



ROMEO

&

JULIET

STONY LIMITS CANNOT HOLD LOVE OUT...

PLAYBILL

Shakespeare
BEHIND BARS

LUTHER LUCKETT CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX

JUNE 14-21, 2012

The ENSEMBLE

MEMBERS OF THE 2011–2012 SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS ENSEMBLE



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JOSH
WALLACE



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GEORGE
COHEN



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DAVID N.
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RODERICK
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WILLIAM
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CHARLES
YOUNG



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PRICHARD



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BRANDON
LANGLEY



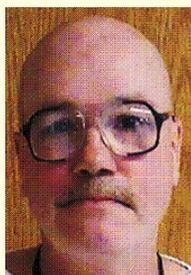
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CHRISTOPHER
LINDAUER



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RON A.
BROWN



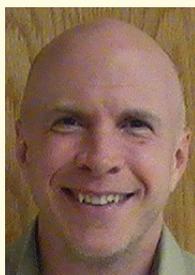
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MALAVENDA



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JERRY
GUENTHNER



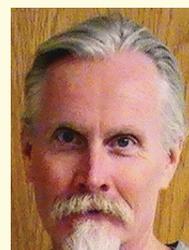
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FLOYD G.
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SULESKI



ABOUT

Now in its 17th year, Shakespeare Behind Bars is the oldest program of its kind in North America serving incarcerated adults and youth using exclusively the works of William Shakespeare. SBB is also the subject of Philomath Films award-winning documentary *Shakespeare Behind Bars*, which received its World Premiere at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. Shakespeare Behind Bars, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

PROGRAMS

Luther Lockett Correctional Complex - *LaGrange, Kentucky*

Audubon Youth Development Center - *Louisville, Kentucky*

Louisville Day Treatment Center - *Louisville, Kentucky*

Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility - *Muskegon Heights, Michigan*

**"I am afraid to think what I
have done"**

- *Macbeth*, II.ii

MISSION

The mission of Shakespeare Behind Bars is to offer theatrical encounters with personal and social issues to the incarcerated, allowing them to develop life skills that will ensure their successful reintegration into society.

VISION

Shakespeare Behind Bars was founded on the beliefs that all human beings are inherently good, and that although convicted criminals have committed heinous crimes against other human beings, this inherent goodness still lives deep within them and must be called forth. Participation in the program can effectively change our world for the better by influencing one person at a time, awakening him or her to the power and the passion of the goodness that lives within all of us. SBB offers participants the ability to hope and the courage to act despite their fear and the odds against them. SBB uses the healing power of the arts, transforming inmate offenders from who they were when they committed their crimes, to who they are in the present moment, to who they wish to become.

VALUES/CREED - The program allows each participant the opportunity to:

1. develop a lifelong passion for learning, especially those participants who are at high risk of not completing or continuing their education;
2. develop literacy skills (reading, writing, and oral communication), including those participants who are classified as learning disabled and/or developmentally challenged;
3. develop decision making, problem solving, and creative thinking skills;
4. develop empathy, compassion, and trust;
5. nurture a desire to help others;
6. increase self-esteem and develop a positive self-image;
7. take responsibility for the crime/s committed;
8. become a responsible member of a group, community, and family;
9. learn tolerance and peaceful resolution of conflict;
10. relate the universal human themes contained in Shakespeare's works to themselves including their past experiences and choices, their present situation, and their future possibility;
11. relate the universal themes of Shakespeare to the lives of other human beings and to society at-large;
12. return to society as a contributing member.

**"Lord! We know what we
are, but know not what we
may be."**

- *Hamlet*, IV.v

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

LUTHER LUCKETT CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX

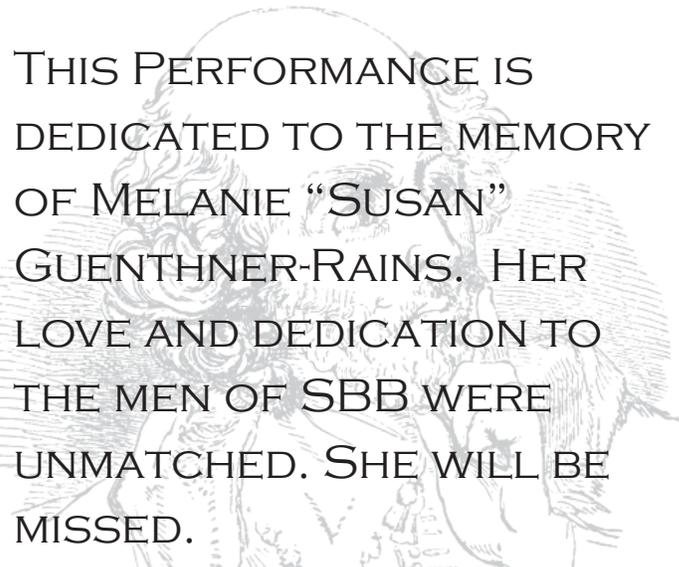
We deeply appreciate the entire security, program and support staff of the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex for their assistance and cooperation in making this production possible.

| | |
|--|---|
| Greg Howard, Warden | Captain Tim Crutcher, First Shift Captain |
| Clark Taylor, Warden | Captain Richard Garcia, Second Shift Captain |
| Phillip Bramblett, Deputy Warden/Security | Captain Trevor Wotring, Second Shift Captain |
| Tiffany Ratliff, Deputy Warden/Programs | Cheri Kraus, KCI Print Shop Operations Manager |
| Joshua Lewis, CTO/Staff Sponsor | Roger Liter, KCI Print Shop Production Supervisor |
| Kevin Hayes, CUA I | Mr. Harold Blandford |
| Casey Heilman, Chaplain | Marty Clute |
| Judy Vilinskis, Administrative Specialist II | KCI Print Shop Staff |
| Sherri Grissinger, Administrative Specialist | The LLCC Observer |
| Karen Heath, Recreation Director | Cathy Buck & The LLCC Observer Staff |
| Scott Jordan, Senior Captain | |

ALSO SPECIAL THANKS TO:

J. Michael Brown, *Secretary, Justice & Public Safety Cabinet*
LaDonna Thompson, *Commissioner, Department of Corrections*
Hasan Davis, *Acting Commissioner, Department of Juvenile Justice*
Kristie Stutler, *Superintendent, Audubon Youth Development Center*
Regan Leo, *Humanities Teacher, Audubon Youth Development Center*
and

Andre Collins
Pamela DiPasquale
Mark Fredo
Jack Heller
Kevin Hesson
Brenda Johnson
Brady McKellar
Craig Pishotti
Howard Ralston
Molly Sensenbrenner
Sam Sorsa
Carol Stewart
Peter Stone
Tina Jo Wallace



THIS PERFORMANCE IS
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF MELANIE "SUSAN"
GUENTHNER-RAINS. HER
LOVE AND DEDICATION TO
THE MEN OF SBB WERE
UNMATCHED. SHE WILL BE
MISSED.

"And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

- *Hamlet*, V.ii

Dramatis Personae

Royals

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Escalus, <i>Prince of Verona</i> | David N. Harding |
| Paris, <i>a young nobleman, kinsman to the Prince</i> | Charles Young |
| Page, <i>to Paris</i> | Roderick Blincoe |
| Mercutio, <i>kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo</i> | Floyd Gene Vaughn |

Montagues

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Lord Montague, <i>head of family, at odds with Capulets</i> | David Hopper |
| Lady Montague, <i>wife to Montague</i> | Mario Mitchell |
| Romeo, <i>son to Montague</i> | James Prichard |
| Benvolio, <i>nephew to Montague and friend to Romeo</i> | John Snyder |
| Balthasar, <i>servant to Romeo</i> | William Whitehouse |
| Abram, <i>servant to Montague</i> | Steve Riddle |

Capulets

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Lord Capulet, <i>head of family, at odds with Montagues</i> | Jeff Griffith |
| Lady Capulet, <i>wife to Capulet</i> | Hal Cobb |
| Juliet, <i>daughter to Capulet</i> | Derald Weeks |
| Nurse, <i>to Juliet</i> | Jerry Guenther |
| Peter, <i>servant to Juliet's Nurse and Capulet</i> | William Whitehouse |
| Tybalt, <i>nephew to Lady Capulet</i> | Erroll Rogers |
| Sampson, <i>servant to Capulet</i> | Brandon Langley |
| Gregory, <i>servant to Capulet</i> | Joshua Wallace |
| A Capulet | Erik Nolde |

Holy Men

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Friar Laurence, <i>a Franciscan</i> | Ron Anthony Brown |
| Friar John, <i>a Franciscan</i> | Michael Malavenda |

Citizens

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| An Apothecary | Mario Mitchell |
| Chief Watchman | Christopher Lindauer |
| 2 nd Watchman | Stephen Riddle |

Shakespeare Behind Bars, Inc. Staff

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Founder/Producing Director | Curt L. Tofteland |
| Artistic Director | Matt Wallace |
| Director of Technology and Communications | Holly Stone |

Production Team

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Director | Matt Wallace |
| Staff Sponsor | Joshua Lewis, CTO |
| Assistant Director/Stage Manager | Gene Vaughn |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Gary Cohen |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Stephen Marshall |
| Stage Crew | Erik Nolde |
| Costume Design | Donna Lawrence-Downs |
| Scenic Design/Artist | Michael Malavenda |
| Scenic Construction | Audubon Youth Development Center Students |
| Original Music/Sound Design | Tom Suleski |
| Romeo and Juliet Logo Design | Holly Stone |

THERE WILL BE ONE TEN-MINUTE INTERMISSION

THE TRAGEDIE OF ROMEO & JULIET

DIRECTOR'S NOTES



"Now in our 2nd season as our own non-profit charitable organization, Shakespeare Behind Bars, Inc. is experiencing exciting growth and remarkable success."

Welcome to the 17th season of the Shakespeare Behind Bars program at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex, the longest running program of its kind in North America! I'm delighted to have you with us this evening to share the culmination of this season's work in our production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Your presence here tonight means the world to these men.

Since last June's production here at the LLCC, we've bid farewell to four SBB members who were released back into society. Kevin Hesson, Curtis Hastings, Howard Ralston, and Jeremy Williams are all home now and making us extremely proud as they employ SBB values and principles on the outside. I was actually able to bring Howard out to speak with our juvenile ensemble just weeks after his release. His story and advice had a profound effect on the young men in that program. We have now had 58 SBB members from our LLCC program re-enter society, and as of today, our program recidivism rate is just 5.2%. (*The national average is about 67%, and the Kentucky rate is 29.5 %.*)

Now in our 2nd season as our own non-profit charitable organization, Shakespeare Behind Bars, Inc. is experiencing exciting growth and remarkable success. In addition to our original program here at LLCC, we are in our second year of expansion into Michigan, with our SBB program at the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility in Muskegon Heights, facilitated by Curt L. Tofteland. We also remain committed to working with juveniles in the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice in our SBB Multidisciplinary Juvenile Arts Program at the Audubon Youth Development Center and our new juvenile aftercare Shakespeare *Beyond Bars* program at the Louisville Day Treatment Center. As students who participated in our intensive at the Audubon Youth Development Center transition out of the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice, we now have this special opportunity to continue working with them at the Louisville Day Treatment Center, with

the goal of helping them successfully transition back into society. You can find more information about these groundbreaking programs later in the playbill.

Simply put, Shakespeare Behind Bars, Inc. would not be experiencing this renaissance without our incredibly generous contributors. I am in constant awe of the compassion of our SBB donors. We could not do this without your continued support. And if you are not yet an SBB donor, we invite you to join us! You can make a tax-deductible contribution securely through our site (www.shakespearebehindbars.org) or by mailing the remittance envelopes provided in the lobby tonight. Together, we are truly making a difference, and we thank you for your generosity and kindness.

I must also thank all of the staff here at LLCC for their continual help and support, and for contributing to the success of this program for 17 seasons. For those of you who are returning, you'll notice a change to this year's playbill. Many thanks to Cathy Buck, David N. Harding, and the LLCC Observer team for making this beautiful 17th Season Commemorative Playbill a reality.

Throughout this playbill, in addition to more information about our organization, you'll see reflections from each of our ensemble members. I asked each of them to write on the topic "What Shakespeare Behind Bars Means to Me." I hope it gives you a glimpse into their courage, their experience in this program, and the profound effects SBB has.

And what does Shakespeare Behind Bars mean to *me*? It means an opportunity, a gift, to witness and facilitate change and to be part of a brotherhood working towards a positive common goal trying to do the right thing. It means finding the goodness in all of us and nurturing it... harnessing it. It's a powerful manifestation of what the arts can *do*. To me, SBB is hope.

This season has been an exhilarating challenge taking on *Romeo and Juliet*, one of Shakespeare's most performed works. Being such a popular play

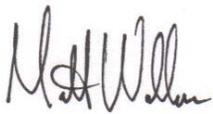
that many people think they already know, it was important for us to really explore the depths of this tragic story, beyond assumptions and clichés. We've spent the past year dissecting the piece and mining the truth, and as always, the ensemble continues to inspire and surprise.

As you take this journey with us tonight, I hope you make new connections with *Romeo and Juliet* and Shakespeare. I hope we impact your outlook on humanity and the potential of others. And I hope you'll see what I see daily... Change is possible. Hope and love are possible, even in a place where you least expect to find them.

"For stony limits cannot hold love out."

- Act II, sc. ii

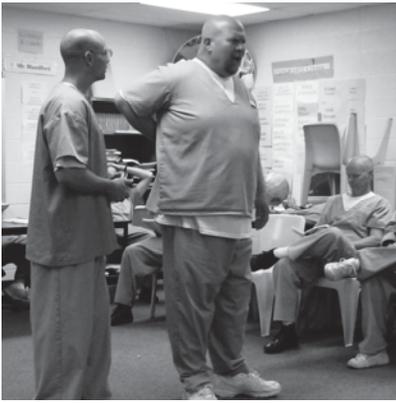
Thank you for joining us.



Matt Wallace,

Artistic Director, Shakespeare Behind Bars





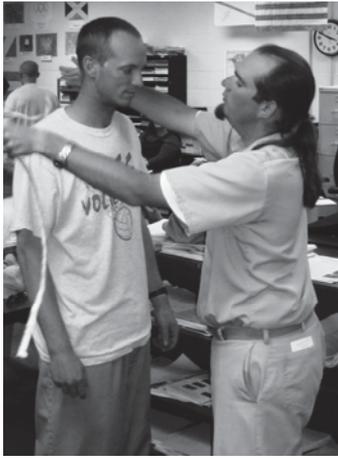

Ron Anthony Brown
Presents
*Shakespeare
Behind Bars*
Behind
THE
Scenes

This year's performance marks the 17th year of Shakespeare Behind Bars. For many people the entire program has been about the plays, but the reality is that SBB would still be a groundbreaking and transformative program if we had never had one single performance. As a founding member of this group, I have enjoyed all of the performances and am extremely proud of the things that we have been able to accomplish as an ensemble, as individuals, and as a family.

I am asked often about all of the things that go on behind the scenes. I guess in this age of paparazzi and "TMZ" people have become preoccupied with all the juicy details that you never see at the performances. I can assure you that there are a lot of things that occur over the course of any particular production year. Most of it would not surprise you. What would probably surprise you is the growth that comes from the awareness that we gain from each and every situation that has happened over the years.

It would be impossible for me to put into words what exactly the *Shakespeare Behind Bars* experience is, because it is such a personal experience for each and every one of the over 100 people that has been involved with the program. We each join with our own preconceived notions of what it is that we are going to experience, but we almost always end the year with the understanding that what we experienced completely surpassed our greatest expectations.

