicago, IL); Bel Canto Study at Gaye Klopach Vocal Studio.



MICHAEL KUROWSKI

(*Samwise Gamgee*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *As You Like It*, *Peter Pan*. **CHICAGO:** *Fiddler on the Roof* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Once*, *Newsies*, *Million*

Dollar Quartet (Paramount Theatre); *Grease*, *Big Fish*, *The Buddy Holly Story* (Marriott Theatre); *Million Dollar Quartet* (Theater at the Center); *Posh* (Steeep Theater Company); *American Idiot* (The Hypocrites); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Elgin Theater); *Four* (Jackalope Theatre Company). **TOUR:** *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Once*. **REGIONAL:** *Million Dollar Quartet* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *Macbeth* (Wolfbane Productions). **FILM:** *Gran Torino*,

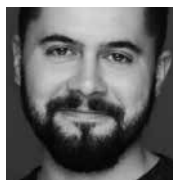
The Armed Boy. **TELEVISION:** *Lovecraft Country* (HBO); *Next* (FOX); *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre performance, Columbia College Chicago; Chicago Studio of Professional Singing with Janice Pantazelos.



JOHN LITHGOW

(*Voice of Treebeard*) John Lithgow's roots are in the theater. In 1973, he won a Tony Award two weeks after his Broadway debut

in David Storey's *The Changing Room*. Since then, he has appeared on Broadway twenty-five times, earning five Tony nominations, a second Tony Award, four Drama Desk Awards, and induction into the Theatre Hall of Fame. His Broadway performances have included major roles in *Anna Christie*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Beyond Therapy*, *M. Butterfly*, *The Front Page*, *Retreat from Moscow*, *All My Sons*, *The Columnist*, and the musicals *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *Sweet Smell of Success* (his second Tony). In England, he has played Malvolio with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the title role in Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Magistrate* with the National Theatre. In 2014, he played the title role in The Public Theater's Shakespeare in the Park production of *King Lear*. In an illustrious film career, Lithgow has appeared in over fifty films, earning back-to-back Oscar nominations for *The World According to Garp* and *Terms of Endearment*. In 2018 Chicago Shakespeare was honored to present him with the Spirit of Shakespeare Award.



IAN MARYFIELD

(*Gimli/Fight Captain*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Short Shakespeare! productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Comedy of Errors*. **CHICAGO:** *Indoor*

Cats (Red Theater); *Recipe for Disaster* (Windy City Playhouse); *Krugozor* (Theatre Evolve); *All Quiet On The Western Front* (Red Tape Theatre); *Photograph 51*, *The Originalist* (Court Theatre); *The Nutcracker* (The House Theatre of Chicago); *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* (Haven Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *As You Like It* (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks). **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** BFA in acting, Oklahoma City University.



BEN MATHEW (*Pippin*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** Harvey Beaver in *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas* (Studebaker Theatre); Bank Manager/Andrej

understudy in *Once* (Writers Theatre); Imran understudy in *Hatefuck* (First Floor Theatre); Upton Sinclair understudy in *Campaigns, Inc.* (TimeLine Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** Illinois Shakespeare Festival, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival. **FILM:** *Apolitical*. **EDUCATION:** BFA in theater, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



JAMES MUELLER

(*Ensemble*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *A Bronx Tale*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Catch Me If You Can* (Surging Films & Theatrics); *Mamma*

Mia! (Brightside Theatre); *Billy Elliot* (Music Theater Works); *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* (Steel Beam Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Crimes of the Heart*, *Closer Than Ever* (Canterbury Summer Theatre). **DANCE:** *When Adonis Calls* (Thompson Street Opera Company). **EDUCATION:** BA in dance, Luther College.



JARAIS MUSGROVE

(*Ensemble*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Zephyr in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **CHICAGO:** *An American in Paris* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Splasher* in *Newsies*

(Paramount Theater); *Chicago Sings Rock & Roll* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Trap Door* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). **DANCE:** *Waiting* by Priscilla Ahn Music Video, *Rhythm* by Vasil Garvanliev Music Video. **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theater with dance concentration, Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. **AWARDS:** 2018 Scholarship recipient of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.



HANNAH NOVAK

(*Ensemble*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago

Sinfonietta. **REGIONAL:** Knox-Galesburg Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. **EDUCATION:** Post-Graduate Certificate in double bass performance, DePaul University; MM in double bass performance, Rice University; BM in double bass performance, Wheaton College. **AWARDS:** Ben Heppner Prize winner, Wheaton College Concerto Competition 2017; Jan and Beattie Wood Concerto Competition Winner, Brevard Music Center 2017.



ADAM QUTAISHAT

(Ensemble) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *The Band's Visit* (Writers Theatre); *Saint Hildegarde* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre).

REGIONAL: Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, TheatreSquared, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Music Theatre of Madison, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, American Gothic Performing Arts Festival, Next Act Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks.



JEFF PARKER

(Saruman/Elrond) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, *The King's Speech*, *King Charles III*, *Cymbeline*, *The Three Musketeers*,

Timon of Athens; understudy in Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, *Red Velvet*. **CHICAGO:** *Parade*, *Days Like Today*, *Isaac's Eye* (Writers Theatre); *Wonderful Town*, *Objects in the Mirror*, *Camino Real*, *Bounce*, *Turn of the Century*, *Floyd Collins*, *The House of Martin Guerre* (Goodman Theatre); *Mamma Mia!*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Fiddler on the Roof* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Discord*, *Mothers and Sons* (Northlight Theatre); *The Secret Garden* (Court Theatre); *Samsara* (Victory Gardens Theater); *The Brother/Sister Plays* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Nine* (Porchlight Music Theatre, Joseph Jefferson Award nomination). **REGIONAL:** *Candide* (Huntington Theatre Company); *My Fair Lady* (Asolo Repertory Theatre); *1776* (American Conservatory Theater); *The American in Me* (Magic Theatre); *Winesburg, Ohio* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, *Chicago P.D.* (NBC); *Soundtrack* (Netflix); *The Big Leap*, *Empire*, *Prison Break* (FOX); *The Chi* (Paramount

Plus-Showtime). **EDUCATION:** BFA in acting, University of Southern California. @jeffparkeractor jeffparkeractor.com



LAURA SAVAGE

(Ensemble/Dance Captain) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Follies*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*. **CHICAGO:** *The Penelopiad*, *The Who's Tommy*,

The Music Man (Goodman Theatre); *West Side Story*, *Carousel* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Cassie* in *A Chorus Line*, *Pal Joey* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Cinderella...After the Ball*, *Something Rotten*, and 25 more productions (Marriott Theatre); *42nd Street*, *Mary Poppins*, *Cats* (Paramount Theatre); *Crazy for You*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Hello, Dolly!* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Percy* in *The Spitfire Grill* (BoHo Theatre, Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination - Principal Actress in a Musical). **TELEVISION:** *Empire* (FOX). @lauramsavage Laura-Savage.com



BERNADETTE SANTOS SCHWEGEL

(Ensemble) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Sanctuary City* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Billy Elliot* (Porchlight Music

Theatre); *Starship Edsel: An Improvised Star Trek Satire* (Otherworld Theatre); *Emma: The Pop Musical* (Broadway Workshop); *Out Here: A New Musical* (Logan Center, University of Chicago); *Wastwater* (Steep Theatre); *The Nutcracker* (The Joffrey Ballet). **FILM:** *Adult Children*; *Debaters*; *A Ladies Almanack*, *Ghostlight*. **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med* (NBC); *Saturdays* (Disney Channel); *Shameless* (Showtime Network). **EDUCATION:** Loyola University Chicago. **AWARDS:** 2023 JANSa Young Filmmakers Award, SAG-AFTRA Short Film Series.



