

Actor-Director-Playwright Keith Baxter To Talk About His Life in Theatre & Film

One of England's Finest Dramatic Artists Will Reflect Upon His Associations with Gielgud, Scofield, Welles, and Others

A few weeks ago, in London's historic **MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL**, our next guest on *SPEAKING OF SHAKESPEARE* held a 450-member audience spellbound as he recalled what it was like to work with Sir **JOHN GIELGUD** in 1966 in a justly famous Shakespearean film. At moments **KEITH BAXTER** seemed to *become* the actor who'd played his father in that evocative cinema. He recited the speech in *Henry IV, Part 2*, that ends with the old King saying "Uneasy lies the Head that wears a Crown," and then he read a letter from Sir John to **KENNETH BRANAGH**, the young actor, director, and producer who was about to receive the fifth annual **GIELGUD AWARD**.

In May, Mr. Baxter had played a similar role at Broadway's **BARRYMORE THEATRE**, when he brought a congratulatory message from the trophy's namesake to the 1999 *Golden Quill* laureate, Dame **JUDI DENCH**. At that point Mr. Baxter was rehearsing Antonio for the **SHAKESPEARE THEATRE** production of *The Merchant of Venice*. This time he'll be in rehearsal again, as director for the Theatre's presentation of William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. Mr. Baxter's initial foray into **MICHAEL KAHN** territory occurred several years ago, when he played the Duke in a Kahn-directed *Measure for Measure* that featured **KELLY MCGILLIS** as Isabella.

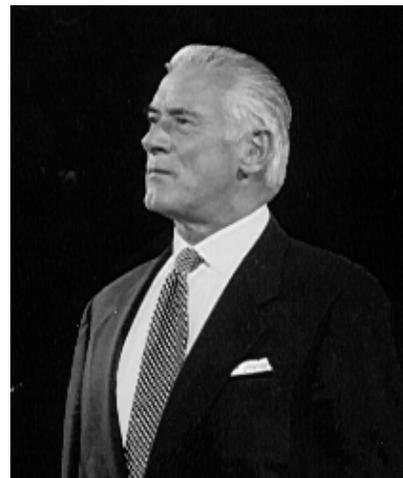
Mr. Baxter is one of Britain's most respected actors, with credits that include a supporting role to **PAUL SCOFIELD**'s definitive Sir Thomas More in the Broadway stage version of *A Man for All Seasons*, the young Prince Hal in a *Chimes at Midnight* film that starred **ORSON WELLES** as Falstaff, Elyot in a London *Private Lives* at the Aldwych Theatre with **JOAN COLLINS**, and the title role in a Birmingham *Macbeth*. He's also a superb director and the author of two plays, *56 Duncan Terrace* and *Barnaby and the Old Boys*, and a memoir, *My Sentiments Exactly*. His numerous honors include a Drama Desk Award and an Outer Critics Circle Award.

After a half-hour reception, the proceedings will commence at 7:30 p.m. with a conversation between Mr. Baxter and Shakespeare Guild president **JOHN F. ANDREWS**. They'll chat for 45 minutes or so, and then you'll have a chance to ask Mr. Baxter to expand upon the many topics he's addressed. Afterwards you'll be welcome to dine at the National Press Club's lovely Fourth Estate restaurant, which will validate your ticket for free parking in the PMI Garage at 1325 G Street NW; to reserve, phone (202) 662-7638.

Speaking of Shakespeare

Dialogues about the playwright and his place in our lives today

Presented by The Shakespeare Guild in league with The British Council, The English-Speaking Union, and The National Press Club, and with generous support from the Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation



Tuesday, February 22, 2000

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The National Press Club
529 14th Street NW, 13th Floor
Two Blocks from Metro Center

For members of The English-Speaking Union and The Shakespeare Guild, the price for *Speaking of Shakespeare* events is \$25. For non-members who do not belong to The National Press Club, the price is \$35. If you wish to enroll in The Shakespeare Guild or guarantee space(s) for the event described above, you may do so by completing this form and either faxing it to (202) 483-7824 or mailing it to 2141 Wyoming Avenue NW, Suite 41, Washington, D.C. 20008-3916. To request further information, or to place orders by telephone, simply call (202) 483-8646.