When we begin, the first mountain that we encounter is that of the Shakespearean language. In retrospect I see that, although I don't use Elizabethan language in my everyday life, I have benefited from studying Shakespeare because it has expanded my horizons and opened my mind to possibilities that I never thought possible. When we take a part in the play, we are faced with the daunting task of trying to memorize lines that often times we have no understanding of. Through our research of the language of our character, we often find ourselves doing something without even realizing it...



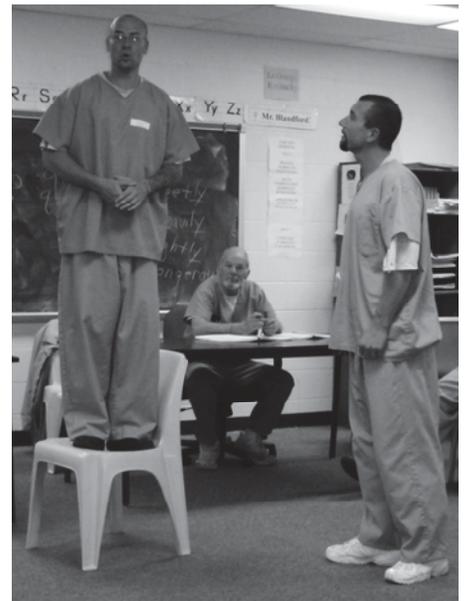
evaluating the language that we use in our own lives. We start evaluating if the words we are using is advancing the story that we would like to tell with ourselves. It is really such a subtle thing that you don't even realize that you are doing it until one day you wake up and realize that you are not the same person you were 6 months ago.

Over the course of a production year, we are all faced with the challenge of not only learning our own character, but also coming to grips with the reality that we must learn to work in concert with others. You begin to learn that you can know your lines backwards and forwards, but if you are unwilling to work with your scene partners, then no one will remember how well you had your lines, because they will only remember that the play was a failure. The reality is that contrary to one of Shakespeare's lines, the play is not the thing. Ultimately, SBB is about cultivating a part of our individual selves that we have yet to discover and then share it with people that, under normal circumstances, we would not even have spoken to. It involves a certain level of trust and a tremendous amount of faith. I am pleased to report that for the past

17 years we have been exceedingly successful in this endeavor. We are not about tooting our own horn. We live everyday with the knowledge that the success that we have had began for each and every one of us with something criminal, and in many cases heinous. Many of the plays that we perform parallel the crimes that we have committed in our lives. This allows us to look at our crimes and our decisions from a different perspective and allows us to learn that we have more options in life if only we would open ourselves to the possibility that we are more than we have come to believe we are.

Although the play is not the thing, it is a very important aspect of what we do because it allows us to show the general public, our fellow inmates, and our beloved families something that we have put our heart and soul into that will not result in jury selection and more lawyer fees. For many of us, it is the very first time that we have ever completed anything in our lives. Most people do not realize it, but when the plays are performed, even though we may have seen each of these scenes several times, we are just as interested in watching the play through cracks in the back drop, from the back of the chapel, or by simply closing our eyes and listening to the words from backstage. For about 3 hours we are not SBB: Shakespeare Behind Bars - we are SBB: Shakespearean Band of Brothers. It feels good to be celebrated for doing something right.

SBB performances can be addictive. We will get tired after so many performances and we will become like walking zombies at our respective workplaces, but when show time comes we will find that energy in our spirit or in our fellow SBB cast mates to tell the story once again. I have watched people who are



physically sick enough to need medical attention fight through the pain or discomfort. I have seen people who have had devastating losses in their family face their own pain to preserve the integrity of the play. I have seen people have heated arguments earlier in the day perform with a respect and professionalism that most think is foreign to this environment. Why do we do it?

We do it because we love each other. We love each other because we have learned to love ourselves. And we love ourselves because someone we didn't know chose to believe in us even when we did not believe in ourselves. For some of us that is the same person and for some it is not. Yet for all of us, it has changed our lives. So, what's behind the scenes of an SBB production? Men who are considered societies worst having the courage to seek out humanity's best. . .inside themselves.●



David N.
Harding

Shakespeare BEHIND BARS

www.shakespearebehindbars.org

CALL ME APPRENTICE



I am halfway through my first season as an apprentice for Shakespeare Behind Bars (SBB). I have to admit that I joined the ensemble with certain expectations—and maybe a little arrogance. I mean, how hard could it be? In my mind, I saw myself wowing my fellow Shakespearean brothers and the crowds that would soon be chanting my name.

Well, I wouldn't go that far, but I was sure that I could dazzle everyone with my ability to act. So, I threw my hat in for one of the open spots in the troupe and became an apprenticed member of SBB. Then I learned that what takes place in SBB has very little to do with acting. It's not about the drama. It's not about convincing an audience that you can play a role. It's not even about the performance.

Stepping into this small association, I began to have my eyes opened to what makes SBB so profoundly unique when measured to other programs here at Luckett. Not only did I watch as men explored aspects of themselves as they identified with the characters they would be playing, but I found myself facing my own truths.

For instance, as an exercise, we were asked to memorize one of Romeo's monologues. It reads as such,

*'Tis torture and not mercy,
heaven is here where Juliet lives,
and every cat and dog, and little
mouse, every unworthy thing live
here in heaven and may look on
her, but Romeo may not.*

*More validity, more
honorable state, more courtship
lives in carrion flies, than Romeo.
They may seize on the white
wonder of Juliet's hand, and steal
immortal blessing from her lips,
who even in pure and vestal
modesty still blush, as thinking
their own kisses sin.*

*This may flies do, when I
from this must fly! And sayest
thou yet, that exile is not death?
But Romeo may not! He is
banished!*

*Hast thou no poison mixed,
no sharp ground knife, no sudden
mean of death, thou nere so mean,
but banished to kill me?
Banished?*

*O Friar, the damned use that
word in hell! Howlings attend it!
How hast thou the heart, being a
divine, a ghostly confessor, a sin-
absolver, and my friend
professed: to mangle me with that
word—banished?*

This is Romeo's response to being banished from all that he holds dear to himself—the love and companionship of his newly wedded wife, Juliet.

Memorizing the part was a piece of cake. I rehearsed it over

and over in my bed at night until I knew I had mastered the words. Then I began to imagine how I would convey the grief that Romeo felt at the forced separation that he would soon be exposed to. Oh, how marvelous the tears would be that streaked my face! I would grasp my chest and pull at my hair! My hands would claw at the empty air in my vain attempt to grasp hold of my dear, ever so dear, Juliet.

I was awe-inspired at my own genius. That is, until I watched William Whitehouse stand before us as the first victim to fall prey to the ensemble's raptor gaze.

I listened as the veteran's of the SBB called Billy to a place of truth and authenticity regarding Romeo's state of mind. I heard Hal Cobb say, "The truth is in what is heard, more than what is seen." Questions were raised about what Romeo meant as opposed to what he was saying.

In an effort to get Billy to move the character out of his head, I watched Matt shake him by his shoulders until he messed the lines up. Then I found that messing up was a good thing!

I took what I heard back to my bed that night and made an effort to find the truth in the words. What was it Romeo was trying to communicate. How can I identify with what it would feel

like to be banished from everything I hold dear?

I was looking at the bottom of my cellmate's bunk as the last image of my wife and kids, which had been seared into my memory over a decade ago, ignited in a painful heart wrenching flame. I recalled feeling the need to die rather than face a life separated from my family.

Heaven was truly where my family lived, where every cat, dog, mouse, and any other unworthy thing could look upon them—but I could not. Even the despicable fly could enjoy their presence, but I could not.

Walking back to my cell after my last visit with my wife so many years ago, I looked over the rail at the fifteen foot drop and longed for the death it could afford me. There was no poison mixed, no sharp knife to use, and I was too much of a coward to use the only sudden means of death that was afforded me in that moment.

Weeping, I understood what Romeo meant when he said that the damned in hell use the word banished and that howlings attend its use. I knew what it was to be mangled by the word—

BANISHED!

The next time we met, Kevin Hesson did a remarkable job on the monologue. At the end of that session, I was asked to take my turn.

I found myself unable to do so without first sharing my experience the night before as I tried to see the truth of Romeo's heart. Even as I did, I couldn't help but experience the tenderness of heart that had been exposed.

Unfortunately, when I finally did quote the monologue, I had reigned myself so far back as to find it nearly impossible to meet the truth of the text. However, my eyes were opened to a level of honesty that I had yet to face. I had not thus far confronted certain painful truths. To me, this is what makes SBB so unique.

I didn't join SBB so that I could confront unaddressed problems. I joined up for reasons that are no longer relevant.

To be honest, I don't have a great love for the works of Shakespeare and I struggle with attending practices, with discussing the gentle nuances of text and meaning, and watching my SBB brothers work their lines

until it all drones in my ears like white noise.

Yet, amidst the struggle to find the truth, to identify with the character, and to push through to the place of transparency, a blinding light bursts through the veil to expose a depth of humanity and honesty that reminds me why I joined SBB.

We are the incarcerated. Many of us were not raised in homes where we were taught to communicate properly. Yet, in the SBB circle, communication becomes important. You find the value in receiving criticism and applying it so that you become greater at what you are doing. You learn the power of conflict resolution.

This is where the veterans of SBB exercise their greatest value. They've had their unhealthy coping mechanisms challenged so many times that when new members fall back on their own, the veterans are ready to challenge them in the hope that they will grow past the need to put on a front.

It's funny when you think about it. Normally stage actors are about putting on the masks. SBB is all about taking them off

while helping each other face who we really are and become grounded and settled in our identity.

In SBB you are allowed to give yourself permission to be vulnerable. As I'm sure you can imagine, this is not a trait that is received well in an incarcerated environment. That is why the circle is so important. That's why the standards are so strict for those who would like to join and for those who would like to stay. The circle is protected.

SBB is not an elite club where only the smart, cool, or sophisticated find a place. No. The only requirement is a willingness to be open to the process, a desire to be greater tomorrow than you were today, and an eagerness to help others on their own road to greatness.

As Ron Brown so clearly stated, "We are not just a bunch of inmates putting on a play. We are an ensemble." After spending nearly a year learning what it means to step into the shoes of our characters and growing as we stretch ourselves across new frontiers, there is, after all... the performance! ●



Above:
Measure for Measure — 2007
Right:
Macbeth — 2009

"We few, we happy few,
we band of brothers."

- Henry V, IV.v



Above:
The Winter's Tale ensemble
meeting with LaDonna Thomp-
son, Commissioner — 2010



PRICHARD'S ROMEO

By Christopher Lindauer



The character “Romeo” is known worldwide. He is the classic romantic personification. Women want a man like Romeo and guys make gestures trying to live up to his reputation. Knowing James Prichard as a friendly acquaintance, “romantic” is not one of the first things that come to mind. His sense of humor is noticeable almost immediately because he is very quick to joke or lighten the mood. In prison, that’s a great skill to have in yourself as well as in the people you surround yourself with. Even though “romantic” is not the word I think of when I think of James, Romeo is not a huge stretch for him. He carries himself with a sense of pride much like the heir of a comfortable family would. Prichard is not stuck up or arrogant but has a confidence in his actions, appearance, and his character. He stands on his own two feet but always contributes something to a group that he is involved in.

I have not seen Prichard in action during this whole season, but I have watched him through about two months of practices. We have witnessed, as a group, a number of scenes worked many times. Some may think the scene can get run into the ground. Truth is, there is a discovery or a new depth found in every try. With a number of the scenes in this tragedy, there are places a person must explore that aren’t always easy to do. There is a lot of

darkness, a lot of pain, lost love, lost friends, dealing with the death of a loved one, and dealing with killing someone. Some of these things are not something that everyone has gone through and it takes a while to unearth the emotions behind it inside one’s self. This takes time and reworking. Each time, Prichard explores it in a deeper and deeper place and there is a sense of authenticity showing through.

One of the biggest lessons in Shakespeare Behind Bars is not to show an emotion or feeling, not to “act”. It is to feel that feeling or emotion, to go there inside, so that it’s real and not just pretend. Prichard sometimes struggles in the beginning when he works a new scene, but once he starts, the struggles are less and less. When he goes back to a scene that he’s already worked, it’s with less effort that he manages to connect to the character and what Romeo is going through and feeling at the time.

Seeing Prichard’s Romeo is, of course, different than seeing someone else playing Romeo. Prichard owns the character and by doing so, makes parts of his personality come through when he’s in character. It adds to the experience and doesn’t take anything away from the play itself or from what’s going on in it. He does it where it is acceptable to have humor, but when the serious parts come, he takes them seriously. It has been a pleasure to

watch Prichard grow into his role more and more, but what is profound is when you see Romeo come through Prichard. At times like this, it’s almost like the text has brought forth the character and he is just wearing Prichard as a vessel. When, as a spectator, you can watch a performance and get lost in it to a point that you forget who the actor is, you forget that you’re watching something. You just get drawn into what’s going on. It’s almost magical. It’s like the story and the text have come to life and not in a superficial way, but that it’s real. You can see and feel Romeo’s anguish, his pain, and his losses. Not Prichard’s, but Romeo’s. It’s amazing, even if it’s only a glimpse. When Prichard manages it throughout a whole scene, it almost leaves you speechless.

I’m not saying that James Prichard is not a “Romeo” in his own right, because I really don’t know. He may be. I know how I see Prichard, and while Romeo isn’t the first thought that comes to mind, I don’t feel like it’s something he can’t be at times. The ideal of Romeo didn’t, in my mind, conjure up a figure or person like Prichard before I watched him as Romeo. Now, every time I think of Romeo, I will see Prichard’s Romeo, and I believe that would do William Shakespeare just fine. ●

James Prichard in his role as Ross in SBB’s 2009 *Macbeth*

It was inevitable that Shakespeare Behind Bars would one day launch a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. The play is perhaps the best known of William Shakespeare's canon and usually the first to introduce students to the bard. As a founding member of SBB (since 1995) my concern for the tragedy has always been who would play Juliet in our all male prison production. Female roles in our productions have always been portrayed by men, just as Shakespeare was forced to do in the social context of his time. Our women have been portrayed with great dignity without any element of caricature or campiness. Playing a female role doesn't make someone less of a man any more than portraying Caesar makes someone an egomaniacal emperor or portraying Hamlet makes someone a suicidal Danish prince. All characters have a humanity and personal truth that must be expressed in the telling of story regardless of gender.

But Juliet: the epitome of young love and adolescent angst (not quite 14 years old), who, with Romeo, speaks some of the most eloquent and romantic words ever spoken in the English language. It would take someone secure enough in himself to tolerate the jibes and jeers of a not so tolerant prison environment. It would



JULIET IS SOMEBODY'S SON

by Hal Cobb



"But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the East and Juliet is the Sun."

-*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2

take someone with a strong work ethic, someone with a desire to study archaic text to fully grasp what is being said and the wherewithal to explore and express emotions far removed from daily prison experience and whatever it was that brought him to prison in the first place.

Defying common convention, Shakespeare Behind Bars self-casts roles amongst its membership without audition or direction from our facilitator Matt Wallace. At the close of each season (mid-June) the next season's play is announced and the group takes an official summer break. During the time off, members read the selected play and begin negotiating who will play what role before the new season begins in September. If more than one person is interested in the same part, members discuss with one another often with the aid of elder members to reach amicable decisions.

People weren't clamoring to play Juliet, nor did they have much time before Derald Weeks, a 34 year old second-year SBB member and Camp Canine trainer serving a life sentence, announced he was interested in the role. Rarely in SBB history, has an apprentice with a modest role in his first year jumped to an iconic title role, the second largest of the play, in his second year. Weeks proved himself in his apprentice

year. He worked hard at learning his lines, showing up for every rehearsal without excuse, seeking advice from senior members while listening to and incorporating ideas presented from fellow members and the facilitator.