ALINA TABER

(Arwen) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire* (Paramount Theatre); *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Marriott

Theatre); *Rizzo* in *Grease* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Once* (Writers Theater); *Rivkele*

in *God of Vengeance* (Victory Gardens Theater). **TELEVISION:** Lexi Olinsky on *Chicago PD* (NBC). Taber has been seen in advertisements for the Illinois Department of Human Services, ZenB Pasta, Veet, and ACE Hardware.



ARIK VEGA (*Ensemble*)
CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE: *Measure for Measure*, Chicago Shakespeare Slam. **CHICAGO:** *In The Heights*, *Gypsy* (Marriott Theatre); *Clyde's* (Goodman Theatre); *Evita*, *Holiday Inn* (Drury Lane Theatre). **REGIONAL:** Cleveland Play House, The Fireside Theatre, Studio Tenn, The Warehouse Theatre. **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre, Belmont University; SAFD Certification in unarmed and knife. **AWARDS:** 2019 ALTA Award.



MATTHEW C. YEE (*Boromir*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Vietgone* (Writers Theatre); *Antigone* (Court Theatre); *Cambodian Rock Band* (Victory Gardens Theatre); *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon* (Lookingglass Theatre Company) for which he also wrote the book and score. **BROADWAY:** *Almost Famous The Musical*. **REGIONAL:** The Old Globe, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Alliance Theatre. **FILM:** *Ghostlight* (2024); *Consumed* (2015). **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago PD*, *Chicago Justice* (NBC); *61st Street* (AMC); *Empire* (FOX); *The Bear* (FX). From 2023-24 he was a writer in residence at the Goodman Theatre creating a new musical. Yee is an ensemble member at Lookingglass Theatre Company.



LAUREN ZAKRIN (*Galadriel*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **BROADWAY:** Little Mermaid in *Once Upon a One More Time*, Moaning Myrtle/Delphi understudy

in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, Natasha understudy in *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, Sherrie in *Rock of Ages*. **OFF BROADWAY:** Riley in *We Are the Tigers*, Kathryn in *Cruel Intentions*, Natasha

understudy in *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*. **TOURS:** Glinda understudy in *Wicked*, Sandy in *Grease*, Elle understudy in *Legally Blonde*. **SAN FRANCISCO:** Polly, Myrtle/Delphi understudy in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. **REGIONAL:** Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Cape Playhouse); Natasha understudy in *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* (American Repertory Theater); Elle in *Legally Blonde* (The Muny); Elle in *Legally Blonde* (Music Circus). Queen of Hearts in *Mad Hatter* (Herberger Theater); Brooke in *Surf the Musical* (Planet Hollywood); **TELEVISION:** *Jesus Christ Superstar LIVE!* (NBC); *Search for the Next Elle Woods* (MTV). @laurenzakrin



ANDREW BOSWORTH (*Understudy*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Antigone* (Redtwist Theatre); *Dracula* (Glass Apple Theatre); *Man of the People* (Stage Left

Theatre); *Innocence of Seduction* (City Lit Theatre Company); *A Christmas Carol* (Metropolis Performing Arts); *End Days* (Theatre Above the Law); *Viva la Mort* (the Conspirators). **REGIONAL:** *Rhinoceros*, *Shakespeare in Love* (Asolo Repertory Theatre). **EDUCATION:** MFA, FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Bosworth is a Certified Teacher at International Demidov Association and a Curator at Demidov Studio Chicago.



TY SHAY (*Understudy*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Xanadu*, *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Metropolis Performing Arts Center); *Spring Awakening*, *Indecent*,

Bright Star (Chicago College of Performing Arts). **REGIONAL:** *Kinky Boots* (Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre).



CARTER ROSE SHERMAN (*Understudy*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Nell Gwynn. **CHICAGO:** *Miranda: A War-Torn Fable* (Impostors Theater Company, Joseph Jefferson

Award Nomination - Best Performer in a Short Run); *A Christmas Carol* (Metropolis Performing Arts Center); Veronica in

Heathers (Surging Films and Theatrics); *Pride and Prejudice* (Edge of the Wood Theater). **EDUCATION:** BA in theater, North Central College. Sherman is an impassioned intimacy choreographer, dedicated to improving rehearsal-room safety across the industry. carterrosesherman.com



LUKE NOWAKOWSKI

(Understudy) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *To Be* (streaming). **CHICAGO:** *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Fun Home* (Paramount

Theater); Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes* (Porchlight Music Theater); *Children of Eden* (Cadillac Palace); *Brigadoon* (Music Theater Works). **EDUCATION:** BA in music performance, Elmhurst University. **AWARDS:** Finalist in National Musical Theater Competition in NYC 2021. Instagram: @_lukenowakowski_



KELAN M. SMITH

(Understudy) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *The Choir of Man* (Apollo Theater Chicago); *The Buddy Holly Story* (Marriott Theatre); *Ring of Fire*

(Drury Lane Theatre); *Spring Awakening*, *Pump Boys and Dinettes* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *The Porch on Windy Hill* (Northlight Theatre); *Verböten* (House Theatre); *The Beatrix Potter Holiday Tea Party* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Bright Star* (Boho Theatre); *Haymarket* (Underscore Theatre); *We're Gonna Die* (Haven Theatre). **REGIONAL:** *Plaid Tidings*, *Lost Highway*, *The Buddy Holly Story* (Timber Lake Playhouse); *Once* (Bristol Valley Theatre); *Moonshine and Mistletoe* (The Garden Theatre). **EDUCATION:** BFA in musical theatre performance, Columbia College Chicago. Smith is the co-artistic director of Streamline Theatre.