I wish to join the Guild, or renew my membership for 2000, as a Subscriber (\$50), Contributor (\$125), Donor (\$250), Benefactor (\$500), or Patron (\$1,000). I wish to reserve space(s), at the \$25 member price, the \$35 non-member price, for the February 22nd program. My check for \$ is enclosed. Please send me details about the 2000 Gielgud Award festivities, the Chicago *SPEAKING* engagements with Garry Wills (February 28th) and Sir Derek Jacobi (May 1st).

Please charge \$ to my Visa MC (exp. /).

Name Address

City, State, Zip Phone Fax

Dame Judi Dench Wins The 1999 Gielgud Trophy

During a delightful ceremony that took place at 8:00 p.m. on Monday night, May 17, in Broadway's legendary **ETHEL BARRYMORE THEATRE**, **DAME JUDI DENCH** claimed her special niche in a pantheon that also includes such theatrical legends as Sir **IAN MCKELLEN** (1996), Sir **DEREK JACOBI** (1997), and Miss **ZOE CALDWELL** (1998).

In years past The Shakespeare Guild had always bestowed its annual **GIELGUD AWARD** as the centerpiece of a lavish spring benefit for the **FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY** in Washington. This year, thanks to the generosity of **THE SHUBERT ORGANIZATION** and the producers of *Amy's View*, the Guild enjoyed a sparkling Broadway debut as its festivities moved to the venerable **BARRYMORE THEATRE**. In that stately interior an evocative David Hare drama was providing its female lead an eloquent vehicle for the 1999 Tony Award, a laurel Dame Judi collected, a few weeks later, in June.

Following a witty Elizabethan prelude by **NEW YORK'S ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC**, television journalist **ROBERT MACNEIL**, who had also hosted the 1996 and 1998 presentations of *The Golden Quill*, greeted an enthusiastic audience with reminders of the luminaries who had been honored with the first three Gielgud Awards. He noted how appropriate it was to be occupying a venue that memorialized our nation's foremost acting family, and then he yielded the podium to "the Barrymore of our own day."

After a series of charming reflections about his hypothesis that Gielgud must



have been a contemporary of the poet himself – "Hell, they had the same acting teacher!" – **CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER** offered facetious condolences to "dear Judi" for the "terrible year" she was having in a career that was unlikely to garner more than three major accolades in a four-month period. He concluded, as did two later speakers, with a Shakespearean love-sonnet.

Next came **REBECCA EATON**, WGBH/Boston's executive producer for *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre*. Ms. Eaton talked about the pleasure she'd derived from working with Dame Judi during the filming of *Henry V* and *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, both of which had been made possible, in part, by Ms. Eaton's efforts. She then introduced two video clips of "Her Majesty" as Queen Victoria, asserting that it was this moving performance that had really earned Dame Judi her March 1999 Oscar as Queen Elizabeth in *Shakespeare in Love*.

Sir **RICHARD EYRE**, former artistic director of Britain's Royal National Theatre and the man who'd staged *Amy's View* and several of David Hare's other plays, spoke of what a privilege it

had been to direct so gifted and disciplined a performer as Judi Dench. His words were soon echoed by Sir **DAVID HARE**, who described Dame Judi as his artistic "lodestar," his symbol of truth and "value," and recalled an instance in which she'd managed, while doing a scene from one of the dramatist's screenplays, to say the word *yes* in a way that clearly and emphatically meant *no*.

Speaking on behalf of his fellow actors in *Amy's View*, **RONALD PICKUP** saluted Dame Judi as the epitome of "Friendship." His comments left no doubt about why she elicits such warm devotion from her colleagues. **TOBY STEPHENS**, the son of Dame Maggie Smith and Sir Robert Stephens, said that, though he'd long admired Dame Judi, he'd never had an opportunity to meet this wonderful lady until a recent trip to see his mother on location for Franco Zeffirelli's movie *Tea with Mussolini*.

