

TOURCO

# SHAKESPEARE ON TRIAL



# Table of Contents

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. A Message from the Director of Education
4. About the Author Jeremy Webb
5. Synopsis
6. Meet the Cast
7. Meet the Creative and Design Team
8. Theatre Etiquette
9. Curriculum Outcomes

- 10-17. Mini Lesson 1: Why is Shakespeare Relevant?
- 18-20. The Globe Theatre
- 21-22. Mini Lesson 2: What is a Soliloquy?
23. Pre Show Activity: Shakespearean Language
24. Post Show Activity: Iambic Pentameter
25. Neptune Theatre School Information
26. Thanks to our Sponsors

# A Message from the Director of Education

Every year, one of the most exciting parts of my job is that I get to select two plays to tour around the Maritimes.

When it came around to choosing this years show for junior high and high school, I knew I wanted something fun, engaging and would challenge the mind.

Jeremy's play immediately came to mind as a great play to get youth who may not have ever seen live theatre, or at least in a loooong time, to reconnect with live performance.

I really hope you enjoy this fun and quirky play.



Laura Caswell  
Director of Education

# About the Author



**Jeremy Webb** is the twelfth Artistic Director in Neptune Theatre's history. Prior to Neptune, Jeremy was the Artistic Producer of Eastern Front Theatre. Jeremy moved to Canada, from his native UK, in 1998, making Halifax home. He grew up in Cambridge and trained at The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Jeremy has been working at Neptune ever since 1998, in so many capacities.

For Neptune he has directed *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*, *Billy Elliot*, *Elf: The Musical*, *Alice*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Shakespeare In Love*, *Cinderella* and many more.

He is also the writer and creator of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* which has run at Neptune for over 20 years.

Jeremy, toured as a performer in *Shakespeare on Trial* for many years in its original incarnation over a decade ago. He is so excited for this show to come back to life and back to schools in Nova Scotia!





# SYNOPSIS

Writer Bill Shakespeare encounters four of his own most famous characters: MacBeth, Iago, Hamlet and Juliet up-close, personal and ticked-off, in a new two-man comedy that explores the Bard's accessibility and relevance in the world today.

Shakespeare has to defend his own writing as the four fictional characters challenge the author to write in a modern way, arguing that no-one understands them anymore.

Shakespeare On Trial is a one-act, fast-paced play created to introduce audiences to the Bard's words and to help those words find an ear today.

The play features a 'greatest hits' of famous Shakespeare quotes, speeches and the occasional soliloquy (featuring scenes from Romeo & Juliet, Othello, MacBeth and Hamlet.)

The show becomes interactive for the last 15 minutes as Shakespeare calls upon the audience to help prove his point: "The play's the thing..."

# Meet the Cast!



## Jeremy Foot as Shakespeare

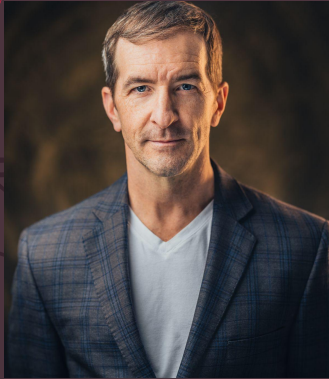
Jeremy is a multidisciplinary artist based in K'jipuktuk/Halifax. He graduated from Sheridan College in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in Music Theatre Performance, with a focus in writing for musical theatre. Jeremy has worked as an instructor at Neptune Theatre School since 2018, teaching classes for kids of all ages. Acting credits (selected): *The Hydrofoil Mystery* (Theatre Baddeck), *The Storyteller* (No Strings Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Theatre Sheridan), *Tiny Tenement of Terrors* on Spotify (Theatre Sheridan/Musical Stage Co.), *Concord Floral* (Theatre Sheridan), *Holly Dolly Christmas* (Grafton Street Dinner Theatre). When he's not performing onstage Jeremy is usually writing plays or drawing comics, or doing "research" by binge-watching cartoons.