TOMMY THURSTON

(Understudy) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Sound of Music* (Marriott Theatre); *Cat in The Cat in The*

Hat (Broadway in Chicago); Pretty Rich Boy in *Poor People! The Parody Musical* (Hell in a Handbag Productions); Leonard

Chess/Clive Davis/Phil Collins in *Reasons: a Tribute to Earth, Wind, and Fire* (Black Ensemble Theater); Bob Wallace in *White Christmas*, Pharaoh in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Sir Lionel in *Camelot* (Music Theater Works); Captain Hammer in *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* (Black Button Eyes Productions); Starbuck in *110 in the Shade*, Edward Bloom in *Big Fish* (BoHo Theatre, Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination - Leading Actor in a Musical); Robert Kincaid in *The Bridges of Madison County* (Theo Ubique, Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination - Leading Actor in a Musical).

SHAUN MCKENNA

(Book and Lyrics) is an award-winning British playwright, screenwriter, librettist, and lyricist. He specializes in original and adapted theater (musical and otherwise) together with audio drama and, increasingly, original screenplays. Musical theater credits include: *The Lord of the Rings* (DORA Award, Olivier nomination), *Maddie*, *Lautrec* and *La Cava* (West End); *Only You Can Save Mankind* and *Murder Mystery Musical* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe); *Last Dance* and a forthcoming revival of *Maddie* (New York); *The Heidi* trilogy (Prix Walo nomination) and *The Return of Peter Pan* (Europe). Upcoming musical theatre projects include: *Jack Cole*, *Trouser Bar*, *Bette & Joan* & *Baby Jane*, *Looking Glass Wars*, and *Celtic Warrior*. Radio credits include: core writer on *Home Front* (Outstanding Achievement Award), adapted *The Forsytes*, *The Complete Smiley*, *China Towns*, *East of Eden*, *Marnie*, *Brother Dusty Feet*, and writing several original dramas, including *Me And Little Boots*, *Meeting Jack*, and three series of *Eleanor Rising* (BBC Radio 4). Other theater credits include: *Ladies In Lavender* (BroadwayWorld UK Best Regional Play), the upcoming *The Forsyte Saga*, *Exhibitionists*, *Rocky Road*, *The Paradine Case*, *Ruling Passions*, *To Serve Them All My Days*, *How Green Was My Valley*, the upcoming *The Paradine Case* and seven Peter James thrillers - *The Perfect Murder*, *Dead Simple*, *The House On Cold Hill*, *Not Dead Enough*, *Looking Good Dead*, *Wish You Were Dead*, and the upcoming *Picture You Dead*. TV credits include: *Heartbeat* (Royal Television Society Award), *Like Father Like Son*, *The Crooked Man*, *The Cuckoo*, and Great West End Theatres. Screenplays include: *Oscar's Boys*, *Agent 160*, *High Crimes* and *Draugr*. Find out more on www.shawnmckenna.me.

MATTHEW WARCHUS *(Book and Lyrics)*

Theatre credits (as Director) include: *The Constituent, Lungs, Present Laughter, 'Art', The Caretaker, The Master Builder, Future Conditional, Speed-the-Plow, OLD VIC: IN CAMERA - A Christmas Carol, Faith Healer, Three Kings and Lungs* (The Old Vic); *A Christmas Carol, Groundhog Day and The Norman Conquests* (The Old Vic/Broadway); *Matilda the Musical* (RSC/West End/Broadway/International tour); *Ghost the Musical* (West End/Broadway/South Korea); *La Bete* (West End/Broadway); *God of Carnage* (West End/Broadway/LA); *Deathtrap, Endgame* (West End); *Our House, Much Ado About Nothing* (West End/UK tour); *Boeing-Boeing* (West End/Broadway/UK tour); *The Lord of the Rings* (West End/Toronto); *Buried Child and Volpone* (National Theatre); *Follies* (Broadway); *Life x 3* (National Theatre/The Old Vic/Broadway); *True West* (Donmar Warehouse/Broadway); *The Unexpected Man* (RSC/West End/Broadway); *'Art'* (Broadway/West End/Los Angeles); *Hamlet and Henry V* (RSC); *Betrayal, Death of a Salesman, The Plough & the Stars, Fiddler on the Roof, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, True West and Peter Pan* (Leeds Playhouse). Opera credits include: *Falstaff* and *Così fan tutte* (ENO); *The Rake's Progress* (ROH/WNO). Film credits include: *Matilda the Musical, Pride* - BIFA Best British Independent Film, *Simpatico*. Matthew was an Associate Director at Leeds Playhouse and Artistic Associate at The Old Vic before being appointed Artistic Director of the theater in 2014.

A.R. RAHMAN *(Composer)* has redefined contemporary Indian music. Taking after his father, a Tamil film composer, Rahman started composing jingles. In 1991, Tamil director Mani Ratnam offered Rahman a movie called *Roja* - a run-away success bringing nationwide fame. By 2000, Rahman had come to the attention of Andrew Lloyd Webber, who brought *Bombay Dreams* to London's West End and Broadway. Then, in 2008, Rahman's music for Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* confirmed Rahman's global presence with Academy Awards for Best Score and Best Song, 2 Grammys, a Golden Globe and a BAFTA. Rahman, recently turned to writing and directing, setting up a film studio in Chennai YM Studios - releasing 99 *Songs* and *Le Musk*, the latter a VR multi-sensory project, exploring new ways of storytelling. He is noted for collaborations with Coldplay, Mick Jagger, Dave Stewart, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Sarni Yusuf, and U2 (his daughters,

Khatija and Raheema adding their vocals to the U2 track "Aahimsa" written to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi). Most recently, Rahman's time has been taken up with his new state of the art recording facility in Dubai, The Firdaus Studio, set up for producing orchestral sessions and recording high quality film soundtracks - and also establishing and mentoring the all-women orchestra comprising of musicians from over 23 nationalities called The Firdaus Orchestra.

VÄRTTINÄ *(Composer)* is a contemporary Finnish group with a folk music/roots-based style featuring multiple female vocals and an ensemble of instrumentalists. Värttinä combines traditional Finno-Ugric vocal elements with trad and original compositions and dynamic performances. Founded in 1983 they have gone through various changes in line-up with the period from 1995-2005 being their most creative and productive as a group of nine members. Music for *The Lord of the Rings* stage production was composed and produced during this time as was their album *Miero* for the Real World records label. Today the band is a six-piece and is active with tours and concerts.

