

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces cast and creative team for

The Merry Wives of Windsor

An endlessly entertaining new take on Shakespeare's most raucous comedy
 Directed by Phillip Breen and running April 2–May 3 in the Courtyard Theater



Chicago—February 23, 2026—[Chicago Shakespeare Theater](#) (CST) announces the cast and creative team for [The Merry Wives of Windsor](#), an endlessly entertaining new take on Shakespeare's most raucous comedy. The secret lives of Windsor wives reveal there is much more to this charming, middle-class English hamlet than meets the eye. Besties Mistress Page and Mistress Ford find themselves the romantic targets of the lewd-but-lovable rogue John Falstaff. In a welcome escape from the drudgery of their day-to-day, they band together to have the last laugh—and get the entire town in on the revelry.

Staged by acclaimed director **Phillip Breen**, the production stars Chicago favorites **Ora Jones** and **Issy van Randwyck** as Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, **Chiké Johnson** and **Timothy Edward Kane** as Master Page and Master Ford, and in his Chicago Shakespeare debut, **Jason Simon** as Sir John Falstaff. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* also features an exceptionally talented ensemble cast of 22 actors including **Sam Bell-Gurwitz**, **Zach Bloomfield**, **Nate Burger**, **Rohan Degala**, **Dylan J. Fleming**, **Teddy Gales**, **Colin Huerta**, **Carmelo Kelly**, **James McCracken**, **Olivia Pryor**, **Nick Sandys**, **Justice Tatum**, **Paul Oakley Stovall**, **Olemich Tugas**, **Bret Tuomi**, **Nancy Voigts**, and **Alex Weisman**, and runs **April 2–May 3, 2026**, in the **Jentes Family Courtyard Theater**, considered one of the world's finest spaces to experience Shakespeare's stories live in performance.

"It's a joy to welcome Phillip Breen and his brilliant take on *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to CST," shared Artistic Director **Edward Hall**. "This play, often underrated in Shakespeare's canon, is full of humor and wit, while also diving deep into social commentary that's as relevant today as ever. As the weather warms up, I look forward to welcoming Chicago back to the Courtyard for a wonderful experience at the theater."

"I can't wait to share Shakespeare's funniest, most subversive, and filthiest comedy with Chicago this spring," shared director **Phillip Breen** stated. "I am thrilled to be making my debut at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, one of the great Shakespeare Theaters in the world, and am hugely looking forward to collaborating with whole team at CST."

In the role of Mistress Page, **Ora Jones** returns to CST with numerous credits, including *Henry VIII*, *The Madness of George III*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and most recently *The Comedy of Errors*. She appeared on Broadway in *Matilda the Musical* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and recent Chicago credits include *Amadeus* and *Noises Off* (Steppenwolf Theatre) and *The Nacirema Society* (Goodman Theatre). As Mistress Ford, **Issy van Randwyck** returns to CST after appearing as Bottom in *Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the subsequent Shakes in the City tour of the same production. She is an Olivier Award nominee with stage credits at the National Theatre, Regents Park Open Air Theatre, in the West End, and more, and film and television credits including *The Danish Girl*, *Blithe Spirit*, and *Belgravia*. In the role of Master Page, **Chiké Johnson** returns to CST after his Jeff Award-nominated performance in last season's *Hymn*. Johnson is a company member of Remy Bumppo Theatre and has worked on many stages in Chicago and around the country, including Broadway credits *Time to Kill* and *Wit*, and *Ashland Avenue* and *Toni Stone* at Goodman Theatre. As Master Ford, **Timothy Edward Kane** returns to CST after appearing in *Hamlet*, *Nell Gwynn*, *Tug of War*, and many more. His recent Chicago credits include *Antigone*, *Gospel at Colonus*, and *Othello* at Court Theatre, and *Birthday Candles* at Northlight Theatre. In the role of Sir John Falstaff, **Jason Simon** makes his Chicago Shakespeare debut. Simon has appeared in the national tours of *Sister Act*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Producers*, *Cats!*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *Funny Girl*, with additional credits at the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center, and the New York Philharmonic.

The company also includes **Sam Bell-Gurwitz** as Fenton (CST debut, *Good Night, Oscar* on Broadway), **Zach Bloomfield** as Nym (CST debut, credits with Shattered Globe Theatre, The Factory Theater, and Oil Lamp Theater), **Nate Burger** as Dr. Caius (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and more at CST), **Dylan J. Fleming** as John Rugby (*Twelfth Night* at CST), **Teddy Gales** as Bardolph (CST debut, credits at Paramount Theatre, Marriott Theatre, and more), **Colin Huerta** as Pistol/Ford Servant 2 (*Much Ado About Nothing* at CST), **Olivia Pryor** as Anne Page (*Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream* at CST), **Nick Sandys** as Sir Hugh Evans (*Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* at CST), **Paul Oakley Stovall** as Shallow (*Twelfth Night*, at CST), **Olemich Tugas** as Simple/Ford Servant 1 (CST debut, credits at Sun Valley Shakespeare Festival and the House Theatre of Chicago), **Bret Tuomi** as Host of the Garter Inn (*Nell Gwynn*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and more at CST), **Nancy Voigts** as Mistress Quickly (*As you Like It*, *Follies*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and more at CST), and **Alex Weisman** as Slender (*Tug of War*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Madness of George III*, more at CST). Young performers include **Rohan Degala** as Robin Page, **Carmelo Kelly** as William Page, and **James McCracken** and **Justice Tatum** as Windsor boys.

