Savoring the Classical Tradition in Drama

Engaging Presentations by The Shakespeare Guild in Proud Collaboration with The National Arts Club The Players, New York City The English-Speaking Union

Melinda Hall ♦ Tuesday, April 23

Melinda Hall is a highly-regarded writer, teacher, and acting coach who not only works with individual performers but conducts classes for Actors Equity, SAG-AFTRA, and other organizations. She is the producer who established the Shakespeare's Birthday Sonnet Slam in Central Park, where all 154 of the poet's lyrics are recited each year, often with leading actors and public figures participating in the festivities. But the most impressive of Ms. Hall's achievements is a series of extraordinary interviews that she has recorded and posted on YouTube. Each is a story in itself, based on a prominent narrator's account of How Shakespeare Changed My Life. To commemorate the 455th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, she'll talk about her work and what it has taught her, and she'll share vignettes from such esteemed performers as F. Murray Abraham, James Earl Jones, Stacy Keach, Ben Kingsley, Estelle Parsons, and Liev Schreiber.

“Ever the Twain” ♦ Tuesday, April 23

Recognizing that the best way to follow one festive gathering in Gramercy Park is to move next door a few hours later for another, the Guild looks forward to joining The Players for an evening that celebrates not only the Bard of Avon but a 19th-century American writer who both admired and envied his eminent predecessor. And what venue could be more fitting for such an event than Edwin Booth's final home, a club the actor founded and one that featured Mark Twain as a trustee? Presiding over our revels will be Jonathan Richards, who co-authored Ever the Twain with historian Lois Rudnick. He'll be joined by Tom Collins, Shana Farr, Forrest Fyre, Jeffrey Hardy, and other performers for an evening that will revisit events like the famous 1849 Astor Place Riot and charm the audience with vignettes such as the Duke and the King’s ludicrous mangling of Hamlet's “To Be or Not to Be” soliloquy in Huckleberry Finn.

Bonnie J. Monte ♦ Wednesday, April 24

Now in her 29th season at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Artistic Director Bonnie J. Monte oversees a multifaceted institution that has evolved into one of the largest and most respected performing-arts complexes in the nation. Ms. Monte has provided audiences not only with acclaimed productions of the playwright her company is known for, but with Greek classics and works by Chekhov, Goldoni, Maeterlinck, and Pirandello. She began her career as Casting Director for the Manhattan Theatre Club, and from 1981 to 1989 she was Associate Artistic Director of the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts. She has also directed plays by Tennessee Williams in Broadway's Circle-in-the-Square, New Haven’s Long Wharf Theatre, and California’s Pasadena Playhouse. During a delightful Salon in the NAC parlor, she'll urge attendees who haven’t done so to arrange a theatrical excursion to the Garden State.
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EVENTS IN D.C., LONDON, NEW YORK, AND SANTA FE

Founded in 1987, The Shakespeare Guild is now in its fourth decade. Since 1994 it has been known primarily for its Gielgud Award for Excellence in the Dramatic Arts, a trophy created with the warm endorsement of Sir John, and one that has been presented in such venues as the Folger Shakespeare Library and the British Embassy in Washington; the Barrymore Theatre, Lincoln Center, and the National Arts Club in New York; and Middle Temple Hall and the Guildhall in London. Gielgud-related activities have also occurred in a number of other settings, among them BAFTA's Princess Anne Auditorium and the Gielgud Theatre in the West End.


Since 1998 the Guild has also presented Speaking of Shakespeare, a conversation series that debuted at the National Press Club in Washington and has enriched audiences in a variety of other locales, among them the Cosmos Club, Ford's Theatre, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and the University Club in DC, the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre in the Windy City, and the Algonquin Hotel, The Players, the Princeton Club, and the Schimmel Center in Manhattan. Guests have included actors Jane Alexander, Simon Russell Beale, Richard Easton, John Goodman, Stacy Keach, Michael Learned, Dakin Matthews, Roger Rees, Prunella Scales, Liev Schreiber, Marian Seldes, Jean Stapleton, Janet Suzman, John Douglas Thompson, Timothy West, and Michael York; directors Bill Alexander, Peter Brook, Robert Brustein, Karin Coonrod. Barry Edelstein, Barbara Gaines, Margot Harley, Jeffrey Horowitz, Tina Packer, Molly Smith, Julie Taymor, and Robert Whitehead; playwrights Edward Albee, Michael Frayn, Ken Ludwig, and Sir Peter Shaffer; and writers Norman Augustine, E.R. Braithwaite, Michael Frayn, Sir Harold Evans, Flora Fraser, Marjorie Garber, Adam Gopnik, Stephen Greenblatt, Anthony Hecht, Peter Holland, Peter Kyle, John Lahr, Peter Marks, John Miller, Judith Martin, Mark Oshaker, Bill Press, Cokie Roberts, Neil Rudenstine, Deborah Tannen, Stanley Wells, Linda Wertheimer, and Garry Wills.

For detail about these and other Guild offerings, including presentations in the Land of Enchantment that have been taken place at the LENSIC Performing Arts Center, the New Mexico Museum of Art, San Miguel Church, the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, and elsewhere, we hope you'll visit www.shakesguild.org and click on the blue links that guide you through our rich and eventful history of cultural and educational programming. We also invite you to visit our Membership and Reservations page and become more deeply involved in our endeavors. By design, most of our attractions are admission-free; but of course that does not mean they're cost-free. Like the schools, colleges, libraries, museums, public radio and TV stations, and other nonprofit institutions that we all help with membership dues and donations, the Guild is in constant need of support from those who cherish its efforts to preserve and enhance a unique artistic and intellectual heritage. We urge you to bear in mind, too, that any contributions that are not offset by benefits received are fully tax-deductible.

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