CHRISTOPHER NIGHTINGALE *(Composer)* is a Tony Award winner for the "Best Original Score", NY Outer Critic Circle Honouree for *A Christmas Carol*, and Grammy nominee for the *Matilda* US Album. Theatre Credits (as Composer) include: *A Christmas Carol* - Tony Award, Best Score (Old Vic Theatre, Broadway); *The Divide* and *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic); Orchestrator, additional music/Musical Supervisor on *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/ Broadway - Olivier Award, Best New Musical); *Matilda: The Musical* (RSC/West End/Broadway/International Tour). Musical supervisor, arranger & orchestrator for *Ghost The Musical* (West End/Broadway); Co-composer/Orchestrator on *The Lord of the Rings* (Toronto/West End) and Musical Supervisor/Orchestrator on *Bombay Dreams* (West End). Theatre credits (for Arrangements and Musical Direction) include: *Closer to Heaven, Whistle Down the Wind and Oliver!* (West End); MD/Keyboards on *The Plantagenets, The Tempest, The Comedy Of Errors, A Clockwork Orange, The Plain Dealer, Pericles, Much Ado About Nothing, Henry IV Part I, Singer, Some Americans Abroad, Playing With Trains, 'Tis Pity She's A Whore, The Changeling, Romeo & Juliet and Tamburlaine* (RSC). Film credits

include: *Matilda The Movie* (Original Score, Orchestrations, Executive Music Producer), *Pride* (Composer), and *Evita* (Conductor & Vocal Coach). Recordings include: Producer on *Matilda The Movie* Soundtrack Album, *Groundhog Day* original Broadway cast album and *Matilda: The Musical* original London & Broadway cast albums; Associate Producer on *Ghost* original London cast album; Co-Producer on *The Lord of The Rings* original London cast album. An organ scholar at Magdalene College, Cambridge, Christopher was Musical Director of the Cambridge Footlights for three years before graduating and working for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

PAUL HART (*Director*) is the current Artistic Director and Joint CEO of The Watermill Theatre in the UK where he originally directed *The Lord of the Rings: A Musical Tale* in 2023. **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **BROADWAY:** *Red* (Associate Director). **WEST END:** *Private Peaceful*, *Pope Joan* (National Youth Theatre); *Huis Clos* (Donmar Warehouse). **WATERMILL THEATRE:** *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Notes from a Small Island*, *Othello* (Co-Director); *Spike* (UK Tour); *As You Like It*, *Camelot in Concert*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Sweet Charity*, *The Borrowers* (UK Tour, Wilton's Music Hall); *Crazy for You* (UK Tour); *Romeo and Juliet* (UK Tour); *Journey's End*, *Twelfth Night* (UK Tour, Wilton's Music Hall); *The Tempest*, *Great Expectations*, *Heroes*. **RADIO:** *Existentialism in Theatre* (BBC). **AWARDS:** 2024 The Stage Award for Theatre of the Year for The Watermill Theatre, 2024 WhatsOnStage Award for Best Regional Production for *The Lord of The Rings* at The Watermill Theatre, 2023 Broadway World UK Award for Best Direction of a Musical for *The Lord Of The Rings*, 2023 Broadway World UK Award for Best Direction of a New Production of a Play for *Notes From A Small Island*.

SIMON KENNY (*Scenic, Properties, and Costume Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **OFF BROADWAY:** *Sweeney Todd* (Barrow Street Theatre, Drama Desk Award Nomination). **REGIONAL:** *The Lion* (Arizona Theatre Company). **WEST END:** *Sweeney Todd*, *The Selfish Giant*. **INTERNATIONAL:** *The Lord of the Rings*, *Whistle Down the Wind*, *Assassins* (Watermill Theatre); *Brassed Off* (Theatre by the Lake); *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Family Tree* (Actors Touring Company, UK tour); *The Death of A Black Man* (Hampstead Theatre); *Noughts*

& *Crosses* (Pilot Theatre, UK tour); *The Wiz* (Hope Mill Theatre); *Blue/Orange* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Ghost Quartet* (Boulevard Theatre); *Black Men Walking* (Eclipse, Royal Exchange); *Cabaret* (English Theatre Frankfurt, Deutsches Theater Munich); *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Babette's Feast* (Print Room); *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant Of Venice* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Ghosts* (Theatr Clwyd); *Island* (National Theatre). **EXHIBITIONS:** V&A Museum Theatre & Performance Collection, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design 2019. **AWARDS:** BroadwayWorld UK Best Set Design and Best Costume Design Awards for *The Lord of the Rings*.

ANJALI MEHRA (*Choreographer and Movement Director*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Queen of Spades* (Lyric Opera Chicago). **WEST END:** *Rumi the Musical* (London Coliseum). **OFF BROADWAY:** *Judgment Day* (Park Avenue Armory). **INTERNATIONAL:** *The Lord of the Rings*, *Spike*, *Othello*, *Brief Encounter*, *As You Like It* (Watermill Theatre); *"Daddy" A Melodrama* (Almeida Theatre); *The Ballad of Hattie and James* (The Kiln Theatre); *Dick Whittington* (Watford Palace Theatre). **OPERA:** *Handmaids Tale* (English National Opera); *Pierre Lunaire and Mavra* (Royal Opera House); *Cherry Town* (Welsh National Opera); *Jakob Lenz* (English National Opera). **FILM:** *little grasses crack through stone*, *Moving in Time* (New Adventures Dance Company); *Alexander*, *World War Z*. **TELEVISION:** *Dope Girls* (BBC). **EDUCATION:** MA in choreography, Diploma in classical and contemporary dance, Central School of Ballet. **AWARDS:** Christopher Gable Choreographer Award. **DANCE CREDITS:** Matthew Bourne's New Adventures Dance Company, *Play without Words* (Sadlers Wells Theatre); *Kiss Me Kate* (Theatre du Chatelet); *Bombay Dreams* (West End); *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Nutcracker*. Mehra is a mentor for young artists who teaches lecturers on careers in the industry and creative choreography/movement workshops.

MARK ASPINALL (*Music Supervisor and Orchestrations*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **MUSIC DIRECTION:** *Sinatra* (Birmingham Rep); *Anything Goes* (Barbican, UK Tour); *City of Angels* (Garrick Theatre); & *Juliet* (Manchester Opera House); *Perfect Show for Rachel* (Barbican); *West Side Story*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Sweet Charity* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *The Band* (UK Tour); *Three Phantoms* (Parisian Theatre); *The Wicker Husband* (Workshop); *Travels*

with my Aunt (Chichester Festival Theatre); *The Smallest Show on Earth* (UK Tour); *Mack and Mabel*, *Titanic* (Princess of Wales, Toronto, Southwark Playhouse); *The Roles I'll Never Play* (St. James Theatre); *Cinderella* (Qdos, Cliffs Pavilion). **MUSIC SUPERVISOR:** *Fiddler on the Roof* (Regent's Park Open Air); *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (Ambassadors Theatre, Southwark Playhouse); *Titanic*, *Ragtime* (Charing Cross Theatre, UK and International Tour). **ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR:** *& Juliet* (Manchester Opera House); *City of Angels* (Donmar Warehouse); *The Pyjama Game* (Shaftesbury Theatre). **KEYBOARD:** *Stephen Ward* (Aldwych Theatre); *Multistory* (RSC Workshop); *Tick, Tick, Boom!* (Duchess Theatre). **FILM:** *The End*, *Cyrano*, *Cats*.