Weeks admits he was initially drawn to the role of Juliet for the sheer challenge of it: the challenge of a larger role, the challenge of portraying someone completely opposite of himself, the challenge of pushing himself beyond his comfort zone and perceptions people may have of him. After working on the character for nine months now, he's discovered it's much easier to feel and express emotions than he previously imagined. He's observed that female emotions tend to run deeper than men are usually permitted to feel and express, but that the root of all feelings are the same. Weeks claims he's become more confident and less concerned about what other people think while he does as much as he can to convey Juliet truthfully and honestly.

It's hard for anyone to say what Shakespeare had in mind as he wrote his plays, but in the immediate, he knew young men would be playing his female characters. Juliet may be compared to the sun by Romeo, but in our production, as intended in Shakespeare's early productions, Juliet is somebody's

son. In my exposure to Shakespeare, and in playing female characters myself and observing dozens of others do the same in SBB productions, I've learned that all the femininity necessary for an honest portrayal is in the text. I don't understand it completely. Perhaps it's in the selection of the words, the cadence of the language, more vowels and softer consonants, or just the magic of Shakespeare and his understanding of the human condition that kept his plays viable for centuries and centuries. But it's all there in the script. One doesn't have to focus on pitching one's voice higher or put a swish and wiggle into their step, but simply focus on the text.

And that's what Weeks is doing. There are moments in rehearsal when he embodies the text and Juliet is channeled through this shaved-head convict. Partnered with Weeks in the same transcendent work is James Prichard as Romeo. The evidence of their hard work and their level of trust is apparent as they work together on stage. Theater art is never created in a vacuum. The same commitment to truth and honesty is necessary of all participants. Weeks and Prichard have modeled the way for the entire cast as we worked toward our June production. ●

SBB SAVED MY LIFE—*TWICE!*

so if this happens during rehearsals, then the consequences can be huge on the group as the role will have to be recast.

Members also rely on you to tow your own weight as well. They can't do the work in preparation for the play for you. You have to do the work yourself. That involves memorization of the lines for your character, finding the meaning for words you don't understand, and practicing your lines so you can connect to them and your character in a deeper way.

This new sense of responsibility is something I will have carried to the free world. I now know and understand that just like in SBB, there are people on the outside who rely on me to do the right things. They rely on me to stay out of trouble so that my role, most notably as a father, will not have to be recast again.

I owe much to my brothers in SBB. However, the best way to repay you all for how much you guys have meant to me is to stay out. I hope and pray that I will see you all again someday...but this time on the outside. I humbly thank you for the time we spent together. It was an honor and a pleasure to have gotten to know you all. ●



Kevin as Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* 2010-2011 Season

By Kevin Hesson

I remember being on pretrial release, prior to being incarcerated. I was in research mode. I knew that most likely I was going to prison eventually. So I wanted to find out as much as possible before going to this new and strange world.

I started watching any and every show on TV that had something to do with prison. Soon enough, the anxiety started to well up and depression kicked in at the thought of the hell I was about to enter. However, little did I know that most of the shows I was watching were more about maximum and super

maximum prisons and were not indicative of life here at Luther Luckett.

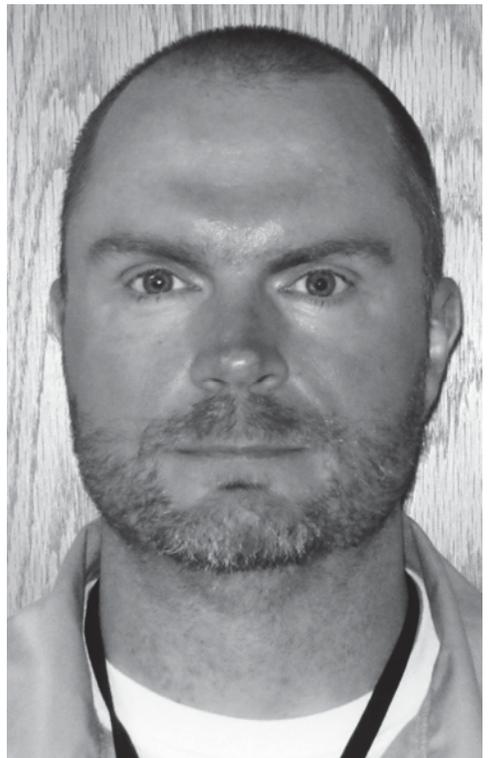
As I continued to delve into what I was getting myself into, I came across a show that was much different from what I had seen previously. It was actually a documentary on Showtime about an acting troupe in a prison in Kentucky— yes, Shakespeare Behind Bars. After watching it, I had hope. Perhaps this was what it was really like in prison. Unlike that hell that I had been shown on most shows that sensationalize prison life. It could, in fact, be a place where there are people who want to work to better themselves.

About a year later, I found myself here at Luther Luckett and in the chapel watching that year's performance, *The Winter's Tale*. I was hooked. I wanted to be up there on stage. I wanted to be a part of this program. Later that summer, Thomas Walker agreed to sponsor me and I began my apprentice year.

Fast forward around two years later and here I am. By the time this will be published, I will have gone home. I made parole, or rather I earned it. They gave me nothing as I earned it by what I accomplished in my three years of incarceration. One of my huge accomplishments in those three years was my participation in SBB.

You see, SBB saved me twice. First, the program began working for me before I was even a member. The hope I needed was given to me while watching the documentary. My anxiety was less and I felt better about this new world I would be entering. Second, while I was here at Luckett, SBB helped build and mold me into the person I am today. I left here a more confident person. One who people can trust and rely on to do what is right. I feel this weighed heavily with the parole board when I met them.

Through SBB, I learned a greater understanding of responsibility. In SBB, the other members of the group rely on you. They rely on you to keep clear conduct. Along with a write-up comes a suspension from the group,



James Prichard

Romeo

SBB has helped me through the years to learn more about myself and my abilities. This is something 22 years on the streets and countless programs could not do. Through playing other characters I have learned who I truly am and what I can do. The group has taught me acceptance of not only others but myself. Self acceptance can be harder than accepting others. It is a safe environment to express your feelings. This is something that is very beneficial. Speaking from

experience, bottling your feelings up is not the way to go. People need some kind of release in their life and I have found mine.

For a lot of us in here, we have been used to handling things in one set way. With SBB, no two practices, scenes, or plays that are the same. You have to think on your feet and handle different situations in different ways. This transfers over into life and we learn there is more than one way to handle every situation. Working together and realizing you don't have to do everything your-

self is another great attribute you can pick up. The group doesn't work if there is no group. You have to learn to lean on other people, not only when it comes to the scenes we work together, but also when personal stuff pops up. We understand that people need help at times (everyone does), but accepting that help can be challenging in its own right.

It is not easy for some of us to get up and be vulnerable in front of a room full of strangers. It is a growing process and we all learn something from it. Whether it is learning about ourselves or others, it depends on the person going through the experience.



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

What I have learned is not only how to accept, forgive, and love others, but also to give those same things to myself. Enjoy the play.

Derald Weeks

Juliet

In September of 2010, I was asked to visit a Shakespeare Behind Bars practice. I went with an uninformed expectation that it would be all about preparing for the next play. I was at one of the presentations of "A Winter's Tale" and was blown away. I saw that it took lots of practice and skill. The way the cast all worked together was amazing.

My first practice as an apprentice was a mass of uncertainty and nervousness. Our leader, oh excuse me, facilitator handed out monologues for us to memorize. I immediately had an urge to quit. I wasn't sure I could memorize that many lines. Also, I didn't realize how memorizing some lines that I

wouldn't even be performing could help me.

Needless to say, I didn't quit, I memorized the monologue and it surprised me how easy it was. When I was called on to do my monologue, it came out great (to me). Matt let me finish, then said, "Okay, you've got it memorized, now say it with feeling." I was shot down in a second. It was a lot harder to put the feeling in than it was to memorize. But I got through it with a lot of help from the circle.

I quickly learned how much the circle can help. One practice led to another. Parts were picked, work on them was done, and when a problem arose, it was dealt with in the form of positive criticism, and at times sarcasm. It was never meant to hurt; perhaps sting a little, but never hurt.

Every practice had an undetermined amount of time of what I like to call "Touchy Feely" time. No, there wasn't any touching, but

there was the opportunity for us to voice personal problems or issues, good or bad, that were going on in our lives. We counted on feedback, understanding, and compassion amongst other things from our circle. There is a trust, a sense of family and a love associated with family.

It was very hard for me to voice my feelings. Trusting people has more often than not led me to disappointment and hurt. But these guys reassured me daily and they earned my trust. I was soon able to talk about things that haven't come out of my head in years, if ever. My words were met with that same understanding and compassion I spoke on earlier. There was no judgment or disdain.

Before long, I found myself understanding the members' problems and issues and I wanted to help. I realized that I genuinely cared about the feelings of people other than myself. With the help of others, I'd begun to face my faults, fears, and shortcomings.

With even more help, I'd begun to eliminate those faults, destroy those fears, and turn those shortcomings into achievements.

Now I am trying to pass that along to others. It isn't always easy and I can't say I'm being altruistic (yes Ron, I used it in the right context). I do it because I know what goes around comes around, for better or worse. This circle is the promotion of growth and a family for those in need. Shakespeare Behind Bars, to me, is a better life with a play thrown in once a year. Thank you to all my family for being there back in September of 2010. ●



Merchant — 2011

Ron Anthony Brown

Friar Lawrence

SBB has been the vessel for, not only my transformation as a man, but also how I see the world around me. I came into this thinking that being in plays involved figuring out the lie and “acting” accordingly. What I found out early on is that true theatre is about telling the truth. Once you come to the point where you can accept that it’s about the truth, then you are faced with the monumental task of finding the foundation for that truth inside yourself.

Through the blessing of being able to play different characters, I have been able to discover things about myself that I would never have been able to face if I did not have the safety and emotional protection of the, sometimes dysfunctional, family most know as SBB.

I have learned to take ownership for my choices, which empowers me to see my future as something that I can make better than my past. I have learned that I can’t do it all alone, which has afforded me the opportunity to have some amazing connections with people that I may have never taken the time to get to know. I have learned that sometimes it is not what you say, but how you say it, that makes all the difference. I have learned that I have never truly been in love, but that that was only because I had yet to learn how to love myself. I have learned that just because you didn’t mean to do something doesn’t change the fact that sometimes you can hurt people by your actions, which teaches me that it is very important to have vision and evaluate each and every decision in your life with that “truth” in mind. Finally, I have learned that there is so much more for me to learn, but that now includes helping others to learn and remaining open to learning from every single opportunity that the universe gives me.

SBB means so much to me that it is really hard to narrow it down to something as limiting as simple words. I know that sounds crazy since, to many people, these plays that we perform are simply a collection of words. I would counter by saying, the thing that makes our family as groundbreaking as it is isn’t acting skill, money, fame, or even the promise of a reduced sentence (i.e. good time). It most certainly is not a t-shirt and pizza. SBB is about hope in its purest form. Hope that despite the mistakes that we have made, we can come to be seen as more than that mistake. Hope that we can be better men than we have been - not just in the eyes of the law, but in the eyes of our mothers and fathers, our spouses, our children, and most importantly ourselves. As you watch this production, we hope that you hear us saying, “We have not given up and we hope that you don’t give up on us.” That’s what SBB has meant to me. Please enjoy the show! ●



Measure for Measure
— 2007

Jerry Guenthner

Nurse



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

My name is Jerry Guenthner, and I have been locked up for twenty-six years, three months, and eleven days. “How do you do it?” the young guys always ask. My reply is simple and is one I developed early on: “Take it one day at a time, keep your head up and your chest out, and never let them see you sweat!”

Well let them write it as they see fit. I will write it as it really is.

Shakespeare Behind Bars is a group of men that have made poor choices and did some horrible things – some worse than others, and mine perhaps worse of all. The things that separate us are remorse and personal responsibility (and I hope that’s obvious), but it’s so much more than that. We are a group of men determined to make *the* noble attempt!

That noble attempt lies at the heart of everything we do. Simply put, we stand in the breach against all odds, vowing to be better sons, brothers, fathers, and human beings. We vow to make the noble attempt and to live in the truth, not just in a play, but also in life itself.

We are a family, and this family has accomplished many small things with great love. For instance, SBB has the lowest recidivism rate, not just in Kentucky, but perhaps the world, and it didn’t cost them a dime. We receive no taxpayer dollars, but exist solely because of your support. For that we say “Thank you very much!”, and thank you for being a part of our family.

I have spent the better part of the last fifteen years doing my best to build this SBB family. The greatest thing about building a family is that when you need a family member, they are always here for you. For example, last

year, I went up for parole (for the third time in 25 years) and was given a ten-year deferment. Who was there for me? My “Shakespeare” family was. About two months ago, I lost my job in the dog program after three years, finding myself on a day bed. Who was there for me? You guessed it – my “Shakespeare” family. While I was on that day bed, my baby sister Susie – whom I loved more than life itself – passed away. I didn’t even have a place to go cry, but you already know who was there for me. That’s right – my “Shakespeare” family!

Some people would say I have had a tragic year, but I am not some people. I am Jerry Guenther, a member of Shakespeare Behind Bars, and we say that every tragedy gives us the opportunity to show great courage. We say that anybody can pilot the ship on calm seas, but let me see what you can do amidst a great storm. It’s at those times when you can best measure the truth of a man’s and his character.

What does Shakespeare Behind Bars means to me? I think I’d rather show you, so...enjoy the show and God bless you all!●

Jeffrey Griffith

Lord Capulet

What if I told you that you could get away with doing lines right in front of Warden Howard?

No joke. You can do lines right in front of the Warden, the guards, your family, the public, and even the Commissioner Ladonna Thompson, and you’ll not only *not* pick up a new charge, you’ll probably pick up some nice applause!

I’m sure you know that the “lines” I’m talking about were written some 400 years ago by a playwright named William Shakespeare, but what you may not know is the “high” that comes from exploring his works as well as the other benefits available to you with the Shakespeare Behind Bars program here at LLCC.

Ask any performer and you’ll hear that performing in theater is addictive...not just the applause (which *is* pretty cool!) but the entire process. From learning the lines to staging the scenes and all the way to bringing the words to life in front an audience, theater – and especially Shakespeare – is an incredible rush. As we learn who our characters are and what

makes them tick, we also learn about ourselves and the world around us. All while having fun!

Shakespeare was a genius at creating “real world” characters and situations that reflect all the diversity and complexity of modern day life just as well as life 400 years ago.

I’ve been incarcerated for almost four years and this is my second year with SBB. I have some theater experience from the street, but I wasn’t sure what SBB was going to be like. I’m blown away! The ensemble carries the mark of a good theater program – no HUGE egos! Everyone works together as an “ensemble” and we *all* reap the rewards.

Another big benefit to this program is the way it makes us feel. Without getting too technical, there are chemicals in everyone’s brains that regulate mood. One of the chemicals that is significant is called “dopamine.” Medical studies have shown that people who are low on dopamine are prone to drug abuse and often end up in trouble with the law. Know anyone like that? Medical research has also shown that groups which operate the way SBB does actually *raise* dopamine levels in

THE OBSERVER.

A Luther Luckett quarterly magazine that supports and reports quarterly on *Shakespeare Behind Bars*. Many of the participants of SBB write regularly for the magazine.

See what the world looks like from the inside out!

