SOUTHWEST Shakespeare

proudly presents

SWIFT

SHAKESPEARE

STUDENT GUIDE

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contact:
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with any questions, concerns, or more fascinating Shakespeare trivia
Here’s what we DO know:

| He was born in 1564 and died in 1616. | He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon England. | He was the third of eight children. | His dad was John Shakespeare, a glove maker...also was mayor for a bit. | His mom was Mary Arden. The Arden name was a big deal. | He married Anne Hathaway in 1582 and they had three children: Susanna and twins Judith and Hamnet. |

...and that's...it. That's pretty much all we ACTUALLY know about the greatest playwright to have ever lived. Basically, we know that he lived. (seriously)

Here’s what we’re not sure about:

| we don’t know his birthday or his deathday, we go with St. George’s Day for both, April 23. | Throughout history, 6 signatures of ol’ Bill have been found; none of which are the spelling we know and use. | No sign of Shakespeare from 1585-1592. Literally. He vanished from any and all historical records for SEVEN years! |

The chronology of the plays or even how many plays he actually wrote, where he went to school, what books he read, where or when he traveled, when he moved to London, how he got started in London, and for whom the sonnets were written.

Here’s what all of that means:

400 years after his death, we STILL use and see Shakespeare in our everyday lives. His stories are about the human condition and will never get old. And our imaginations will never stop paying homage to The Bard. Just think about this, without the works of William Shakespeare we wouldn't have these classic (adaptations) films:

And these are just a few. As long as we have entertainment, we will have Shakespeare!

**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**
- double the twins. double the confusion.
- double the fun! also his shortest.

**THE TAMING OF THE SHREW**
- love. trickery. mischief. who says love can’t be fun?
- LOVES LABOUR’S LOST
- MUCH ADD ABOUT NOTHING
- A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

**THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**
- more trickery!
- THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR
- AS YOU LIKE IT
- TWELFTH NIGHT
- and then a few that aren’t super funny:
- ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL
- TROILUS AND CRESSIDA
- MEASURE FOR MEASURE
- they’re more about morality.

**THE COMEDIES**

**THE HISTORIES**
- KING JOHN
- RICHARD II
- HENRY IV PART I
- HENRY IV PART II
- HENRY V
- HENRY VI PART I
- HENRY VI PART II
- HENRY VI PART III
- RICHARD III
- HENRY VIII
- listed in chronological order of crown history, not date produced.

**THE TRAGEDIES**
- TITUS ANDRONICUS
- revenge is a dish best...served.
- ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
- ROMEO AND JULIET
- both about star crossed lovers who end up killing themselves. A&C are based on real people, R&J are teenagers and in waaaay better.
- TIMON OF ATHENS
- OTHELLO
- everyone is awesome as long as you have things to give them.
- MACBETH
- actors call it ‘The Scottish Play’ inside a theatre. ambition isn’t always a good thing.

**THE ROMANCES**
- KING LEAR
- story about a fictional king who goes mad.
- CORIOLANUS
- both about real Romans. Cor. is not liked by the people or audiences; Caesar is VERY liked by the people and therefore killed...way better than Coriolanus.
- JULIUS CAESAR
- HAMLET
- one of the greatest plays of all time. Hamlet has hit a bit of a rough patch in life...

All of these are generally believed to have been published between 1589-1613. That’s over a play a year!

- denotes material from this play is in *Swift*!
VERSE or PROSE

Most everything you read and write everyday is Prose. This is Prose, just words written in an order we understand. It’s ordinary. Verse is extraordinary. Verse has a rhythm. A heartbeat. Sometimes it rhymes. Whether Shakespeare’s characters speak in Prose or Verse can often tell us about their Status, Are they Royalty or Commoners? Switching from Verse to Prose, too, is signal that something new or different is happening in that moment.

The all encompassing term for a literary style in which we arrange our words for emotional effect often employing POETRY numerous rhetorical devices.

A Sonnet is a Poem with 14 lines, in English it’s typically written in iambic Pentameter with a final rhyming couplet (last two lines). People generally say Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets that were published in 1609, but there are 6 more written into his works, 3 of which occur in ROMEO AND JULIET, 2 of which are in our show, 1 of which you will get to say on the day!

VERSE

"But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks?"
Can you feel the Rhythm to that line?

"But, SOFT, what LIGHT through YONder WINdow BREAKS?"

During the show, you are going to learn several words we use everyday that are believed to have been invented by Will himself. Here are some phrases you may have heard before:

"a heart of gold" HENRY V
"eaten me out of house and home" HENRY IV PART II
"Neither here nor there." OTHELLO
"for goodness' sake" HENRY VIII
"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't." HAMLET
"Wear my heart upon my sleeve." OTHELLO
"Wild-goose chase" ROMEO & JULIET
"Vanish into air." HAMLET
"Not slept one wink." CYMBELINE
"Flesh and blood." HAMLET

Spectacular Vernacular!