DR. MICHAEL MCBRIDE (*Music Director and Music Programmer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Revolution(s)* (Goodman Theatre); *Grease* (Drury Lane Theatre); *Big Fish* (Boho Theater, Joseph Jefferson Award — Best Music Direction); *The Choir of Man* (Apollo Theater Chicago); *Rent* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Passing Strange* (Theo Ubiqwe Cabaret Theatre); *Billy Elliot*, *Brigadoon*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Carousel* (Music Theater Works). **REGIONAL:** *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (John W. Engeman Theater, NY); *We Will Rock You*, *Legally Blonde*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Pippin*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Into the Woods*, *The Little Mermaid* (Timber Lake Playhouse). **ACADEMIC:** *Yeast Nation* (North Park University); *The Old Man and the Old Moon*, *Fun Home*, *Violet*, *Cabaret*, *Tintypes*, *She Loves Me*, *Spring Awakening*, *Hot Mikado*, *Urinetown* (Loyola University Chicago). **EDUCATION:** DM Composition, Northwestern University. McBride is a visiting Assistant Professor at North Park University.

RORY BEATON (*Lighting Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **WEST END:** *The Time Traveller's Wife*, *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy*, *The Merchant of Venice 1936*, *Wild About You*, *Death Drop: Back in the Habit*, *Your Lie In April*, *Instructions for a Teenage Armageddon*, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!* **INTERNATIONAL:** Royal Shakespeare Company, Bristol Old Vic, Kiln Theatre, Almeida, Royal Court, Southbank Centre, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Royal & Derngate, The Watermill, Chichester Festival Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Barbican Theatre. **OPERA:** Danish National

Opera, Scottish Opera, Wexford Festival Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera Holland Park, OTC Ireland, Blackheath Halls Community Opera, Trinity Laban, Guildhall School, Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music. **EDUCATION:** Guildhall School of Music and Drama. **AWARDS:** Broadway World Award for Best Lighting Design (*The Lord of the Rings*); WhatsOnStage Award nomination (*The Time Traveller's Wife*); Knight of Illumination nomination (*Così fan Tutte*).

ADAM FISHER (*Original Sound Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **BROADWAY:** *Sunset Boulevard*. **WEST END:** *Pippin in Concert*, *Wild About You in Concert*, *Evita*, *Love Never Dies in Concert* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane); *Sunset Boulevard* (Olivier Award, WhatsOnStage Award); *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Last Five Years* (Vaudeville Theatre, Garrick Theatre); *Gillian Lynne Celebration* (Gillian Lynne Theatre). **LONDON:** *Kiss Me Kate* (Barbican); *Yeast Nation* (Southwark Playhouse); *The View Upstairs* (Soho Theatre). **INTERNATIONAL:** *Oliver!* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Evita*, *Billy Elliot* (Curve Leicester); *Bhangra Nation* (Birmingham Rep); *Cinderella*, *Dick Whittington*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Nottingham Playhouse); *The Lord of the Rings*, *Our Man in Havana* (Watermill Theatre). **AWARDS:** 2024 Olivier Award for Best Sound Design for *Sunset Boulevard*.

NICHOLAS POPE (*Chicago Sound Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *It Came From Outer Space*. **BROADWAY:** *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*. **OFF BROADWAY:** *Hundred Days* (New York Theatre Workshop); *In the Green* (Lincoln Center); *Outer Space* (The Public Theater); *King Lear* (Theater for a New Audience). **REGIONAL:** *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, *The Visit*, *Father Comes Home From the Wars*. **INTERNATIONAL:** *The Gift of Angels* (Universal Studios, Osaka, Japan). **EDUCATION:** Yale School of Drama. **AWARDS:** 2017 Drama Desk Award, Outstanding Sound Design of a Musical (*Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*); 2020 Lucille Lortel Award nomination, Outstanding Sound Design (*In the Green*). Pope currently serves as CST's Sound Department Manager.

GEORGE REEVE (*Projections Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **WEST END:** Stephen Sondheim's *Old Friends*; *My Son's A Queer* (*But What Can You Do?*), *Six*, *The Great British Bake Off Musical*.

INTERNATIONAL: *Hercules, Tarzan* (Disney Theatrical); *Sunset Boulevard* (Princess Theatre); *In Dreams* (Leeds Playhouse/Toronto); *Oliver!* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *The Lord Of The Rings, Notes From a Small Island* (Watermill Theatre); *Hey Duggee The Live Theatre Show* (Royal Festival Hall); *RENT and Cinderella* (Hope Mill Theatre); *Now Is Good* (Storyhouse Chester); *Gypsy* (Alexandra Palace); *A Christmas Carol* (Dominion Theatre); *NoiseBoys, VIVA Club* (Norwegian Cruise Line); *Cinderella In Concert* (Cadogan Hall). **TOURS:** *Hairspray* (UK Tour); *Hey Duggee The Live Theatre Show* (UK Tour); *Dawn French Is A Huge Tw*t!* (UK/Australia Tour, BBC); *The Sound of Music* (Netherlands Tour). Reeve won the award for Best Video Design in the 2023 Broadway World UK/West End Awards for his work on *The Lord of The Rings* at the Watermill Theatre.

CHARLIE TYMMS (*Puppet Designer*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **BROADWAY PUPPET FABRICATION:** *Life of Pi, Harry Potter and The Cursed Child, Angels in America*. **WEST END:** *Spirited Away* (London Coliseum Theatre); *Stranger Things* (Phoenix Theatre); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Palace Theatre). **INTERNATIONAL PUPPET DESIGN:** *The Lord of the Rings, The Wicker Husband* (Watermill Theatre); *The Dream Thief* (National Theatre of Iceland); *The Dinosaur Show* (Southwark Playhouse); *Zoe's Peculiar Journey Through Time* (Burg Theatre, Southbank Centre); *Wizard of Oz* (Leeds Playhouse Theatre); *Running Wild* (Chichester Festival Theatre, Regents Park Theatre); *Gnomus* (Kew Gardens); *Beauty and the Beast, Witches, Christmas Carol, Peter Pan, Noah* (Chichester Festival Theatre). **TOURS:** *The Dinosaur Show, Book of Mormon, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Dr Dolittle, Running Wild*. **FILM:** *Isle of Dogs* (Wes Anderson); *Artemis Fowl* (Disney); *Frankenweenie* (Tim Burton). **EDUCATION:** BA, Central School of Art and Design UK; Goldsmiths College of Art UK; Motley Theatre Design School UK.