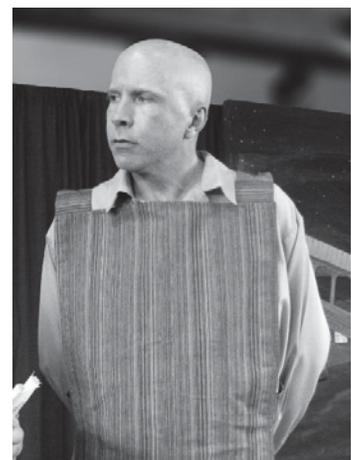
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the brain. No wonder theater is addictive! It also explains why when I was in theater on the street, I wasn’t using any of the drugs I used when I wasn’t in theater. Put another way, theater (the “ensemble” kind) is my “anti-drug.”

If you’re an inmate reading this, do some lines that are really worth it...give Shakespeare Behind Bars a try. If you’re someone from the community, come see a show and share the buzz of positive energy with us. I guarantee you, there is no “high” like it!●



The Merchant of Venice — 2011



Macbeth — 2009

Hal Cobb

Lady Capulet

The bug bit me early.

My First Gig

The kindergarten year-end show
Was circus-themed that year.

I don't remember if I sang;
I smiled from ear to ear.

I wore brown baggy overalls,
A red-maned lion-eared cap;
A feature role in my first gig,

My grin a toothless gap.

But best of all was Bambi Stultz,

To crack the whip her chore.

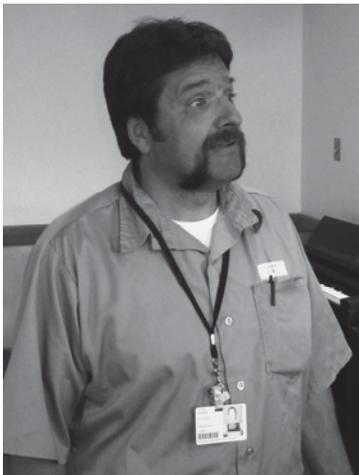
Her leotard and emcee hat

Made little lions roar.

By junior high it was a full blown disease. Performance (whether theater or music) was escape, a place I didn't have to be me. With a playwright's or lyricist's words I could pretend to be anybody else. I found solace behind the mask, cloaked in a costume, hidden in a melody. I was in church choirs and gospel bands, madrigal and show choirs, every play and musical the school produced, involved with three different community theater groups, even a professional regional production. Plays, rehearsals, and concert seasons overlapped each other throughout high school. I continued to study music and theater in col-

David Hopper

Lord Montague



Romeo & Juliet rehearsal — 2012

Before joining Shakespeare Behind Bars this year I was already assisting fellow apprentice David Harding with the editing of the Observer, and it was through the process of editing last year's special edition that I first learned of the program. Prior to that point, the only thing that I knew about SBB was seeing the members carrying around their bright red binders that contained their scripts to "Merchant". I must admit that even after hearing about the program, I didn't really have to much interest in it.

Fortunately, I read the articles that last year's members had written for the special several times and in my repeated attempts to correct vernacular, grammatical and spelling

errors I discovered something much deeper. Without exception, each man spoke about just how much SBB had meant to them in discovering the truth in William Shakespeare's words and how that truth was either transforming or had already transformed their outlook on their lives.

I was a little suspicious, just like you might be right now, too. But, my curiosity was piqued enough that I decided to explore it a little bit more. So, one evening last June I grabbed a friend and convinced him to attend opening night with me. I was blown away with the intensity that the ensemble displayed on their improvised stage in the chapel. Sure, just like any opening night at any community theatre that you might attend on the streets, there were a couple missed lines or some nervous twitches - but I have never witnessed a theatre group connect with the words that they spoke as I did that night.

What the men had written in their short essay's suddenly carried a lot more weight and I was hooked. Shortly after the performances had concluded, I approached Jeffrey Griffith about SBB and after a few discussions; he offered to sponsor me for my apprentice year. The next week I paid a visit to the sponsor of the program and filled out the application to enter into the program. Then in August, I sat in the SBB circle for the first time.

Everything that I have mentioned or said to this point is all great stuff about the program, but it is what I have witnessed and experienced in the months since that 2011 opening night that has affected me beyond measure. In the ensuing months since that first practice last August, I have tried something that I am admittedly not very good at - I listened. What did I hear? Find the truth. Yet it's not just our facilitator, Matt Wallace, barking that command. The senior members of SBB are constantly reinforcing what I have come to understand to be our mantra - "Find the Truth" - in not just their words, but in their actions.

When I arrived at prison a couple of years ago, I made the decision to get involved in as many positive activities and programs as possible. Some of that decision was selfishness - if I could stay busy, time would go by faster. However, my overwhelming desire was to attempt to find a meaning for why I had made the choices that I had made. In other words - to find the truth. ●

lege and pursued performance in the community and professionally.

I thought Shakespeare Behind Bars would be a way to continue something I loved, and be a familiar tool to hide from others and escape/survive the strange new world of prison. Initially I enjoyed the distraction, but when it seemed SBB was not developing into the acting troupe I imagined it should be, I bailed. Watching the troupe from the outside in for a season and a half revealed something else was going on, something more than acting, something I didn't quite understand but was still drawn to.

The thing I didn't get was truth. There's no hiding, no pretense, no faking it to put on a show in SBB. Our facilitator worked tirelessly

to empty my self-protecting, actor bag-o-tricks. He encouraged me to look into the eyes of audience members and bare my soul rather than look above their heads and keep an imaginary fourth wall between us. He taught and coached me to live nothing less than the whole truth of myself. The truth, as it turns out, is not a destination. It's an avenue. A road we're called to walk in every moment of our lives, as well as the moments we're on stage.

We are continually encouraged to let Shakespeare's words and characters get under our skins, to reach the depths of our beings to find truth and give voice to our humanity, as flawed and glorious as it can be. The strength of our imperfect, human circle supports the often gut-wrenching, frightening, and unex-

plored aspects of our individual and corporate journeys. The truth isn't always pretty. It's often unsettling. But ultimately, it's freeing.

Oh, I'm not cured. Sometimes the bug and my environment still make me want to hide, and in some ways, it would be so very easy to hide. But Shakespeare and my band of brothers call me, challenge me, and raise me to something more. ●

"Men at some time are masters of their fates."

- Julius Caesar, I.ii

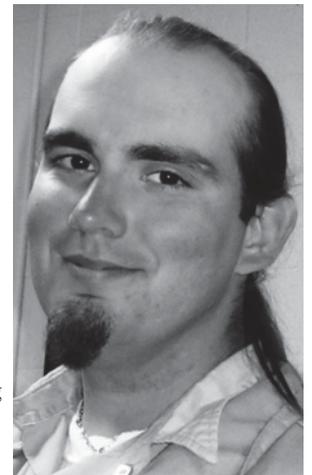
Mario Mitchell

Lady Montague/Apothecary

This is an easy question to ask, but not so easy to answer. As you have already read, or perhaps will read, SBB is a family. Therefore I really don't need to go into that. It has already been said for me.

For me, specifically, it's all about having my time to unwind and simultaneously wind up. By that I mean I get to loosen up and relax in a nice and calm atmosphere in an otherwise stressful one. I get wound up in the sense that I build up energy and emotions necessary for the task at hand – in this case performing the play and putting my best foot forward in my first production as an actual member of SBB.

It is also my time to shine; my time to show people that I'm more than just another pretty face (ha!) It gives me a chance to shine and let my talents be seen. I sing as well as act, although there's not much room for singing in SBB. Well, you make do with what you can get. As [Captain Jack Sparrow] in *Pirates of the Caribbean* said "Take what you can..." Never mind the response because I always try to give back in some form or fashion. ●



John Snyder

Benvolio

This year's performance of *Romeo & Juliet* will be my fifth season as member of Shakespeare Behind Bars.

Each of those previous seasons have offered enough reflection, evaluation, introspection, and support to have brought me back for this current production and the group's seventeenth season. Although it isn't always easy, I do enjoy the nine-month process that always culminates in a truthful, simplistic, and innovative story for all to enjoy. SBB is not for everyone, but I encourage those that think it might be for them to give it a try. ●



The Winter's Tale — 2010

"By playing someone else, I have learned to be myself."

-SBB ensemble member

Gene Vaughn

Mercutio

In 2003, I joined Shakespeare Behind Bars. At that time, cameras were in your face everywhere you went. The first couple of weeks I thought it was all about “kicks and giggles,” but I was quickly brought back to reality after watching two massive and powerful men fall to their knees and cry like babies. This is something men in prison just do *not* do.

For a few days, I was really unsure how to handle this. Who am I to say or ask anything about this? Both guys could snap me in half like a twig, not to mention both were very good friends of mine. These two guys are the reason I stayed with SBB. My best friend Jerry Guenther and Sammy Byron took me under their wing, and told me that I will only get out of this program what I put into it. This statement really is true for just about everything in life.

It’s impossible to name all the guys that have helped me over the years, but in addition to Jerry and Sammy, these are the guys that touched my soul the most: Ron Brown, Demond Bush, Hal Cobb, and Charlie Bush. You guys shared your stories with me, and I felt I was a part of you as we shed tears together. Each of us can relate in some way with each other’s life, in one form or another.

Many years ago, we as a group (SBB) were told it was not just about the play, and as a rookie I thought, “What the hell else can it be about?”. Then I watched Sammie Byron do the Saint Crispin Day speech, and again I watched a very powerful man cry. I was stunned to see a prison inmate speak with such a power, conviction, and passion. He made me feel like I really was on the battlefield with him.

Then it hit me, and I understood at that point what SBB was all about, and why the guys told me I would find out on my own. It’s about sharing your feelings and your truth through the characters we play each year. It’s about being able to cry inside your group and still be treated like a man. It’s about being able to go places through your character, to go deep into your soul, without being judged by your peers. It’s about being able to do or say what you want (within reason) in this circle, without having to look over your shoulder or answer to a staff member. It’s about being able to laugh and have fun, and learn something new every day about yourself. It’s about making yourself a better person.

Now I ask you – do I really have to tell you what SBB means to me? If you have seen one of our shows, I think you’ll know exactly what I mean. ●



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

Erroll Rogers

Tybalt



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

If I had to write a definition of what Shakespeare meant to me, I would define it as: the art of finding one’s truth through playacting and personal connections. I have been with the Shakespeare Ensemble for three productions now. I have definitely benefited from the challenges of deciphering the variations between the thinking patterns and the feelings of the characters that William Shakespeare has created. The art derives from the ability to intertwine my thought processes, feelings, and emotions with the fictional characters. The personal connection I have with the character allows me to be honest and truthful while portraying the character, thus making my character’s personality come to life.

While embarking down this journey, I’ve been fortunate to choose the character that spoke to me. This year I choose the fiery, fierce Tybalt! I decided on this character for many reasons, but primarily because I wanted to revisit a part of my past that has plagued and destroyed countless years of my life. Revealing my tribulations through a fictional role isn’t an easy task. As ensemble members, we may have to open doors that we’ve welded shut, praying that we wouldn’t have to reopen them ever again. These challenges would be difficult for most people, but being surrounded by the family (fellow Shakespeare members), we accept all challenges, knowing that we will strengthen each other’s weaknesses—allowing ourselves to travel into great depths to reconnect with the truth that only we possess.

There are segments from my past that I frown upon, segments that I have to experience again during this production. The difference between then and now is the growth and transformation that Shakespeare has provided. Change is a powerful thing. It can also come with a powerful lesson. Shakespeare has taught me a simple concept: It’s not how you start, but it’s how you finish. In the same sense, I know where I’ve come from, where my life is now and the direction my future is headed in. Through Shakespeare, my mind has been reconstructed and I’ve been put in a position where I can enlighten the world with my life story and tell William Shakespeare’s story at the same time. ●

William Whitehouse

Peter/Balthazar

When I first joined Shakespeare Behind Bars, I thought it was just a bunch of guys getting scripts and performing plays which is what probably a lot of people would think. But when I saw the communion these guys had when they performed Merchant of Venice, it was an addiction that I wanted. I saw that they had each others backs, even if one dropped some lines, which does happen, the other who was in the scene would have that person's back and the play went on. There was no "Oh, you messed up and ruined the play for us." No, it was more like "Hey, don't worry about it, pick your head up and get me on the next one." It was the support they had for each other that caught my attention.

Another thing I was not expecting was to have my comfort bubble busted. Many of us are so perfectly content in our bubble of protection that we don't allow anyone to see what we are really feeling, what we are thinking, and the truth in who we are is hidden. When our director, Matt, gets a hold of you, huh, the game is on. He breaks you out of that zone and things that you have shut up in a box, locked it, and thrown away the key now become visible and then you can finally start working on what has been hindering you your whole life. One of mine was anger. I have had so much anger built up inside of me that it was the big reason I got locked up. When I thought all was well and I had it under control, it came back

and every line I saw in the script, I thought the person was angry. Once I realized this and Matt continued to bust that bubble, I was able to realize that it was not Shakespeare who was angry, it was me. So I am not saying that this anger is fixed, but it is still something I am continuing to work on every day, that way I can become not only a better member of society, but that I can finally have that peace of mind that I have so longed for.

Shakespeare Behind Bars is more than just a play performance that is great, and it is great, but it is about the continuing changes that are happening to each and every one of us that way you don't just see an institutional number or the crime a person committed, you see the person who William Rufus Whitehouse III really is. To me that is what is most important in Shakespeare Behind Bars and the play is the bonus enjoyment. God bless! ●

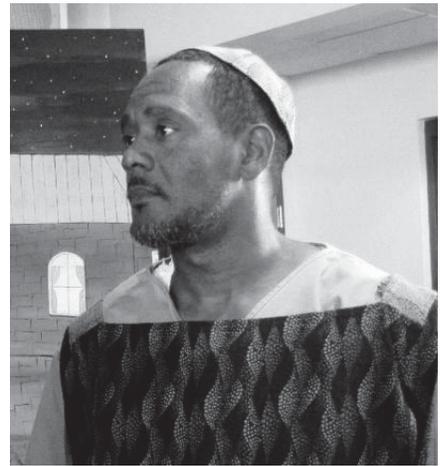


Stage Crew, *Merchant of Venice* — 2011

"Being part of the play helped me realize that I can do or be anything that I want in life."

-SBB juvenile participant

**"The rarer action is in virtue,
than in vengeance."
-The Tempest, V.i**



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

Charles Young

Paris

Having very little knowledge of something that has been around for hundreds of years is what Shakespeare was to me a year and a half ago! Today, what it is to me is a world of intriguing events that have a lot of similarities with today's current as well as social events. Shakespeare has helped my interpretation of life in general. It's allowed me to be okay with not understanding a language but search hard for the meaning of it's words to know that one's pursuit of happiness comes in many different forms and fashions in life and the world of theatre. The arts hold tremendous passions that are universal. Shakespeare has allowed me to have theatrical encounters with personal and social issues of today. It has helped me develop life skills that will ensure my successful reintegration into society. For this I thank James Lavana Carter for introducing me to this program (SBB) and Matt Wallace, along with my present core cast members for helping me to experience the world of Shakespeare! ●

Roderick Blincoe

Page to Paris

Aside from the unspoken brotherhood that being a part of the group consist of, there's a therapeutic twist to being a member that no other program or organization on this compound has to offer. That twist or niche is a legitimate means of escape. No, I don't mean it in the literal sense. I mean to act and be good at it.

One must not only get away from this physical setting, but you must also figure a way to get outside of yourself as well. What I mean is that everyone has a built-in defense mechanism, especially in here, to survive this particular environment. You have to thicken your skin. Yet, to effectively portray any characters in any given Shakespearean play, you must be willing to explore places emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually.