Have you ever said any of these? You’re speaking Shakespeare!
**A Swift Exploration of Elizabethan England**

Theatre then was far different than what we know today. Open air theatre in industrial (loud) space, outside the City of London, across the river, the theatre in Shakespeare's time was an incredibly distracting place to be, let alone to perform. The audience participated, ate, drank, yelled, and was part of the experience.

**PRODUCING A PLAY**

Elizabethans loved the theatre, and they went to it en masse. Theaters were competitive and fought for business, so variety was the spice of life:

‘11 Performances of 10 Different Plays in 10 Days,’

That was an actual advertisement. A different show everyday.

The theatre employed a different process back then: no director, maybe no rehearsals? How did they figure out characterizations? How did they make choices about action and motivations? How did they even know when or where to enter or exit? How could they do any of it without rehearsal??

**ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES**

The printing press in 1600 was 100+ years old but still labor intensive and expensive, so players (actors) only received their lines and not the entire play. Using the verse, prose, punctuation, capitalization and others tricks, the authors could let their actors know exactly what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, without the need for a director.

STOP! Not THAT Elizabeth! The one in the painting.

Yeah, THAT Elizabeth.

This is a rendering of the Globe Theatre.

That is sketch of a 16th century printing press.

That is our buddy Zack Meyer doing some Hamlet using the original principle.
SWift Shakespeare is a fast paced romp where we learn, play, and speak the speech as we help our hero prepare for his Shakespeare project... which he hasn’t started...and is due tomorrow.

We asked our trio to answer the following: 1. Who are you favorite Shakespearean characters or what are your favorite plays? 2. What is your favorite thing about being an actor? 3. Who inspires you and why? 4. Tell us a fun or silly fact about yourself.

**Dalton Davis**

My favorite Shakespearean play also has in it my favorite character! The manic, mischievous fairy that is Puck is a comedic centerpiece in Shakespeare’s, A Midsummer Night's Dream, & a character I have treasured since I began performing Shakespeare. The character provides a stimulating energy that drives this easily understandable & high energy piece forward & is something I strive to do whenever I am on stage.

My favorite thing about being an actor is being, at times, forced to confront a situation, an emotion, or a person head on that I do not often get to feel or confront in my everyday life off stage. It provides an outlet for the immense energy my body is gifted & often leaves me feeling drained and satisfied after every performance.

I always have two actors I looked up to when growing up - Robin Williams & Jim Carrey. I admired Williams’s unrivaled ability to rant on & on about anything & everything while keeping a crowd entertained & Carrey’s uncanny ability to embody another through his impressions & physical transformations. I thought if one could combine William’s eloquent speech with Carrey’s physicality, it would create the ultimate clown.

Fun Fact: I am also a HS wrestling coach! Sports are another beautiful outlet for expression!

**Mary Beth Hollmann**

My favorite Shakespeare plays are Richard III and The Tempest. My favorite characters...that’s hard. Richard III, Portia, Emilia, Prospero, Puck, Beatrice, Viola and Jacques.

My favorite thing about being an actor is being someone else on a regular basis (especially a Shakespeare someone else).

My kids inspire me because they remind me that I was a kid once too. Shakespeare inspires me because he reminds me of how we are all humans just trying to figure things out. In high school, I hated Shakespeare. We had to read Julius Caesar. PUHLEASE! Ugh! But one day, I SAW Julius Caesar on stage and it made all the difference. Shakespeare’s plays rock when you see them performed. Just keep seeing them and it will all make sense!

Fun Fact - My husband and I renewed our vows at Trinity Church at Stratford-Upon-Avon in 2015 with “Shakespeare” as the officiant.

**Elle Broeder**

My favorite Shakespeare plays are Titus Andronicus and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

My favorite things about acting are:
1. The collaboration! I love playing with awesome people. I love exchanging ideas and helping each other give great performances.
2. Acting always has something to teach you. Sometimes it’s obvious like rollerskating, singing, or developing an accent. But sometimes it’s more subtle. You have to learn how a person’s experiences and circumstances have caused them to be the people they are in the play. My capacity to experience empathy is constantly expanding in this craft because it is my job to listen and consider the ideas of people with different experiences than me.

I am totally inspired by the way people love things; the way my friend’s get excited by their favorite songs, the way or the way my parents worked very hard to give my sister and me a good life. I am inspired by the way people care about things!

Fun Fact: I can say (with confidence) that I can give a one woman reenactment of Jim Carrey’s masterpiece How The Grinch Stole Christmas.