LINDSEY NOEL WHITING (*Chicago Puppetry Director*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **CHICAGO:** *Lookingglass Alice, Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth, Cascabel, The Great Fire* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The Snow Queen* (Victory Gardens Theatre); *Leonardo* (Manual Cinema); *Sink, Sank, Sunk, The Golden Truffle, The Cabinet* (Redmoon Theatre). **REGIONAL:** Actors Theatre of Louisville, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Syracuse Stage, Adrienne Arshnt Center, Kennedy Center

for the Performing Arts, Segerstrom Center for the Arts. **INTERNATIONAL:** Singapore International Arts Festival, International Children's Festival of the Arts (St. Albert, Canada). **TELEVISION:** *Chicago Fire* (NBC). **EDUCATION:** BS in theatre performance, Bradley University.

RACHEL FLESHER (*Chicago Fight and Intimacy Director*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet*. **CHICAGO:** *Twilight Bowl, Relentless* (Goodman Theatre); *The Burials, Constellations, I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter, The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *The Displaced* (Haven Theatre - Joseph Jefferson Award nomination); *First Love is the Revolution* (Steep Theatre - Joseph Jefferson Award nomination). **LOS ANGELES:** *Cabaret, Destiny of Desire, Dial M for Murder* (Old Globe Theatre); *Cassils Human Measure* (RedCat Theatre); *Radical* (IAMA Theatre Company). **REGIONAL:** *There's Always the Hudson* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company); *Othello* (Dallas Shakespeare Theatre); *West Side Story* (Lyric Theatre Oklahoma). **TELEVISION:** *GLOW* (Netflix); *You* (Warner Horizons); *Hunters* (Amazon); *The Summer I Turned Pretty* (Apple TV+); *Gaslit* (NBC). Flesher is a Certified Intimacy Director and Intimacy Coordinator on the SAG-AFTRA registry, a SAG-AFTRA stunt performer, a Certified Fight Director and Fight Instructor with the Fight Directors Canada, and the founder and CEO of Intimacy Professionals Education Collective.

CHRISTA HARRIS (*Associate Director*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Debut. **WEST END:** *The Time Traveler's Wife* (Associate Director); *Back to the Future the Musical* (Resident Director). **INTERNATIONAL:** Directing Credits: *Summer Camp for Broken People* (Pleasance Theatre, Summerhall); *FAT TONGUE* (Riverside Studios); *Park Bench* (Park Theatre); *United Queendom* (Kensington Palace for Les Enfants Terribles); *Inside Pussy Riot* (Saatchi Gallery for Les Enfants Terribles); *The Hole* (Old Rep); *FREAK* (The Space). **INTERNATIONAL:** Associate/Assistant Director Credits: *The Game's Afoot* (Madame Tussauds for Les Enfants Terribles); *Kiss Me Quickstep* (New Vic Theatre, Stoke, UK Tour); *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, Only on Sundays* (The Birmingham REP); *A Third* (Finborough Theatre). **TOURS:** *Mr. Men and Little Miss on Stage*. **ACADEMIC:** *Spring Awakening* (Trinity Laban, London); *Love & Information* (DTA, Birmingham).

EDUCATION: BA in theatre and english, University of Birmingham. **AWARDS:** 2015 JMK Regional Leverhulme Arts Scholarship, 2022 Olivier Award Best New Musical for *Back to the Future the Musical*, Winner of 4 WhatsOnStage Awards including Best New Musical for *Back to the Future the Musical*. Harris is the Associate Artist of the twice Olivier Award-nominated theater company Les Enfants Terribles and is the Co-founder of the arts organization WildChild.

BOB MASON (*Artistic Associate/Casting Director*) celebrates his twenty-third year at CST, where his credits include over 150 productions and programs, and 35 plays in Shakespeare's canon. In addition to numerous productions with Chicago Shakespeare founder Barbara Gaines, productions of note include: a host of Sondheim musicals (*Follies*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *A Little Night Music*, *Passion*, *Road Show*, *Gypsy*, directed by Gary Griffin); *SIX* (CST, Broadway, American Repertory Theater, Ordway Center, the Citadel); *Ride the Cyclone* directed by Rachel Rockwell (CST, off Broadway at MCC Theater, Fifth Avenue Theatre/American Conservatory Theater, Alliance Theatre); and *Rose Rage: Henry VI, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, directed by Edward Hall (CST, The Duke on 42nd Street). He also directed and co-created *Shakespeare Tonight* with Beckie Menzie, as part of CST's Shakespeare 400 Chicago Festival. Prior to casting, Mason enjoyed a career as a Joseph Jefferson Award-winning actor and singer and has been a visiting educator for Northwestern University, the School at Steppenwolf, Acting Studio Chicago, DePaul, Columbia, Roosevelt University, and multiple university programs across the country.

DAVID CASTELLANOS (*Production Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Hamlet*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Timon of Athens*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry IV Parts One and Two*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *All's Well that Ends Well*. **CHICAGO:** *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *Trevor*, *Hunter and the Bear*, *Hysperia*, *Do The Hustle*, *Crime and Punishment* (Writers Theater). **EDUCATION:** BFA in production stage management, The Theatre School, DePaul University. Castellanos was formerly the Production Stage Manager at Writers Theater and is an Assistant Professor at Columbia College Chicago.

DREW DONNELLY (*Assistant Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *The Enigmatist*, *Islander*, Disney's *Beauty and The Beast*. **CHICAGO:** *Anything Goes*, *Cabaret* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Sweeney Todd* (Kokandy Productions); *The Drag Seed*, *Snowgirls*, *Satan's School for Girls*, *Bewildered* (Hell in a Handbag Productions); *Gentle*, *The Edge of Our Bodies* (TUTA Theatre); *Triassic Park*, *35MM* (Circle Theatre); *Always Saturday*, *Beth In July* (Prop Thtr); *The Glass Menagerie*, *Superior Donuts* (Mary-Arrchie Theatre Co).

MICHAEL GEORGE (*Assistant Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** *Richard III*, *Twelfth Night*. **CHICAGO:** *Sweeney Todd* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Million Dollar Quartet* (Apollo Theatre). **OFF BROADWAY:** *Twelfth Night* (Classical Theatre of Harlem); *The Light Princess* (New Victory Theater). **REGIONAL:** *The Light Princess* (American Repertory Theater I.A.T.T.); *The Wizard of Oz*, 9 to 5, *Guadalupe in the Guestroom* (Creede Repertory Theatre). **TOURS:** *Blippi: The Musical* (RoundRoom Live); *The Cat in the Hat*, *Rock the Presidents* (Childsplay Theatre Company); *Encore!* (Chamber Theatre). He was the PSM for *The Polar Express Train Ride* (Rail Events Productions) for four seasons.