Two of the evening's notables, actors **BRIAN BEDFORD** and **HAL HOLBROOK**, offered delightful vignettes from fresh productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*, respectively. In an aside, Mr. Bedford said he hopes that when, three decades hence, he calls to wish Dame Judi a happy 94th birthday, as he had done with Sir John a few months earlier, she too will say that as a consequence of hiring a new agent she's "getting more work."

In what turned out to be the most stirring moment of the evening, actor **KEITH BAXTER**, who'd performed with Gielgud in the Orson Welles cinema *Chimes at Midnight*, read Dame Judi a congratulatory message from the Award's namesake. In what Mr. Baxter labeled a characteristic Gielgudian touch, a backhand compliment, Sir John singled out for special praise a part – Lady Macbeth – in which he'd been sure that such a modest and diminutive lass could never prevail.

As the 1998 laureate, **ZOE CALDWELL** was called upon to bestow this year's trophy on its recipient. Miss Caldwell prefaced her commendations of Dame Judi with a hilarious letter she imagined the present occupant of the British throne might have written, informing a proven theatrical "Majesty" that she was so adept at this kind of role that she might wish to consider an occasional foray to Buckingham Palace to relieve a weary Queen Elizabeth II on her "bad days." Miss Caldwell then read a missive that had come in from her 1998 *Golden Quill* predecessor, Sir **DEREK JACOBI**. He depicted Dame Judi as an extraordinary talent who had been lauded with so many richly deserved prizes that "she could open her own department at Bloomingdale's."



As she cradled the award, to the accompaniment of a rousing ovation that persisted for several minutes, a tearful honoree described herself as "overwhelmed" by such an outpouring of affection.

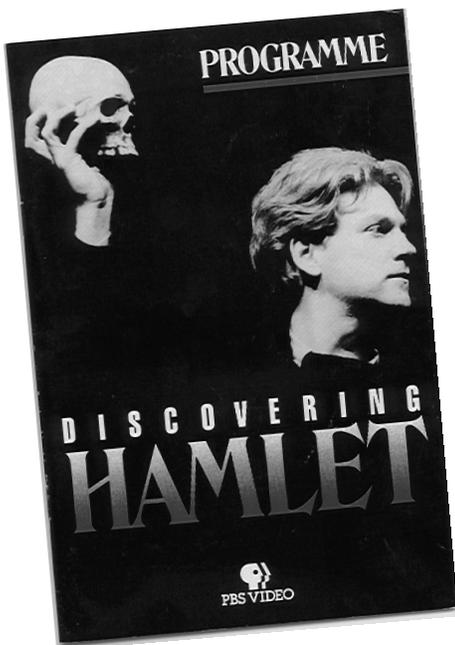
Press coverage was even more extensive than expected. Announcements or news items about the program appeared in *The Georgetown*, *The New York Post* (both Neal Travis and Liz Smith featured it in their society columns), *The New York Times* (an item in Lawrence van Gelder's "Footlights"), *Parade* ("Walter Scott's Personality Parade"), *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (a four-page cover article by co-editor John Mahon), *The Washington Post* (Jane Horowitz's "Backstage"), *The Washington Times* (a full-page illustrated story by Ann Geracimos), and *Women's Wear Daily* (two gushing reports from the irrepressible "Suzy").

A number of prestigious partners joined the Guild for what proved to be a stellar gathering, among them **THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF SADLER'S WELLS**, **THE BRITISH COUNCIL**, **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER**, **THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**, **THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB**, **THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**, **THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY**, **THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**, **THE THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**, and **THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE**. In addition the Guild received honorary patronage from **BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND LADY MEYER**, as well as from **MRS. VINCENT ASTOR**, **MR. LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS**, **MRS. KITTY CARLISLE HART**, and **MRS. LEWIS T. PRESTON**.

Key financial assistance came from two major sponsors, **MIRAMAX FILMS**, which had given the world *Shakespeare in Love*, and **THE NAOMI AND NEHEMIAH COHEN FOUNDATION**, whose trustees, guided by **LILLIAN C. SOLOMON**, have provided crucial underwriting for several Guild initiatives. The Guild was also indebted to two members of its **GOLDEN QUILL CIRCLE**, Board member **BARBARA G. HAMMERMAN** and her husband **RAYMOND LAVINE**, who have supported its endeavors from the outset, and who attended with their lovely daughter Amanda.