You will need to go places where you wouldn't ordinarily allow yourself to travel. You suddenly feel compelled to go, simply because everyone is expecting and depending on you to become the best at portraying your character. And they have a right to expect the best of you because you can see for yourself that they are giving their best to the role they are playing. Every line and gesture they make proves that they are giving their best each and every time. In some, you see it day one of rehearsals, while for others it may take a little longer, but its guaranteed that by show time, everyone is on the same page.

I suppose that it's in the unity—the way we're all working toward the same goal that make Shakespeare Behind Bars something very special to me!



Romeo & Juliet Rehearsal

Christopher Lindauer

Chief Watchman

I have only read four of his plays and what I have read of Shakespeare has spoken to me. I can read and reread it and manage to find new things every time. There is a lot to be learned from the text of Shakespeare as well as the man himself. Shakespeare Behind Bars, as a group, tends to use this to their advantage and we work to apply it to our daily lives. We learn and apply and help others to do the same. Amazingly, one can get a great deal more from the circle and each other than they can from the writings of a great man.

I'm fairly new to the circle, even though some of its members have known me for a while. I came on at the beginning of this year to sit in and help in any way that I could. I watched the guys put their heart, soul, and sweat into their work. I saw a brand new Romeo and Juliet. I was hesitant in the beginning to open my mouth and give input because I wondered who I was to question or comment what these guys are doing; they've done it for years. It didn't take long for the hesitation to melt away. I have never felt anything like it, but when I finally spoke up, they listened to what I had to say. Me, a newbie. They even tried to incorporate my feedback. I hadn't been in the room watching this more than twice, and they opened the circle up to accept me like I was a full-fledged member. I felt valued, appreciated, and respected.

From the beginning, I got a lot of enjoyment out of watching it all, then later, out of participating. I spent time with the guys outside of practice and went to voluntary sessions where guys worked on their own. I was accepted and I really wanted to be a part of this group. We have common interests and we have common loves. I wanted to work really hard to give back to the circle, to participate as much as possible because I felt a need to compensate for what they were doing for me. Through Shakespeare Behind Bars I am appreciated, I am valued, I am strengthened, and I am validated. There may have been discussions over my title, but there is never a question in their minds- I am a member of this wonderful group and they have done many things to show this to me. They don't want me to doubt this, and I haven't.

Everyone gets something out of SBB. Some people get different things. I feel more confident being on stage with these people because they have confidence in me. I feel like I'm a better person for working with this group. I have noticed that even in this short time, my priorities have shifted. I feel like I have been gifted with a wonderful opportunity to be a part of this production and I have a lot of pride in what I have put into this as well as what the rest of the group has put into the production. This is some of what Shakespeare Behind Bars has done and given to me personally. What I learned that SBB gives to everyone involved with it is a wonderful set of friends, but even more, a family that takes care of itself and its members. On this side of the fence, there isn't anything that means more to me than Shakespeare Behind Bars and its members. ●





The Winter's Tale — 2010

Stephen Riddle

Abram/2nd Watchman

I have been a part of the Shakespeare Ensemble for six years now and locked up for seventeen years flat.

Since I've been in Shakespeare, I've always played servant parts or messenger parts. Somebody has got to play the part and I feel that if I was living back at that time that's probably what I would be doing.

I've learned that I am not worthless. I used to have low self esteem. I still am fighting that beast, but being in SBB, I've been on an amazing journey in my life. I've dug deep down and I have found that I'm not a terrible person. I'm starting to get used to myself.

What I would like to say to anybody who reads this is you're not a piece of crap. If you're thinking badly about yourself, do some soul searching, dig deep and I bet you can find something good about yourself. ●

"This above all: to
thine own self be
true."
-Hamlet, I.iii



The Winter's Tale — 2010

Michael Malavenda

Friar John

Hey everybody, my name is Mike Malavenda and I have served approximately eight years of a 20 year sentence. This is my Third year in Shakespeare Behind Bars.

I really don't know how to tell you how Shakespeare has changed me, but here it goes. It has taught me to have patience. It has also given me the confidence to speak in public, which I didn't have before. It is a comfortable place to go and speak with fellow members about problems that I have and not have to worry about it getting back to everyone on the yard. It is kept within the circle.

I hope everyone enjoys the play. Shakespeare Behind Bars is a brotherhood of men who strive to change themselves for the better. To those inmates who are interested in becoming a part of something special, you are more than welcome to come up to see us. ●

Brandon Langley

Sampson

I've been incarcerated for nine years now and this is my second year in SBB.

What I like most about the play is the work. It is awesome to really delve into the meaning and try to find a truthful connection to the text. It's a challenge.

I guess what I've learned about myself in this process is that there is no right or wrong way to play it. If it is honest and comes from your heart, it will show. I learned to accept constructive criticism and open up to ideas that are polar opposite to what I had in mind. I learned that SBB is all about the process and the performance is merely a product of the 9 month long journey. ●



The Merchant of Venice — 2011

Josh Wallace

Gregory

Let me start off by saying that words can't truly express what Shakespeare Behind Bars means to me or the impact that it has had on me. I had always had some sort of fondness for Shakespeare growing up through reading the plays in high school. But never really took it any further. After my incarceration in 2008 I coincidentally ran into to a SBB Alumni and of course the conversation led to Shakespeare. He told me he thought SBB would be good for me and "if" I was to go to Luckett that I should join.

Well in 2009 I got here but didn't take the alums advice. I was very optimistic at first. I didn't know how the guys would perceive me or if I would even be welcome. A few guys I knew in the group, but still was very uncomfortable with even the thought of performing a play or anything with these guys. Curtis Hastings, a good friend of mine, kept pushing me to join and I knew I wanted to get in there, so after *The Winter's Tale* I showed up for my first rehearsal - and to this day I'm still going at it.

Through Shakespeare Behind Bars I have had and seen so much growth in myself. I in a way have begun to grow out of my shyness. I have broken down walls and began to open myself to others. I have even come to know more about myself though my fellow ensemble members. To SBB, I'm not just the short little dude, or whatever nickname you know me as, I'm Josh.

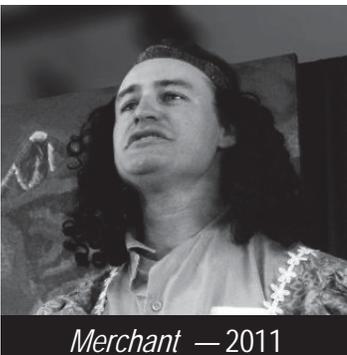
Through SBB I have also seen changes in others as well. Not just us "the inmates". But from the people who drive countless hours from all parts.

So come and see us. For me, one of the best things is going out there with the guys as you look out into the crowd. It gives you a true sense of humanity. I've seen people cry when Gene Vaughn delivered Shylock's "to bait fish withal" monologue. People just simply laugh when Big G walks in. Not to mention Hal Cobb as Prince Aragon, Hysterical to say the least. People, who don't just see characters or the khaki uniform. They see us.

In closing I would just like to say I can't stay away from these dudes. I am extremely thankful to Matt and the guys. For bringing out the best in me. Letting me come in and feel accepted and welcome with open arms. I never knew when I came in to prison that 4 years down the road that I would leave with family. Brothers to be exact. People I will Never forget as long as I live. Thank you guys, from the bottom of my heart. ●



The Merchant of Venice — 2011



Erik Nolde

Backstage Crew/ A Capulet

I have served a little more than nine years flat. My role in SBB this year will take place off stage.

This is my sixth year with SBB. I've had multiple roles in three out of the last four plays. It is difficult to put into words what SBB means to me. In many ways, I'm not entirely certain what I have learned. What I do know is that I'm a better person because of it. As long as I continue to learn, even if only on a subconscious level, I will continue to grow; and that is what matters. ■



Gary Cohen

Asst. Stage Manager

I have been in SBB for six years now. My roles have mainly been smaller roles, servants, messengers, and a young boy that is kind of clownish. This year I will do my best work off stage.

I have learned over the years that I have the ability to ask others for help and guidance when I am feeling the pressures of life. I don't have to be afraid to reach out to get help from others to help keep me and others safe.

Being in Shakespeare Behind Bars has helped me not only to mature, but it has also given me hope for a brighter future. ■

Tom Suleski

Composer/Sound Designer

I believe that creativity is a chief part of our Human Nature. Unfortunately, creativity is often stifled in our Western culture. I believe that if our society nurtured creativity, many of us would not be residents here. Shakespeare Behind Bars affords some of us a creative outlet and it is that channel that draws me to SBB.

When I was in high school, I spent the last three years in its drama club in a technical role – namely stage crew and lighting technician. I did have one part in a play that required me to be on stage – ironically as a juror in *Inherit the Wind*. Even then, I still helped out with scene changes. So, when I found out about the Shakespeare program, I asked if they needed any stage crew and I have been with them ever since. Lately, I have been able to provide music and sound effects for our productions and this has truly been a blessing. But even as a stage manager, I found a need to be creative in finding solutions to the myriad problems putting on a stage production inherently begets.

All the people involved in putting on an SBB production – from the new apprentices to the veteran actors to the backstage personnel – find creative outlets to give birth to a sometimes rough, but harmonious rendering of one of Shakespeare’s plays. Everything we create in this



production – the roles, the music, the scenic backdrop – has a little piece of ourselves in it; a piece we sometimes have to dig deeply to find, and then find the courage to expose and present to each other and to the public.

It is in this process that the true value of programs such as SBB shine forth, for through this process we all grow – individually and as a group. The positive growth we experience helps our community inside these fences to grow as well. Positive growth in here can only benefit our communities on the other side of the fence, too.

It is my hope that all of you who are here watching *Romeo and Juliet* learn and grow from our creative journey. I hope you are moved by the truth we found in the lines William Shakespeare wrote centuries ago. I hope you enjoy our interpretation of this classic story. Thank you for the support and your interest in our little troupe. ●

Stephen Marshall

Asst. Stage Manager

In the beginning of 1994 there was a mentally messed up individual that called himself Stephen Marshall. He was in a very confused state of mind that even his family knew was not the real him. Though they tolerated this person and still stood behind him when he got a life sentence with 25 years to serve till he could even meet the Parole Board for murder. This person even after being convicted refused to accept responsibility for the heinous transgression he had perpetrated on another human being.

Then in 2003 during the filming of the documentary, I met Jerry Guenther who told me about Shakespeare Behind Bars, and what it was all about. At that time I was interested solely for the performance aspect and asked if

he would be my sponsor. He turned me down at that time and told me to think about why I wanted to be in Shakespeare. So I went to see my first play a few months later and was taken aback at the power and nobility that was put forth in the performance. This was the first time that I saw the family aspect of Shakespeare Behind Bars.

Truthfully I was taken aback at how these men (who I thought at the time were supposed to be “convicts”) were acting toward each other, shaking hands and hugging each other. This perplexed me greatly, so I stuck around after the performance and met this person that unbeknownst to me would be the facilitator that would bring such chaos and turmoil into my life that it would force me to make a 180° turn in my thinking process, and impart the knowledge and give me the capacity of thought to face the horrible thing that I had done those many years ago.

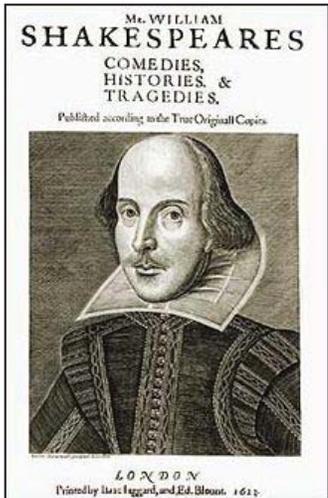
This man was none other than Curt Tofte-land, who after I was sponsored, allowed me to open up in my own time – which took well into

my 2nd season. For the person I had been was a very anti social and non trusting person.

Now I have faced the horrible thing that I did almost 18 years ago now. There is never a day that goes by that I don’t think about what I did, and for the stupid reason it was done. I am only glad that I found Shakespeare Behind Bars, or that it found me. Either way, if it weren’t for my brothers I would never have had the support to accept my wrongdoing, and would not be where I am today if it weren’t for this program. ●



The Winter's Tale — 2010



Shakespeare Behind Bars/Michigan

Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility

On February 12th, 2011, a dream was re-birthed in a prison four hundred miles north of the mother program in LaGrange, Kentucky. On a cold, cloudy afternoon, sixteen incarcerated men gathered in a circle in the education wing of the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility in Muskegon Heights, Michigan to begin their journey into the Shakespeare Behind Bars Restorative Circle of Reconciliation. The span of time of incarceration of the inmates sitting in the circle ran the gamut of one to thirty-seven years. Five of the prisoners had LIFE sentences.

For each of the men, the decision to participate in this unique program using art, theatre, and the works of William Shakespeare to get at what it means to be a human being was a leap of courage into the abyss of not knowing. It was the beginning of a sojourn into themselves to discover . . . who they were . . . what they loved . . . how they were going to live their lives knowing they would die . . . and what their gift was to humankind . . . Twelve months later, the nine men pictured above became

the founding members of SBB/MI. At the conclusion of year one, the nine founding members, SBB founder Curt L. Tofteland, and facilitator-in-training Kate Thomsen each sponsored a new member from the general prison population to join the circle.

In July, one of the nine founding members will be paroled. He will be the first SBB/MI member to be released. When he steps into his life beyond bars, he will take with him the tools he learned in the SBB Restorative Circle of Reconciliation, as well as the love and support of his band brothers and a sister.

As SBB/MI moved into its second year of operation, Curt, Kate, Joseph Byrd, newest facilitator-in-training, and twenty-one inmate seekers sit circle twice weekly for two and half hours each session. As for the future growth of SBB/MI, Curt is in conversation with other Michigan prisons and Juvenile Justice programs that have expressed an interest in beginning a Shakespeare Behind Bars Restorative Circle of Reconciliation in their facilities. SBB/MI wishes SBB/KY all the best during their performances of *Romeo and Juliet*. ●

-Curt L. Tofteland

“For each of the men, the decision to participate in this unique program using art, theatre, and the works of William Shakespeare to get at what it means to be a human being was a leap of courage into the abyss of not knowing.”



Titus Andronicus —2001

Bio - Curt L. Tofteland Founder/Producing Director

CURT L. TOFTELAND is the Founder of the internationally acclaimed Shakespeare Behind Bars program.

From 1995 - 2008, Curt facilitated the SBB/KY program at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex. Additionally, Curt worked in the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women - where he taught college classes for the Jefferson Community and Technical College and created a Ten Minute Playwriting Program, and the Kentucky State Reformatory - where he taught JCTC classes.

In the summer of 2010, Curt partnered with filmmaker/director/producer Robby Henson and playwright Elizabeth Orndorf to create Voices Inside/Out - a 10-minute playwriting program - funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts at the Northpoint Training Center in Burgin, Kentucky. Now in its third year of funding by NEA, the program has generated inmate authored plays that have gone on to be professionally produced at Theatrelab, an Off-Off-Broadway theatre in New York City.

On February 12, 2011, Curt created the most recent Shakespeare Behind Bars program at the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility in Muskegon Heights, Michigan.

Curt frequently travels the country to screen Philomath Films award-winning documentary - Shakespeare Behind Bars, facilitate a post-screening audience talk-back, teach master classes, and visit classrooms. To date, he has visited thirty-three college campuses and eleven professional Shakespeare Festivals. Additionally, Curt has been hosted by the Modern Language Association, Shakespeare Association of America, National Conference of the Teachers of English, Shakespeare Theatre Association, and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Regions III, VII, and VIII.

Curt has been the keynote speaker at the Utah Shakespearean Festival's Wooden O Symposium; the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) Joint International Symposium with Columbia College, Chicago, IL;

National Arts Club in New York City; and the Shakespeare Connection Conference at the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival. Additionally, he has upcoming keynote speaking engagements at the Gates-Ferry Distinguished Visiting Lectureship, Centenary College; Personal Effectiveness and Employability Through the Arts (PEETA) International Symposium, Rotterdam, Netherlands; and the Jepson School of Leadership Study, University of Richmond.