SHANNON GOLDEN (*Assistant Stage Manager*) **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE:** Chicago Shakespeare in the Parks production of *The Hero Within* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *I, Banquo*, *Short Shakespeare! The Comedy of Errors*, *Q Brothers Christmas Carol*, *Fight Night*. **CHICAGO:** *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *Mesmerized*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Frederick* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Frankenstein*, *Act(s) of God*, *Plantation!*, *Hard Times*, *Moby Dick*, *Thaddeus and Slocum: A Vaudeville Adventure* (Lookingglass Theatre Company); *The King of the Yees*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Carlyle*, *Soups Stews and Casseroles: 1976*, *Feathers and Teeth* (Goodman Theatre); *The Mutilated*, *Simpatico* (A Red Orchid Theatre); *This Wonderful Life* (American Blues Theater). **REGIONAL:** *Peninsula Players Theatre*. **EDUCATION:** BS in stage management, Ball State University.



EDWARD HALL (*Artistic Director, Carl and Marilyn Thoma Chair*)
Acclaimed theater, television, and film director Edward Hall joined CST in October 2023. In February 2024,

he directed his debut production as Artistic Director—*Richard III* starring Tony nominee and Paralympic champion Katy Sullivan. He previously directed the Jeff Award-winning *Rose Rage* trilogy at CST in 2003. Edward has built his love of Shakespeare around original interpretations of the Bard's plays, staging acclaimed productions in London's West End and on tour around the globe. He led the UK's Hampstead Theatre for nearly a decade, transforming it into one of the nation's most successful theaters for new work development, with over 100 world premieres. He was the founder and Artistic Director of Propeller Shakespeare for twenty years touring across the US, Europe, Asia, and beyond. He has served as an Associate Director at the National Theatre and Old Vic in London. His extensive film and television credits include *The Heist Before Christmas* starring Timothy Spall, *Blithe Spirit* starring Dame Judi Dench, multiple HBO and BBC series, and the season 4 finale for *Downton Abbey*. This season, Hall directs CST's productions of *Henry V*, *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Sunny Afternoon*. He is a member of the Arts Club of Chicago.



KIMBERLY MOTES (*Executive Director*)
Esteemed arts leader Kimberly Motes joined CST in October 2023, bringing more than 25 years of senior leadership experience

within the performing arts and higher education in Minnesota and Washington DC. Motes served as the Managing Director of the Tony Award-winning Children's Theatre Company (CTC). During her seven-year tenure, CTC produced 46 plays/musicals including 15 commissioned new works and six co-productions/transfers. Motes has held leadership roles including Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement at the University of St. Thomas, Vice President of Institutional Advancement at the College of Saint Benedict, Managing Director at Theater Latté Da, and Executive Director at the Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts. She spent 13 years in Washington, D.C., where she was the Director of Development at Arena Stage and led adult arts education programming and a ballet training program with legendary ballerina Suzanne Farrell at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Her career began at The Washington Ballet. She has also served on grant panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Minnesota State Arts Board. She is a member of the Economic Club of Chicago.

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Chicago Shakespeare is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization of non-profit theaters; Shakespeare Theatre Association; Arts Alliance Illinois; the League of Chicago Theatres; and Ingenuity, Inc.



Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 45,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. www.actorsequity.org

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH

KEVIN WALLACE & WILLIAM BENNETT FOR KEVIN WALLACE PRODUCTIONS

Kevin Wallace is a multi-award-winning international producer of plays and musicals. For Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Really Useful Group; *Whistle Down the Wind* (Aldwych Theatre), *The Beautiful Game* (Cambridge Theatre), Celebration - ALW's 50th Birthday Concert (Royal Albert Hall), *The Phantom of the Opera* (Switzerland, Belgium, Mexico, and Denmark), *Cats* US Tour, *Sunset Boulevard* UK Tour, *Sunset Boulevard* (Germany), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (UK Tour & Broadway), *Closer to Heaven* (Arts Theatre). KWP productions include: *The Lord of the Rings* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane & The Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto), *The Lord of the Rings - A Musical Tale* (The Watermill Theatre), *Our Town* (Shaftesbury Theatre), *Eurovision* (Vaudeville Theatre), *Gagarin Way* (Arts Theatre), *Eden* (Arts Theatre), *Frank's Closet* (Hoxton Hall), *Loserville* (Garrick Theatre), *I Capture the Castle* (Watford Palace Theatre), *The Emperor Jones* (Off-Stage, Camden), *Gabriela Clove & Cinnamon* (Teatro Cetip, Sao Paulo), and for Seven Ages; Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Shanghai Culture Square Theatre & PRC Tour). Visit KWP at www.kevinwallace.co.uk.

MIDDLE-EARTH ENTERPRISES

Middle-earth Enterprises owns exclusive worldwide rights to motion picture, merchandise, live stage and services inspired by *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* books, by J.R.R. Tolkien. We have produced and licensed goods based upon these four books, for a half century.

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GWB ENTERTAINMENT

With offices in Australia and the United Kingdom, GWB Entertainment, is a leading international producer of first-class theatrical productions.

Established in 2010, the company originally focused on new market development and enhancing touring circuits in Asia. GWB Entertainment has since expanded its operations to produce and present a diverse array of live productions and events worldwide. Over the past five years, GWB has produced and presented more than 25 productions in 50 cities across 16 countries, reaching audiences exceeding 4 million.

Current productions include *Sunset Boulevard* (Australia), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Australia), *Matilda the Musical* (International), *School of Rock* (Asia) and *Miss Saigon* (Asia).

Recent productions include the Australian premiere of *Groundhog Day the Musical*, the Japanese language premiere of *Matilda the Musical*, and Australian stagings of *Death of a Salesman*, *2:22 A Ghost Story*, *The Old Vic's A Christmas Carol*, *Amadeus*, *Jagged Little Pill*, *An American in Paris*, *Girl from the North Country*, and *West Side Story*.

Additionally, GWB provides General Management for numerous first-class tours, including the international tours of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* and *CATS*.

GWB manages the Queen's Theatre in Adelaide and GWB Studios in Adelaide and Sydney.

TIM MCFARLANE

Tim McFarlane is an Australian theater manager and producer with forty years' experience in theater and the performing arts.

Tim was General Manager of the performing arts center, Adelaide Festival Centre in Adelaide, South Australia where he was involved in numerous shows including a production of *The King and I*, which subsequently played Broadway, winning the 1996 Tony for Best Revival of a Musical.

From 1994 until 2013 Tim headed up the Asia Pacific office of Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Really Useful Group, producing shows including *Sunset Boulevard* and *Love Never Dies* in Australia, and *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats* in both Australia and Asia.

Tim was CEO of The Ambassador Theatre Group Asia Pacific from 2013 until 2017 before joining Trafalgar Entertainment Asia Pacific as Executive Chairman. Trafalgar Entertainment operates Sydney's Theatre Royal.