Director **Phillip Breen**'s work has played at: the Citizens, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Birmingham Rep, and Theatre Cocoon Tokyo. He has directed off-Broadway, as well as in the West End, and his work has played all over the UK, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, New York, Los Angeles, the Sydney International Theatre Festival, Adelaide, Canberra, Dubai, and through the streets of Assisi. His eclectic range of work encompasses opera, theatre, comedy, musicals, jazz cabaret, large-scale community theatre projects, new work and classics. He also regularly collaborated with Vivienne Westwood, for whom he directed and co-devised *Homo Loquax*, her London Fashion Week show in 2019. In 2016 he directed the York Mysteries in York Minster with a community cast of hundreds. In 2025 he directed Peter Mullan as Bill Shankly in his own adaptation of David Peace's *Red or Dead* in Liverpool, and Natalie Dormer in the UK premiere of his adaptation of *Anna Karenina* at Chichester. He made his Royal Shakespeare Company debut in 2012 with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This was followed up with a production of Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in the Swan, followed by an award-winning production of Richard Bean's new play *The Hypocrite* and Vanbrugh's *The Provok'd Wife* and *The Comedy of Errors*. He has contributed extended essays on Shakespeare to two books on Shakespeare, and completed his own monograph on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "Walking in A Windsor Wonderland: Some Ramshackle Reflections on Directing Shakespeare's Greatest Comedy."

The creative team for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* also includes **Max Jones** (Scenic & Costume Designer), **Marcus Doshi** (Lighting Designer), **Lindsay Jones** (Sound Designer), **Laura Rook** (Assistant Director), and **Chelsea Strebe** (Assistant Lighting Designer), **Matthew Silar** (Production Stage Manager), **Danny Fender** (Assistant Stage Manager), and **Tuesday Thacker** (Young Performer Supervisor).

Opening is set for 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.

On Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, Chicago Shakespeare Theater will team up with Illinois' largest independent craft brewery, [Revolution Brewing](#), to host "Drink and Be Merry," a preshow beer tasting and education event, celebrating Falstaff's beverage of choice. More details to be released soon.

More information at www.chicagoshakes.com/merrywives or on social media at @chicagoshakes.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Phillip Breen

April 2–May 3, 2026

in the Jentes Family Courtyard Theater

PERFORMANCE LISTING

- Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee April 8*)
- Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Fridays at 7:00 p.m.
- Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*no matinee April 4*)
- Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Creative Team

Phillip Breen – Director
Max Jones – Scenic & Costume Designer
Marcus Doshi – Lighting Designer
Lindsay Jones – Sound Designer
Laura Rook – Assistant Director
Chelsea Strebe – Assistant Lighting Designer
Matthew Silar – Production Stage Manager
Danny Fender – Assistant Stage Manager
Tuesday Thacker – Young Performer Supervisor

Cast

Sam Bell-Gurwitz – Fenton
Zach Bloomfield – Nym
Nate Burger – Dr. Caius
Rohan Degala – Robin Page
Dylan J. Fleming – John Rugby
Teddy Gales – Bardolph
Colin Huerta – Pistol / Ford Servant
Chiké Johnson – Master Page
Ora Jones – Mistress Page
Timothy Edward Kane – Master Ford
Carmelo Kelly – William Page
James McCracken – Windsor Boy
Olivia Pryor – Anne Page
Issy van Randwyck – Mistress Ford
Nick Sandys – Sir Hugh Evans
Jason Simon – Sir John Falstaff
Justice Tatum – Windsor Boy
Paul Oakley Stovall – Shallow
Olemich Tugas – Simple / Ford Servant
Bret Tuomi – Host of the Garter Inn
Nancy Voigts – Mistress Quickly
Alex Weisman – Slender
Sara Mountjoy-Pepka – Understudy

ABOUT CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CST)

CST is a leading international theater company and the nation's largest year-round theater dedicated to the works of Shakespeare. Under the visionary leadership of Artistic Director Edward Hall and Executive Director Kimberly Motes, the Regional Tony Award recipient is committed to creating vivid, entertaining theatrical experiences that invigorate and engage people of all ages and identities by illuminating the complexity, ambiguity, and wonder of our world. Each year, nearly a quarter of a million people experience CST's artistry through more than 12 productions. With Shakespeare at the heart of the artistic work, CST also produces compelling, contemporary stories from fresh voices of today. CST brings the world to Chicago and sends Chicago out into the world as Chicago's foremost presenter of international theater, and consistent producer of North American and world premieres. Serving more students and teachers than any theater in the city, CST annually welcomes more than 20,000 students to performances and programs like Chicago Shakespeare SLAM, alongside professional development opportunities for teachers. CST activates its campus with three venues: 700-seat The Yard; the 500-seat Jentes Family Courtyard Theater; and the 200-seat Carl and Marilyn Thoma Upstairs Studio. Free programs like Shakes in the City bring performances to parks and community spaces across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. Shared humanity and unforgettable stories—now THIS is Chicago Shakespeare.

www.chicagoshakes.com

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