Curt has delivered two TED Talks. In 2012, at the TEDx Macatawa in Holland, Michigan where the subject of his talk was mercy and in 2010, at the TEDx East in New York City where the subject of his talk was shame. Additionally, he was a guest speaker at the Vibe Wire Youth, Inc. FastBREAK Breakfast Speaker Series in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. In September, Curt will be hosted at the IDEA Festival in Louisville to screen the SBB documentary, facilitate a post-screening audience talk-back, and chair a panel about Shakespeare in corrections.

Curt is the recipient of two distinctive fellowships, from the Petra Foundation and the Fulbright Foundation, for his work with Shakespeare in corrections. Curt's 2011 Fulbright Senior Scholar Fellowship took him to Australia where he brought SBB to the Borallon Correctional Centre in Queensland.

Curt is a published poet and essayist who writes about the transformative power of art, theatre, and the works of William Shakespeare.

He has three published essays - "As Performed: By Shakespeare Behind Bars at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex in LaGrange, KY, 2003" in **The Tempest**, Chicago: Sourcebooks Shakespeare 2008 and "The Keeper of the Keys: Building a Successful Relationship with the Warden" in **Performing New Lives: Reflections on Prison Theatre**, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2010. His third essay, published in the 2012 edition of the **Shakespeare Survey**, is co-written in with SBB/KY founding member Hal Cobb - "Prospero Behind Bars: Redemption, Forgiveness, & Transformation". His essay - "Shakespeare Goes to Prison: Holding the Transformative Mirror up to Nature: Responsibility, Forgiveness, and Redemption" won the University of Wyoming 2010 National Amy and Eric Burger Essays on Theatre Competition. Additionally, Curt continues to write his own book, *Behind the Bard-Wire: Reflection, Responsibility, Redemption, & Forgiveness . . . The Transformative Power of Art, Theatre, and Shakespeare*.

Curt is the recipient of a number of prestigious honors and awards, including a Doctor of Humane Letters from Bellarmine University, an Al Smith Fellowship in playwriting from the Kentucky Arts Council, the Fleur-de-lis Award from the Louisville Forum, the Mildred A. Dougherty Award from the Greater Louisville English Council, and a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Minnesota. ●



**Bio - Matt Wallace,
Facilitator/Artistic Director**

MATT WALLACE is completing his fourth season as Artistic Director of Shakespeare Behind Bars and Director/Facilitator of the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex program. He previously directed the last three seasons of *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Macbeth*. He is also Program Director and Facilitator of two Shakespeare Behind Bars programs in the Department of Juvenile Justice – the SBB Multidisciplinary Juvenile Arts Program at the Audubon Youth Development Center and the SBB program at Louisville Day Treatment Center. For his work with SBB, Matt was recognized by the Louisville Courier-Journal Velocity 2011 *Generation Next* Issue as a Louisville Leader to Watch, and the Kentucky Council on Crime and Delinquency awarded him the 2010 Volunteer of the Year Award for Outstanding Service and Commitment to the Kentucky Criminal Justice System.

Matt is also the Director of Children's Theatre and Audience Development at Derby Dinner Playhouse, where he has directed the last three seasons (13 productions) of the children's musical theatre series. Three years ago he created the Derby Dinner Playhouse Performing Arts Academy which now serves over 800 students a year. Matt has also performed in nearly 40 productions at the Playhouse over the past eight years.

As an Artistic Associate with Kentucky Shakespeare Festival for nine years, Matt performed in several main stage productions in the park, toured/taught throughout the state, and directed in Central Park (*Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, 50th anniversary production of *Richard III*). In Chicago, he served as Artistic Director of Dolphinback Theatre Company where directing accomplishments included the world premiere rock musical *The Sound of One* (After Dark Award winner), the United States Premiere of *Anna Weiss*, the Chicago Premiere of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and bringing in Pulitzer Prize and Tony nominated playwright Lee Blessing to workshop and premiere his play *Rewrites*. Matt was also Booking Manager and Company Member with Chicago's Health-



Works Theatre, working in HIV/AIDS prevention and violence prevention theatre for several years. While he was at HealthWorks, the company was awarded the 2000 Award of Excellence in Prevention Education by Mayor Daley and the Chicago Department of Public Health.

As an actor, Matt has performed professionally at Chicago theatres, across the Midwest, and throughout this region for twenty years. Favorite stage credits include Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Charlie in *The Foreigner*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, Starkwedder in *The Unexpected Guest*, and Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma*. Film and TV credits include roles in the Oscar-winner *Forrest Gump*, *Clancy*, *The Perfect Gift*, *1 Message*, and he recently wrapped filming on two upcoming releases *Nikki and the Perfect Stranger* and *Pieces of Easter*. This year Matt traveled to Chicago and Tel Aviv, Israel as spokesman/actor for Intel, Kraft, and Coca-Cola Israel.

As an educator, Matt has taught with

companies including Children's Theatre of Charlotte, the Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts, Horse Cave Theatre, Derby Dinner Playhouse, and at youth facilities including Home of the Innocents, Brooklawn Child and Family Services, and Mary Ryan Academy. He has been judge and respondent for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Illinois Theatre Association, Kentucky Thespian Society, and English Speaking Union Shakespeare Competition.

As a writer, he has been published in Shakespeare Magazine, has had plays produced professionally by multiple theatres, and will have three new plays produced professionally this year at theatres in New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Indiana.

He has studied with Second City Chicago and Shakespeare & Co. and holds a BFA in Theatre Performance from the Webster University Conservatory of Theatre Arts in St. Louis. ●

Bio - Holly Stone

Director of Technology & Communications

HOLLY STONE has been working with the Shakespeare Behind Bars team for over 10 years. She grew up on free Shakespeare and began volunteering and apprenticing with Kentucky Shakespeare Festival as a teenager. From 1999-2010, she worked for Kentucky Shakespeare as the Director of Technology & Design, focusing in Graphic & Web Design, Marketing, IT and general administration of the organization.

Holly studied art and theatre at the Youth Performing Arts School/duPont Manual, is an alumni of the Young Actor's Institute, and attended Wright State University's Theatre Design and Technology Program. Holly has also worked with many other Louisville theatres including the Pleiades Theatre Company, Stage Oane Children's Theatre, University of Louisville and Music Theatre Louisville. She served on the Board of Directors for Dayton Theatre Guild in Dayton, OH and has volunteered with Actors Theatre Louisville, The Kentucky Center, Conrad-Caldwell House Museum and Bunbury Theatre.

Aside from her life-long career of working with Shakespeare, Holly is a freelance artist, designer, and photographer. She and her husband Peter are also proprietors of *The Salvage Emporium*, which specializes in vintage and retro knick knacks, jewelry, junk and other curiosities hand-made from salvaged items and materials. ●



Bio - Donna Lawrence-Downs, Costume Designer

DONNA LAWRENCE-DOWNS joined the SBB team in 2010 and last designed costumes for *The Merchant of Venice*.

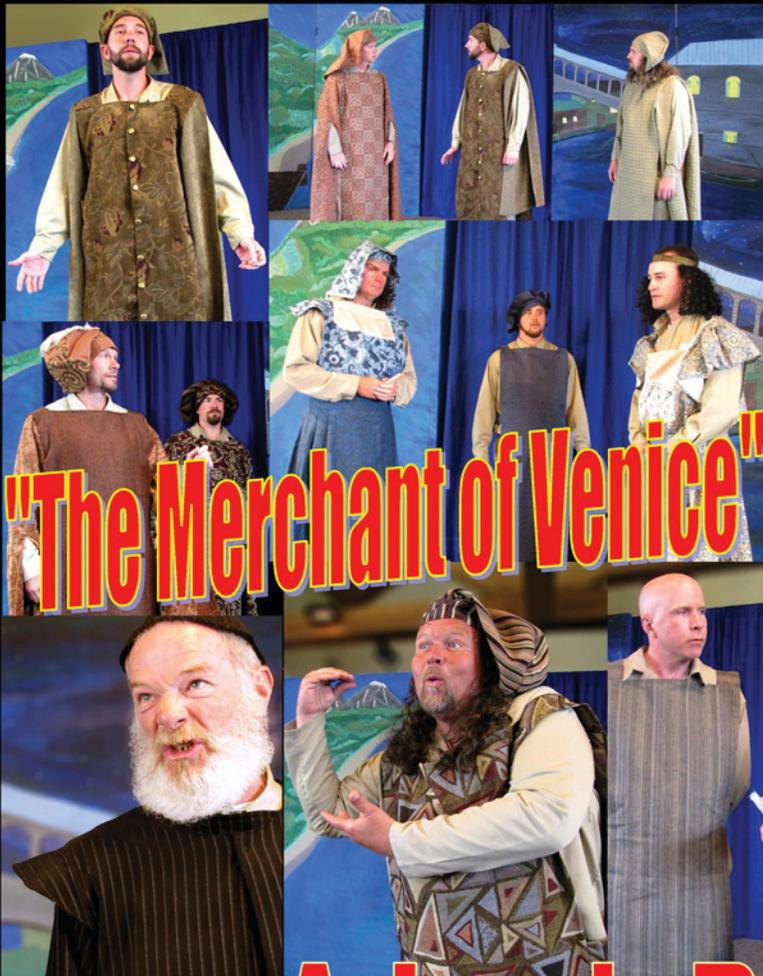
Donna has been part of the Louisville Theatre family for 19 years. She was costume shop manager, draper and resident designer for 18 seasons. She has also been costume shop manager and resident designer for Music Theatre Louisville for 15 seasons. She has been lucky enough to work with many theatres in town, including Pandora Productions, Centre Stage, Walden Theatre, Louisville Ballet, Kentucky Opera, Assumption High School, Bunbury, Actor's Theatre and Derby Dinner Theatre. Donna has had the wonderful experience of designing Shakespeare Behind Bars productions of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merchant of Venice*, in addition to working with the juvenile program at Audubon Youth Development Center.

Included among the over 280 shows that Donna has designed are: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*, *The Jackie Robinson Story*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A Year With Frog And Toad*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Hello Dolly*, *Schoolhouse Rocks Live*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Take Me Out, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Cabaret*, *The Full Monty* and *The Secret Garden*. Donna's designs for *The Great Gilly Hopkins* were seen on the Broadway stage at the New Victory Theatre. Donna has also had the chance to work with award-winning costume designers Jane Greenwood, Martin Pakladinez, Marie Ann Chimet and Andre Barber as a draper for Opera Theatre St. Louis. Donna has also designed and built several local school mascots and done several commercials for Kentucky Lottery and Caesar's (now Horseshoe) Casino.

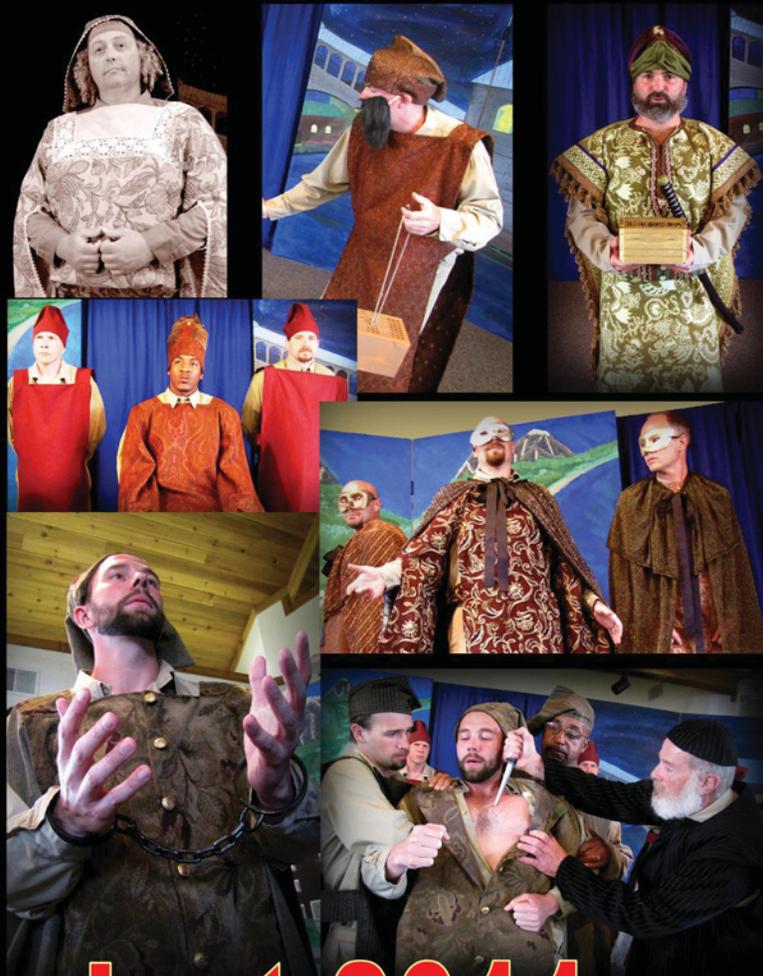
Donna has recently opened her own costume shop and is a professional baker for local outlets in Louisville. ●



Custom-made costumes for *The Merchant of Venice* designed and created by Donna.



A Look Back at 2011





Renewing LIVES



Internationally renowned Shakespeare Behind Bars members stand out as performers, scholars, and leaders in Shakespearean interpretation.

In this friendly, close-knit community, they teach and challenge one another to be greater tomorrow than they were today. As a result, they excel in the renovation of the human mind.



Now in its 17th year, *Shakespeare Behind Bars* is the oldest North American Shakespeare program contained within the walls of a medium security adult male prison with an ensemble of inmates performing exclusively the works of William Shakespeare.

The recidivism rate for Shakespeare Behind Bars members is 5.2%, as opposed to the 67% recidivism rate nationally and the 29.5% recidivism rate for the Kentucky Department of Corrections.

Visit the new website at www.shakespearebehindbars.org for information concerning future performances, the media gallery, staff biographies, past productions, and to make a secure, tax-deductible contribution.

The mission of Shakespeare Behind Bars is to offer theatrical encounters with personal and social issues to the incarcerated, allowing them to develop life skills that will ensure their successful reintegration into society.