Once again the Guild had reason to be grateful to **THE MOBIL CORPORATION** and to **WGBH**, which continue to augment their marvelous showcase of dramatic talent for the edification of American viewers. Their help was indispensable to the success of this year's activities.

Finally, the Guild is thankful to the inimitable **GEORGE TRESCHER** and his talented colleagues, and to all the patrons, benefactors, donors, contributors, performers, directors, consultants, suppliers, friends, and loved ones who did so much, in so many diverse ways, to ensure that this pivotal undertaking would result in an occasion for everyone to cherish.



Key Incentives to Join the Guild

If you enroll or renew your membership in the Guild at the CONTRIBUTOR level or above, you'll be rewarded with a copy of Mark Olshaker's PBS VIDEO of *DISCOVERING HAMLET*.

This one-hour documentary, which has been praised by *The New York Times* and has enjoyed a recent revival on the popular market, will give you a delightful glimpse of KENNETH BRANAGH's earliest attempt at a role to which he returned in 1996 in a cinema that has been called the most ambitious Shakespearean film in the annals of the silver screen. You'll smile as one of the great Danes of the 20th century, Sir DEREK JACOBI, undertaking his initial voyage as director, steers his charge through what may well be the most treacherous of the playwright's title parts.

A membership at any level will entitle you to discounts for *SPEAKING* engagements. Enrollment at the CONTRIBUTOR level or above will position you for even better rates on tickets to events such as the Guild's annual GIELGUD AWARD festivities.

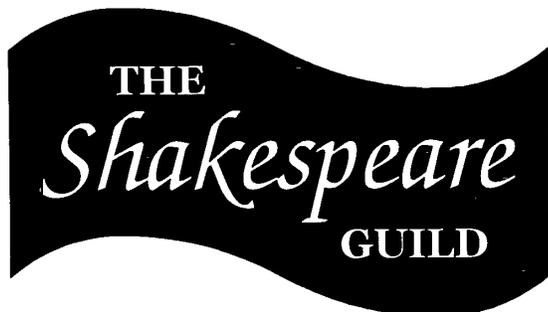
CONTRIBUTORS will enjoy 20% reductions, DONORS 25%, BENEFACTORS 30%, PATRONS 35%, and GOLDEN QUILL CIRCLE members 50% or more.

Speaking of Shakespeare OPENS AT THE CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

Author Garry Wills and Actor Sir Derek Jacobi to Launch a New Series

The Shakespeare Guild is pleased to announce that its popular *SPEAKING OF SHAKESPEARE* series is now being extended to the Midwest. On MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH, our guest will be author GARRY WILLS, and on MONDAY, MAY 1ST, we'll chat with actor Sir DEREK JACOBI. Both programs will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the brand new Navy Pier facilities of the CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER. The setup will be the same as in Washington's NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, with Guild president JOHN F. ANDREWS conducting what promise to be exceedingly lively discussions. The price for admission to each event will be \$15, plus an additional \$75 for those in May who opt for a post-program reception. Tickets may be ordered either through the Guild at 202 483 8646 or through the box office in Chicago at 312 595 5600.

Sir DEREK JACOBI will need no introduction to those who've been following the Guild's initiatives of late. Suffice it to say that at the time of this get-together he'll be playing the title role in a ROUNDABOUT THEATRE production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* on Broadway. GARRY WILLS is one of the most impressive and prolific writers of our day. A winner of two National Critics Circle Awards and of a coveted Pulitzer Prize, he is the author of books on such diverse topics as Saint Augustine, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. His most recent critically acclaimed study is *A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government*.



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John F. Andrews, President

Founded in 1987, The Shakespeare Guild is a global not-for-profit corporation that celebrates, and endeavors to cultivate larger and more appreciative audiences for, the dramatist who has been applauded in every society as history's most reliable guide to the mileposts of life.