Tim is collaborating with Kevin Wallace and Torben Brookman to introduce *The Lord of the Rings – A Musical Tale* to Australia and Asia.

PEOPLE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Established in Greece in 2008 by George Isaak, People Entertainment Group is a front runner in live entertainment theatre.

With offices in every European capital, People Entertainment Group stands out as one of the fastest growing live entertainment companies and the sole theatrical producer actively involved with a local presence in over 20 European countries.

Renowned for their extensive portfolio of productions and prestigious awards, People Entertainment Group broke new ground by staging the first-ever English language non-replica production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*, which is now captivating audiences across the Middle East and Europe.

Currently, People Entertainment Group is producing the European Tours of *Chicago*, *Disney in Concert*, and *Fame the musical*.

THE WATERMILL THEATRE

The Watermill Theatre is a small but mighty 200-seat producing powerhouse which provides a crucible for creativity, innovative storytelling, and artistic excellence in rural West Berkshire, England. Creating the environment for actors and creatives to thrive, productions are characterized by an enduring pursuit of artistic innovation and the weaving of actor-musicianship through new writing and reinvigorated classics, sharing stories that reflect diverse lived experiences and connecting audiences with theater that resonates.

The Watermill holds the prestigious title of Theatre of the Year. This award, recognizing excellence in British theater, was bestowed for The Watermill's continued ambition in the wake of a 100% cut to its Arts Council England funding, equating to £460k a year. The Theatre, now an independent charity without statutory funding, continues to produce multi-award-winning theater, including *The Lord of the Rings*, its most ambitious production to date.

Productions regularly transfer to London's West End or tour extensively, including the upcoming *Calamity Jane*, *Amelie the Musical*, and *Tell Me on a Sunday*. This season includes a major revival of *Barnum*, David Seidler's *The King's Speech*, and *Pinocchio*.

The Watermill runs a comprehensive outreach program, working with young people, those from low-income backgrounds, and isolated or displaced communities.

watermill.org.uk

A Conversation with the Director

Director Paul Hart discusses his vision for the musical US premiere of *The Lord of the Rings – A Musical Tale*.



Visit chicagoshakes.com to explore more ideas and stories behind the art on CST's stages.

What is it about the story of *The Lord of the Rings* that has captivated generations?

Paul Hart: J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most beloved stories ever told, and the beautiful thing is that everyone has their own relationship with it. For me, what was so important is that we tell the story in a way that works for all audience members. So whether you're a huge fan of the piece and have seen every version of it, or whether you're coming to this completely fresh and it's a new story for you—I wanted to create a version that connected with everyone.

How does this story lend itself to being told with music live onstage?

Incorporating music is such a vital part of our storytelling in this adaptation. J.R.R. Tolkien uses songs all the way through the original stories, so the idea of using music to tell the story has always been a big part of it. I think it takes this adventure to another level because we're creating entirely different worlds through sounds and senses. We're creating this sense of huge scale and something that's really epic—and music plays a major role in how we're able to do that.





What is your entry point to this story?

I love that we meet the Hobbits right at the beginning of the show and that audiences become part of their world from the moment they arrive to the theater. As we're celebrating Bilbo Baggins' eleventy-first birthday in the Shire, the Hobbits introduce this story and we see this adventure through their perspective. We're interested in the idea of Hobbits being the ultimate storytellers. They love to create these tales, these narratives, and take the audience along with them on that journey.

Tell us more about the rehearsal process. What is it like collaborating with this ensemble of artists?

**The Hobbits
are the ultimate
storytellers.
They love to create
these tales...and
take the audience
along with them
on that journey**

This process has been full of joy and full of energy. This company is such an amazing group of people, and they all bring their unique skills to the work. They're unbelievably talented actors, but many also play instruments, and dance, and do puppetry. Add on top of that the projections and other production elements, and suddenly we've crafted this truly unique experience. We start out at the beginning with this very simple way of telling a story, and it becomes more and more immersive and imaginative as we go through this tale.

**What does it mean to you to launch this
US premiere production in Chicago and at
Chicago Shakespeare Theater?**

It's a really big deal to be opening this show in America and to be staging the US premiere right here in Chicago for Chicago audiences. And for me, it's especially important that we're making it with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, which has that classical legacy of work. There are so many comparisons between Tolkien and Shakespeare and inspirations that Tolkien drew from Shakespeare in terms of creating the work initially. So, it always felt like the right place to do it. I'm excited to be creating this world for The Yard, which is such an amazing and epic space. We're really thrilled to be able to share this special experience with audiences. ■

*pictured (left) Eileen Doan, Suzanne Hannau, Matthew C. Yee, Ty Shay (above) Paul Hart
photos by Liz Lauren*

Planting the Seeds of Change

"If you really want to know what Middle-earth is based on it's my wonder and delight in the earth as it is particularly the natural earth." — J.R.R. Tolkien

Inspired to join the inhabitants of the Shire as stewards of forests and nature? You can make a difference in your community by protecting green spaces and planting trees. Chicago Shakespeare Theater is proud to amplify and uplift the sustainability work of these organizations:



OPENLANDS

Openlands protects the natural and open spaces of northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region to ensure cleaner air and water, protect natural habitats and wildlife, and help balance and enrich our lives. Through local alliances, forward vision, and persistent action, Openlands connects and leads conservation work, serving as a guiding voice for communities, organizations, and policy.

openlands.org



THE MORTON ARBORETUM

Known as "The Champion of Trees," The Arboretum is an internationally recognized tree-focused botanical garden and research center. Its 1,700 acres of tree-filled landscapes are a place of enjoyment, a vibrant hub for nature education, and a world-renowned center for scientific research. Its vision is a greener, healthier, more beautiful world where people and trees thrive together.

mortonarb.org



THE GARFIELD PARK CONSERVATORY ALLIANCE (GPCA)

Based in one of the largest and most stunning conservatories in the nation, GPCA's work is grounded in the belief that inspiring a love of nature, gardens, and natural areas is fundamentally important to the well-being of everyone. Their Urban Roots Teen Environmental Justice Program engages high-school students across the Westside as environmental agents of change.

garfieldconservatory.org



LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION (LVEJO)

LVEJO organizes with the Little Village community to accomplish environmental justice and achieve the self-determination of immigrant, low-income, and working-class families. Their vision is to build a sustainable community that promotes the healthy development of youth and families, provides economic justice, and practices participatory democracy and self-determination.

lvejo.org



OUR ROOTS CHICAGO

Joining 96 cities around the world, the City of Chicago has updated its Climate Action Plan to reflect the bold action needed to protect and strengthen communities. The goal is to plant 75,000 new trees, expanding the tree canopy in Chicago through an equitable approach to every neighborhood.

Call 311 or use the CHI311 app to request parkway tree planting.

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