W V E R O N A C B D L O V E R S P E T Y W H D U E F
O A V E I S I R R A H D G H Y B K N O N H R S Q R A
E L A T L X O D A S S A P O C N E H M O O B U I A X
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B A M G F D E S S O R C R A T S M A N T U A L O O F

ROMEO AND JULIET WORDSEARCH

Arranged by Hal Cobb

ACCURSED
ALACK
ALAS
ALIKE
ALOOF
APOTHECARY
BALCONY
BALTHAZAR
BANISHMENT
BEAUTEOUS
BENVOLIO
BOUNDLESS
BOWBOY
BURIAL
CAPULET
CHORUS
CORDIAL
COO
COVERT
DEATH
DIGNITY

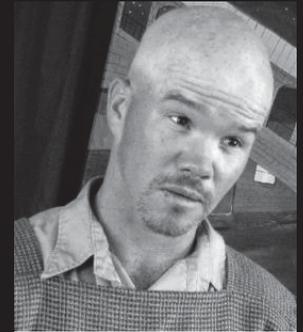
DREAMS
EAST
EVERMORE
FAIREST
FEAST
FEUD
FOOL
FOP
FRIARJOHN
FRIARLAWRENCE
FUNERAL
GALLANT
GENTLEMAN
GREGORY
HEART
HOOD
HOUSES
JULIET
KISS
LARK
LAY

LOVERS
MAB
MANTUA
MARRIAGE
MERCUTIO
MONTAGUE
MOON
MOUSEHUNT
NAME
NIGHTINGALE
NOBLE
NURSE
ORB
PASSADO
PEACE
PETER
POISON
POTION
PRINCE
ROMEO
ROOM

ROSALINE
ROSE
ROSEMARY
RUE
SAMPSON
SHAKESPEARE
SIRRAH
SOLDIER
SORROW
STARCROSSED
SUICIDE
SUN
ORB
SWEET
TALE
TOMB
TRAGEDY
TYBALT
VALIANT
VERONA
WOES
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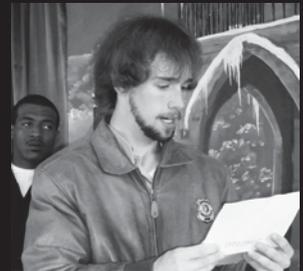
KEVIN HESSON



THOMAS WALKER



JEREMY WILLIAMS



CURTIS HASTINGS



HOWARD RALSTON



Romeo & Juliet Rehearsal, Act One

SHAKESPEARE ALUMNI



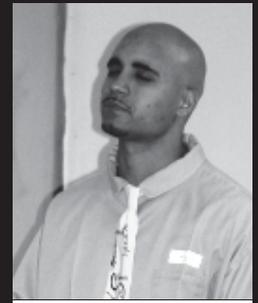
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CLARENCE HALL, SAMMIE BYRON, DALE DIRKES, DEMOND BUSH



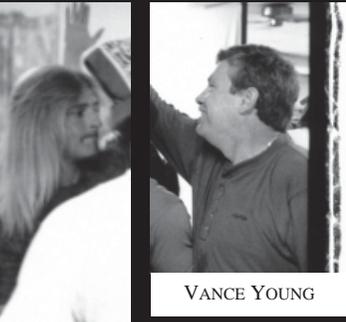
BILLY WHEELER



DALE DIRKES



MICHAEL WILLIAMS



VANCE YOUNG

DONNIE WORTHINGTON



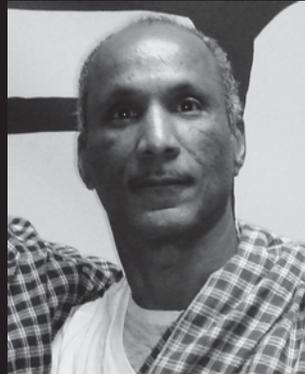
LARRY LUCAS, LEONARD FORD, LAVASSA ANDERSON, SAMMIE BYRON, HAL COBB, RANDY TRUE



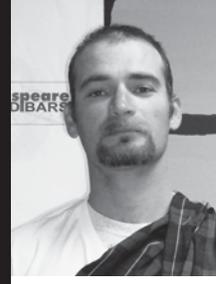
TIMOTHY JETT



JAMES L. CARTER



ANDRE COLLINS



LARRY GOLDIZEN



VINCENT INGABRAND



DANIEL RUDD



ALEX CASTILLO



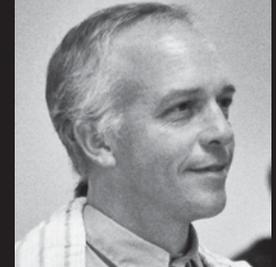
PAUL MARTIN



LONNIE CLARK



RONALD KNIGHT



GREG RAYBORN



JESSE WHITE, SR., KENNETH WRIGHT, SR.



LARRY DECLUE



BILL MAGGARD JR.



WAYNE RICHARDSON



LOUIE GARR III

Shakespeare BEHIND BARS PROGRAM

SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS

Multidisciplinary Juvenile Arts Program

at Audubon Youth Development Center - Louisville, KY

Shakespeare Behind Bars believes it is imperative to create transformational programs that provide incarcerated and at risk youth with the tools they need to work towards a future outside correctional institutions and thereby reduce the rate of youth who will commit crimes that could lead to their spending their adult lives behind bars. The Shakespeare Behind Bars juvenile programs employ the same vision, mission, values, and techniques that have proven successful in the adult program founded in 1995 at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex in LaGrange, KY.

In the spring of 2012, SBB Artistic Director Matt Wallace led the 70-hour SBB multidisciplinary arts program at Audubon Youth Development Center. All residents/students had the opportunity to volunteer to participate and join the SBB ensemble. Over the course of 13-weeks, students participated in daily ensemble-building and conflict resolution work to create a safe circle for participants. The ensemble explored text, themes, and issues from *Romeo and Juliet* through discussion, reflection, exercises, and performance. Visiting specialists contributed to the program in the areas of visual art/art therapy, prejudice reduction, playwriting, costume design, scenic design, and live theatrical performance.

Through special permission from the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Corrections, juvenile participants posed written questions to adult inmates in the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex SBB program (also working on *Romeo and Juliet*) and had a dialogue and mentoring opportunity in the form of shared writing.

The process culminated in a final sharing for peers, teachers, staff, family members, and Jefferson County Public Schools, Justice Cabinet, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Department of Corrections officials and staff members.

Program evaluation included observation and evaluation by a licensed psychologist.



Audubon Youth Development Center provides educational opportunities for students who have been adjudicated by Kentucky courts as youthful offenders or seriously delinquent and committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice for treatment.



"We stood as a family for once since we've been in this facility. . . It's like I could fly or something!"

-SBB juvenile participant

SBB JUVENILE PARTICIPANT WRITTEN AND PERFORMED ROMEO RAP:

Man, when Romeo got caught up, da Capulet came to 'em,
brought it to 'em where dey was brought up.
Dey was looking 4 man ta slaughta, dey try 2 take up 4 Juliet,
but he 'aint know dat dey was newly weds.
Romeo 'aint want beef he was cool wit dem,
tells Tybalt wanna try 2 come n fool dem,
but Mercutio new beef, nuttin' new to dem,
so he start hollin' bout what he gonna do to dem!
Both dudes tried but one got murked,
Mercutio lyin' n da dirt!
Romeo's mind gone plus he cryin', he hurt.
Mad cuz Juliet had his mind in her skirt,
saw his partna dead now he mad about it,
so dat's when he had 2 bring dat it savage out 'em,
dat was his main man wouldn't die without 'em,
Sad either one of us gonna lie beside 'em!

JOURNAL SELECTIONS
FROM SBB JUVENILE
PARTICIPANTS

“The program was much more than participating in a play. It was about teamwork, perseverance and patience.”

“I really am trying to turn my negative attention seeking into positive attention seeking. Life is

not only about me. I have to change the way I was abused into not abusing others but loving others. I started to drink alcohol and pop pills to get over the hurt I had all my life. If I change those things into positive things then I can make a change in the world.”

“You are your only obstacle.”

“The program has taught me how to be open to new ways of life, how to work with other people,

and how to have self-discipline. What’s more is that it exposes us to more things in life.”

“I really liked the Commissioner coming. He really did have a moving story. I learned that even though you have a rough past you can turn it into a positive future. I don’t have to live negative my whole life... I really do have things to live for besides being locked up my whole life.”

“It’s easy to connect with this character because he becomes banished from society. Being locked up can create this banished feeling within most of us who are in the Shakespeare program.”

“Some things, and people, will have to be left behind in order for a person to reach his/her destination.”

SELECTIONS FROM
RESPONSE LETTERS TO
JUVENILE PARTICIPANTS
FROM ADULT SBB
ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

“My friend, I believe in you and until you come to see your own value, please know there is a man locked away in a prison in Kentucky that celebrates your life.”

“Do not ever let other people (so-called friends) make your deci-

sions for you. Don’t let the fear of being looked at as weak, square, or a punk be the reason you do anything.”

“Don’t take anything for granted. Every day be the best you can be – a better son, a better brother, even now you have the power to affect people positively.”

“Drugs and the street life don’t discriminate! If you start using drugs and buying drugs, you probably will start selling drugs. If you start selling drugs, you

probably will start carrying a gun. If you start carrying a gun, somebody will probably get killed or end up in prison. In my case both happened.”

“In love we tell you that if you don’t learn from our mistakes, you are doomed to repeat them. I will leave you with one last piece of wisdom - Look at your friends. Look at them good. Show me your friends, and I’ll show you your future.”

“As I travel down memory lane, I shake my head in disgust that I allowed others to control my mind and use me as a puppet. The crazy part is, the people that used me are the ones that I thought had my back no matter what.”

“As a man you understand the need to protect your integrity against all the things that will tempt you to lower your standards to the point that you no longer know what you stand for.”

Program Evaluation Results

- Improved grades - 94% of program participants improved their grades/had an increase in grade equivalency over the period of time in the program.
- Improvement in behavior – 50% less critical incidents/write ups for disciplinary action than those not participating in the program.
- “This program is a life-saving one. It changes the hearts and minds of these young men who are involved. Throughout my teaching career I have provided many wonderful learning opportunities and experiences for my students. The Shakespeare Behind Bars program is truly the best.” - *Teacher*



Shakespeare BEHIND BARS PROGRAMS

SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS

Shakespeare *Beyond Bars* Program

at Louisville Day Treatment Center - Louisville, KY

January 12, 2012, Artistic Director Matt Wallace began Shakespeare *Beyond Bars*, a new SBB program at the Louisville Day Treatment Center. Students including past participants from the Audubon Youth Development Center SBB Juvenile Program who have transitioned to the Louisville Day Treatment Center have the opportunity to receive ongoing support and opportunities in Shakespeare *Beyond Bars*.



Louisville Day Treatment Center is a specialized day treatment and educational program with the primary goals being the prevention of further delinquent acting-out, the prevention of institutionalization, the improvement of individual and family functioning, and a successful instructional transition to the community school. Youths benefit from an academic curriculum that complies with current high school graduation requirements. Students receive instruction accommodating individual learning styles and remediation of skills.



The program meets weekly and is facilitated by Matt Wallace with guests including former inmate ensemble members of the adult SBB program. Juvenile participants continue to explore the values and pursue the goals of the SBB program in this critical time of their lives as they work to successfully transition back into society.

SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS

Michigan Program

at the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility - Muskegon Heights, MI

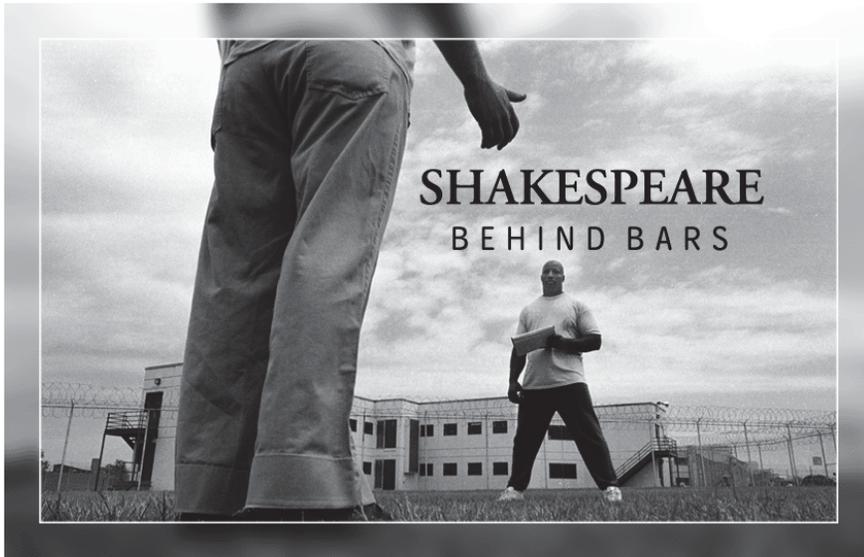
On February 12, 2011, Curt L. Tofteland founded the Shakespeare Behind Bars/ Michigan circle at the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility in Muskegon Heights, Michigan. Kate Thomsen joined the team as its first facilitator-in-training. Kate facilitated the SBB/MI circle solo when Curt was in Australia for four months on a Fulbright Fellowship. On November 17, 2011, the SBB/MI circle shared its first public performance with Warden Mary Berghuis, thirteen of her staff, and one outside minister.

After one year of participation, each of the nine founding SBB/MI members sponsored a fellow inmate as an SBB/MI program apprentice. The founding member is responsible for his apprentice and acts as a mentor/big brother to him. Currently, there are twenty-one active members.

In May, 2012, Joseph Byrd joined the team as its second facilitator-in-training. Joseph will join Kate Thomsen to facilitate the SBB/MI circle while Curt is in France, Switzerland, and The Netherlands this summer.



First Anniversary of Shakespeare Behind Bars/Michigan - the nine founding members with SBB Founder Curt L. Tofteland, Warden Mary Berghuis, Program Coordinator Terry Plews, and Facilitator-in-Training Kate Thomsen.



SOMETHING'S WORKING

SBB RECIDIVISM 5.2%

An oasis in the desert of disappointment

In a nation where politicians, the courts, and local communities are pulling their hair out to find the answers to the increasing number of convicted felons returning to prison after their release, Shakespeare Behind Bars (SBB) stands out as an oasis amidst the discouraging statistics—statistics that delve deeply in to the double digits.

What is it about the nature of this seemingly insignificant troupe of convicted felons that sets its members (who are released back into the community) against the common mindset of others who are released under similar guidelines?

The ultimate goal for the Justice Department, which includes the Depart-

ment of Corrections and The Department of Juvenile Justice, is to return offenders back to the community as productive citizens who are equipped to offer something of a positive nature to the collective whole.



It is the opinion of this writer, that the answers to the questions of recidivism can be found among the tight-knit group referred to as *Shakespeare Behind Bars*.

The difficulty in finding the answers to increasing recidivism rates is not that there are no answers. We are simply not looking where those answers can be found. ●

FACING THE TRUTH

RECIDIVISM
A HABITUAL
RELAPSE INTO
CRIME

NATIONAL RECIDIVISM

67%

KENTUCKY RECIDIVISM

29.5%



SUPPORT NEEDED

SBB is a donor supported program that relies solely on the generosity of those who understand its contribution to both the lives of incarcerated men and the communities into which they will one day return.



DONATE TODAY

Shakespeare Behind Bars is a not-for-profit, 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible as provided by law. For information on how to make a tax deductible donation, see page 36.



2011-2012 LLCC Ensemble

JOIN US! DONATE TODAY.

IF you have already made your donation this season, we thank you for your continued support.

IF you know someone who would like to support our cause, please spread the message.

IF you haven't yet had the opportunity to donate this season, we invite you to join us!

**"So shines a good deed in a naughty world."
- *The Merchant of Venice***

***Shakespeare Behind Bars* relies on private donations to operate.**

Any size gift is greatly appreciated and needed to help us continue this important work.

Shakespeare Behind Bars is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and all donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.

To make a donation, mail to:

Shakespeare Behind Bars

PO Box 33293

Louisville, KY 40232-3293

Info@shakespearebehindbars.org

Or make a secure donation through our website:

www.shakespearebehindbars.org

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Funds received June 1, 2011 – June 1, 2012 in support of 2011-2012 Season

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Norton Foundation

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Vivian Ruth Sawyer

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Sister Mary Carol Hellmann, St. Walburg
Monastery

\$0.01 - \$99.00

Anonymous (8)
Clara Adkins
Reyhan Akyildiz
Jeff Berggren
Renee Betz
Virginia Blackburn
Jeanne Bowen
Joseph and Grace Byrd
Joe Calarco
Kris Chafin
Brent Chamberlin
Deborah Busch and Robert Christopher
Lance Clark
Tiffany Conroy
Phyllis Costello
Blair Dowden
Barbara Dunn
Doris Dykes
Judy Esterline
Meg Fidler
Jo Folsome
Nicole Gaines
Cindy Geders
Nathan Geer
Phyllis Goldstein *in honor of Phyllis Costello*
Phyllis Gorfain
Bob Gottlieb
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Theatre (502)
Toast on Market

SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS LLCC ENSEMBLE

Founding Company Members 1995 (11) Ron Brown, Sammie Byron, Hal Cobb, Dale Dirkes, Robert Head, Juadon Randle, Richard Staton, Billy Wheeler, James Workman, Donnie Worthington, Vance Young

First Apprentice Company 1996 (12) DeMond Bush, David Duvall, Bruno Fassler, Tom Frank, Clarence Hall, Stephon Harbin, Marvin Isabelle, Ronald Kiper, Jimmy Osborne, Michael Smith, Ben Spencer, Tom Suleski

Founding Company - currently at LLCC (2) Ron Brown, Hal Cobb

First Apprentice Company - currently at LLCC (1) Tom Suleski

Core Company (19) Roderick Blincoe, George Cohen, Jeff Griffith, Jerry Guenther, III, Larry Goldizen, Brandon Langley, Michael Malavenda, Stephen Marshall, Robert Miller, Erik Nolde, James Prichard, Stephen Riddle, Erroll Rogers, Troy Smith, John Snyder, Floyd Vaughn, Joshua Wallace, Derald Weeks, Charles Young

Apprentice Company (5) David Harding, David Hopper, Christopher Lindauer, Mario Mitchell, William Whitehouse

Alumni Company - Released from prison (54) Lonnie Clark, Alex Castillo, Andre L. Collins, Jack Daugherty, Larry DeClue, Adler Derosette, Dale Dirkes, Montest Eaves, Bruno Fassler, Tom Frank, Ryan Graham, Clarence Hall, Stephon Harbin, Curtis Hastings, Robert Head, Kevin Hesson, Mark Hourigan, Richard Hughes, Vincent Ingabrand, Marvin Isabelle, Timothy Jett, Ronald Kiper, Ronald Knight, Larry Lucus, Bill Maggard, Mark Mason, Donald Mikesell, Joseph Napier, Jimmy Osborne, Howard Ralston, Juadon Randle, Greg Rayborn, Roger Richardson, Philip Rieger, Daniel Roberts, Michael Rogers, Daniel Rudd, Anthony Silver, Charles Smith, Michael Smith, Kelly Stillwell, John Sowers, Kenneth Stone, Neil Sweet, Harvey Swiger, Randy True, Michael Wells, Billy Wheeler, Jason Wheeler, William White, Jeremy Williams, James Workman, Donnie Worthington, Kenneth Wright

Alumni Company - Transferred to other prisons (30) Claudman Anderson, Lavassa Anderson, Keath Bramblett, Clinton Brewer, Demetrius Burrus, DeMond Bush, Chris Byers, Sammie Byron, James Carter, Siah Cornett, David Duvall, Leonard Ford, Louie Garr III, Allan Grundy, Marcel Herriford, Michael Jones, Christopher Keeley, Kenneth King, Paul Martin, Robert Molloy, Joseph Napier, Jeffrey Smith, Raymond Smith, Ben Spencer, Richard Staton, Jessie White, Boris Williams, Michael Williams, Vance Young, Thomas Walker

In Loving Memory of Our Departed Brothers (3) Siah Cornett (transferred), Ben Spencer (transferred), Billy Wheeler (paroled)

"...and art thou chang'd, pronounce this sentence then,
women may fall, when there's no strength in men."

-Friar Lawrence, *Romeo & Juliet*

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| December 1995 | <i>An Evening of Scenes from Shakespeare</i> |
| Summer 1996 | <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> |
| December 1996 | <i>Knaves, Knights, and Kings</i> |
| Summer 1997 | <i>Twelfth Night</i> |
| December 1998 | <i>The Bard Behind Bars</i> |
| December 1999 | <i>The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice</i> |
| May 2001 | <i>The Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus</i> |
| May 2002 | <i>The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke</i> |
| May 2003 | <i>The Tempest</i> |
| Sept.-Oct. 2003 | <i>The Tempest Tour: Roederer Correctional Complex, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| May 2004 | <i>The Life and Death of Julius Caesar</i> |
| September 2004 | <i>The Life and Death of Julius Caesar Tour: Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| December 2004 | <i>All the World's a Stage</i> |
| January-Feb. 2005 | <i>All the World's a Stage Tour: Kentucky State Reformatory, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| December 2005 | <i>Comedie of Errors</i> |
| January 2006 | <i>Comedie of Errors Tour: Kentucky State Reformatory, Green River Correctional Complex, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| May 2007 | <i>Measure for Measure</i> |
| May 2007 | <i>Measure for Measure Tour: Kentucky State Reformatory, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| May 2008 | <i>The Life and Death of Julius Caesar & The Life and Death of Julius Caesar Tour: Kentucky State Reformatory, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women</i> |
| May 2009 | <i>The Tragedy of Macbeth</i> |
| May 2010 | <i>The Winter's Tale</i> |
| June 2011 | <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> |
| June 2012 | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> |



INMATE STATISTICS

Originally, there were eleven inmates in the program. Today, the group fluctuates between 20 to 30 members. Currently two of the founding members and one of the first apprentice company are still involved. Not all members are actors; some are technical support. Since 1995, approximately 215 inmates have participated in the Shakespeare Behind Bars program. (105 inmates did not complete a production and therefore are not classified as SBB alumni. 106 inmates did complete a production and are classified as SBB alumni. 4 inmates have yet to complete a production and are classified as apprentices.)

Current members: 21 inmates are active - 2 founder, 1 first apprentice company, and 14 core members have completed one or more productions; 4 apprentice (haven't completed a production); 5 inmates are inactive (voluntary withdrawal to deal with more pressing issues).

Alumni members: 84 inmates are not at the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex. 30 members have served out; 24 members were paroled (1 died); 30 members were transferred to other Kentucky institutions (2 died).

Shakespeare Behind Bars has a current recidivism rate of 5.2%.

58 SBB members have served out or were paroled – three SBB members have reoffended and were re-incarcerated. The majority of the SBB members have achieved at least a GED. All members have received at least one technical degree and/or an Associate of Arts and/or Science degree from Jefferson Community College. Many of the members have several combinations of degrees. ●

"My own family would not recognize the new man I have become."

-SBB ensemble member



The cast and crew of Shakespeare Behind Bars 2007-2008 season, *Julius Caesar*.

A Perspective in Correctional Duality: The Despair of Incarceration Against the Hope of Rehabilitation

Kevin Hayes, UAI

This will be my third year working with Shakespeare Behind Bars. It has been quite rewarding. I get the honor of seeing inmates transition into men who are willing to accept their faults and challenge themselves to do what is right. Everyday, the members of SBB take on the routine challenges of being incarcerated. The difference is that being a part of this program is a challenge for which they have openly volunteered.

I was asked to write a few words regarding what this program means to me. This will undoubtedly be something different than what it means to those who live and breathe it everyday, who do not have the opportunity to leave it all behind by walking out the front doors at 4 PM everyday. I return continually to a discussion I had with the group in which I confessed that I hold them to a higher standard. Why is this? Simply, this program impacts a person internally and spiritually. It may not be the same for everyone, but, much like anyone who has invested themselves so fully in an endeavor – benefits are gained, dividends are paid. I found myself offended and, frankly, irritated at some of the petty circumstances members put themselves into this year – circumstances which threatened the integrity and trust of the whole group. My response was one of incredulity but encouragement. I re-



mined key players that their actions affect not only themselves, but the ensemble as a whole – that my outrage was due to the fact that I know these members are capable of better.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to see a Shakespeare Behind Bars program at Audubon, a juvenile facility in Louisville. One of the projects for the members was to formulate questions for inmates in the LLCC program. In turn, the LLCC inmates responded back and answered the questions, drawing upon and citing painful lifelong experiences. I watched as one of the juvenile members read the response to his question, taking each word written with respect and meaning – as if the ideas he encountered were pivotal for him. The ideas? Encouragement to be a man and do what is right. He stood there with watered eyes and said this program taught him that he could do anything if he just tried.

When I first became involved with SBB, I thought this program was a joke, and a waste of my time. I now refer to Shakespeare Behind Bars as a program, not just another club on the yard. I learned very quickly that this program works. Period. It may not be evidenced-based from a correctional perspective, but that is because we have nothing to compare it too.

I would like to end with a quote by Audrey Hepburn: *“People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.”* I believe in what Shakespeare Behind Bars is trying to accomplish, and I believe that these men are trying to redeem their lives and prove that they are more than just inmates – men who have made mistakes in the past, but are willing to accept it and look to the future. After all, this may be their last chance to make things right. ●

“They get to spend nine months or so to learn about their character and to really and truly understand what the play is about. I think this is more powerful than learning lines in a couple of months and trying to act like a person you’re portraying. These guys pick roles based on their own life experiences. They know what it feels like to be in these same positions and experience the same feelings as the characters they choose.”

-Ellen, Bellarmine University Student

“I felt a connection with them and by the end of two hours, I viewed them as regular guys – human beings who had made mistakes in their lifetime. Perhaps it was short-sighted of me to pre-judge them; it won’t happen again. I loved my time at LLCC. Not only did I enjoy myself, but I also learned a valuable lesson about humanity as a whole: just because people have done bad things, they’re not necessarily bad people.”

-Peggy, Bellarmine University Student

Shakespeare Behind Bars as Existential Therapy

Joshua Lewis, CTO

As we put another season of SBB behind us, some of us may be inclined to reflect upon all that has happened over the past nine months. Each year has its challenges and triumphs. Whether one reflects on personal accomplishments and failures, local yard scuttlebutt or world news, one thing should be apparent: *there is nothing new under the sun.*

This piece of wisdom from the biblical book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that life is full of successes and disappointments, great happiness and profound sadness, that empires rise and fall, that humans are a mixture of good and evil, and though we hope and aspire for the good to win out, we also know that one day we shall diminish and return to the earth from whence we came.

And so, this knowledge cultivates a sense of urgency to life – that our existence must be something more than the mundanities we manage to chisel out of the world: the money, the house, the record deal, the reputation, the next promotion, the next town, the next fiancée, the next high, the next serve out. From all these things we may derive a sense of pleasure in our human subsistence. But in the end, we are met with the existential crisis that it is all *a chasing after the wind*, that the sun rises and sets each day and that no matter what we do, we cannot prevent the inevitable.

*“Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about*

*The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.”*

-Measure for Measure, Act III, scene i

Shakespeare was aware of this urgency to life. I would not presume to say that this was his only motivation. After all, to suggest that Shakespeare was an existentialist is anachronistic. But, then again, Shakespeare is given to anachronism, and it becomes apparent that his plays are informed by this sense of existential crisis. In his writing, he attempts to “level the playing field” by showing both commoners and nobility as human, with all their idiosyncrasies and foibles.

This style of presentation is successful in reducing the characters to their ontological commonality: that hopes, desires, fears, struggles – the things which define the boundaries of life’s exigency – center the players within the shared task of authentic self-definition.

*“Would I were in an alehouse in London! I
would give all my fame for a pot of ale and
safety.”*

-Henry V, Act III, scene ii

It is in the face of this *great equalizer* that Shakespeare destroys the conventional façade of royalty and paupry alike, presenting to his audience a mirror of themselves and the vanity of their worldly pursuits. This is especially true of his later tragedies. And this is where Shakespeare – though he be 5 centuries our senior – meets the inmates in our program. He challenges them too with this existential crisis, asking them, “Where are you in these lines?” – pushing them ever-forward in the task of authentic self-definition.

To betray or neglect this task leaves the character no option but to live, as Jean-Paul



Sarte called it, in bad faith. And this is the crisis in which so many inmates find themselves, feeling pushed into a corner by the necessities and passions of life, forced to deny the most authentic parts of who they are because they are just “playing the hand they were dealt.” Such a person may find himself in league with Hamlet who struggles with whether or not to avenge his father’s death:

*“The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!”*

-Hamlet, Act I, scene iv

Those who feel their hands are forced or that they have no choice in life have sold their souls to the ambiguity of inauthenticity. Shakespeare confronts us in this regard, reminding us there is always a choice. The only true difficulty is in being honest with one’s self. And so it is with these thoughts that I turn to the 2011-2012 troupe of Shakespeare Behind Bars in admiration, in congratulations, but (most of all) in curiosity and ask...

Who. Are. You?●

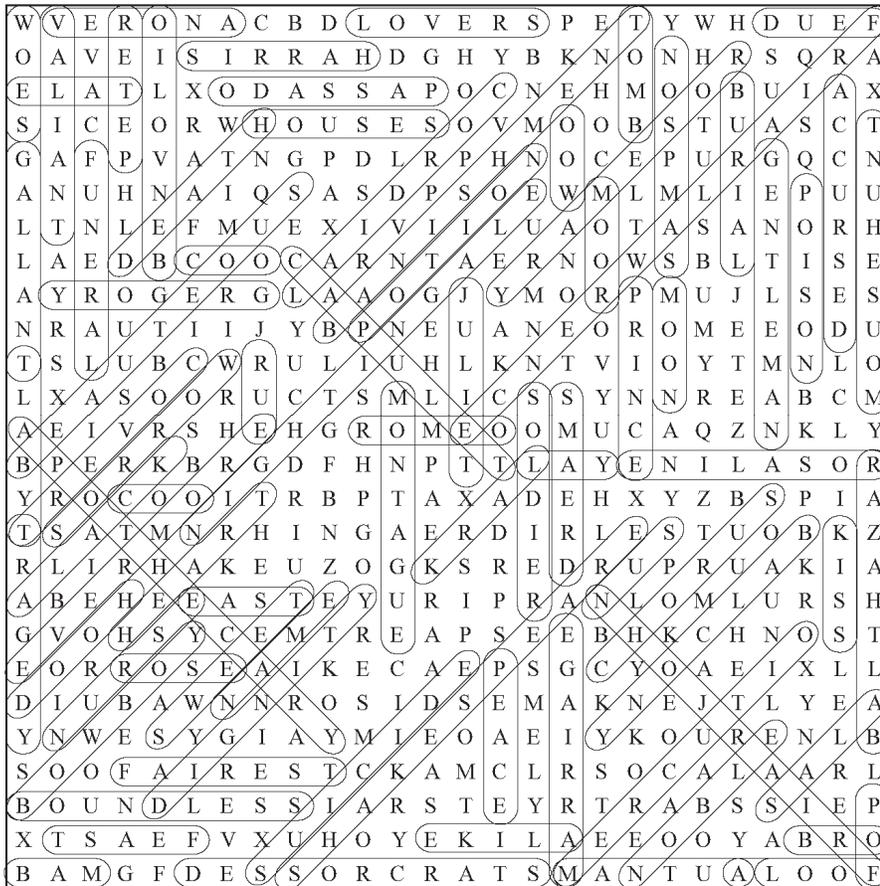
“I learned that these guys don’t just commit to SBB because they want to be good at acting, but because over time, it unlocks a part of themselves that has been hidden for so long.”

-Allie, Bellarmine University Student

“My opinion of [Romeo] completely changed as soon as he started performing. I was completely surprised by the love and truth in his voice. As soon as he became Romeo, I started picturing him as someone’s son, brother, father, husband.”

-Abigail, Bellarmine University Student

WORDSEARCH SOLUTIONS



"Visiting LLCC was easily the highlight of my semester. I am terribly impressed with the level of skill of these actors. If not for the khaki outfits, I could easily have forgotten that we were in a prison.

I was particularly impressed with the way that they direct each other. There is a director, but they seem to take direction better than most from their peers. I thought that the apprentice who plays the Prince was absolutely phenomenal, as well as the actor who plays Romeo." (Amy)

-Amy, Bellarmine University Student

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