## Nancy Kenny as the Prosecutor and other characters

A proud Acadian originally from New Brunswick, Nancy Kenny is a fluently bilingual (French/English) actor, writer, film and theatre producer, who makes Halifax/K'jipuktuk her home. She is the creator and solo performer of the award-winning, critically acclaimed plays, *Roller Derby Saved My Soul* and *Everybody Dies in December*. She is also the executive producer of *On the Fringe*, a feature-length documentary about touring the Canadian Fringe Festival circuit. (Winner: Best Documentary Film, 2023 Screen Nova Scotia awards )Her biggest claim to fame is appearing as 'The Mother' in a Heritage Minute on the Deportation of the Acadians. Through her company, Broken Turtle Productions, Nancy's focus is in stories that explore the role of women, marginalized genders, and 2SLGBTQ+ people in society.

# Meet the Creative Team



## **Jeff Schwager - Director**

Jeff is an award-winning actor with nearly 25 years of stage experience, including numerous appearances on the Neptune Theatre stage. He has been actively involved with Neptune Theatre School since 2008. Jeff's performance work has taken him to stages across Canada and around the world, but he happily calls Dartmouth home, where he lives with his family of humans and dogs. When not working in theatre, Jeff enjoys experiencing the natural beauty of the Maritimes, whether hiking through the forest or on a beach, or surfing and kayaking in the Atlantic Ocean.

## **Karen Bassett- Fight Director**

Karen is a multi-disciplinary theatre artist as a fight director, performer, playwright, and teacher. She is a passionate advocate, creator, and innovation in the discipline of stage violence. She holds numerous fight direction credits with Neptune Theatre, Theatre New Brunswick, Ship's Company Theatre, Festival Antigonish, Two Planks and Passion Theatre, Villain's Theatre, Shakespeare by the Sea, 2B Theatre, Mulgrave Road Theatre, and Halifax Theatre For Young People as well as work around the world.



# Design Team

All sets, costumes and props are designed and built at Neptune Theatre. Construction, painting, sewing and all production elements are put together with our amazing team. It took over forty individuals and over 400 hours of work to bring the elements of this production to life.

## Design Team:

**Costume Design - Oliver Dorais Fleming**

**Set and Prop Design - Hanna Laaksonen**

**Sound Design/Stage Manager - Ryan Wilcox**

**Chrysalis Assistant Director - Harmony Adesola**

## Admin Support Team:

**Tour Administrator - Maddie Maitzen**

**Technical Associate - Nicole Flynn**



# Theatre Etiquette

- Whether you're in your school's gymnasium or at the Neptune Theatre itself, you have a part to play as a respectful audience-member! Please respect the performance space.
- Watching live theatre is very different from watching a TV show or a movie. The actors on stage will be able to see and hear everything you do – so please be respectful by remaining silent while the show is in progress. Save all of your questions until the very end!
- Please remember to turn your cellphones off. Please note that recording any part of the performance or taking photos is not allowed without permission.
- Live theatre is meant to be an experience shared between the performers and the audience. You may feel a range of emotions from joy to sadness. Feel free to laugh, cry, cheer, and applaud – whatever you need!

# Curriculum Outcomes

## **Grades 7**

-Learners will comprehend a range of communication forms using listening strategies, reading strategies, and viewing strategies.

## **Grade 8**

-Learners will create oral, written, and visual communication forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

## **Grade 9**

- 7.3 respond critically to texts of increasing complexity
- 8.3 make informed choices of language to create a range of interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing

<https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/english-programs>

# Curriculum Outcomes

## **Grades 10, 11, 12**

- 2.1 complete warm-up activities
- 3.3 make connections between text and their own life experiences
- 6.1 use various dramatic forms to create text that gives meaning to cultural and historical events
- 6.2 make connections between their own lives and the characters, ideas, and events in a drama work
- 1. explore, challenge, develop, and express ideas using the skills, language, techniques, and processes of the arts
- 2. create and/or present, collaboratively and independently, expressive products in the arts for a range of audiences and purposes

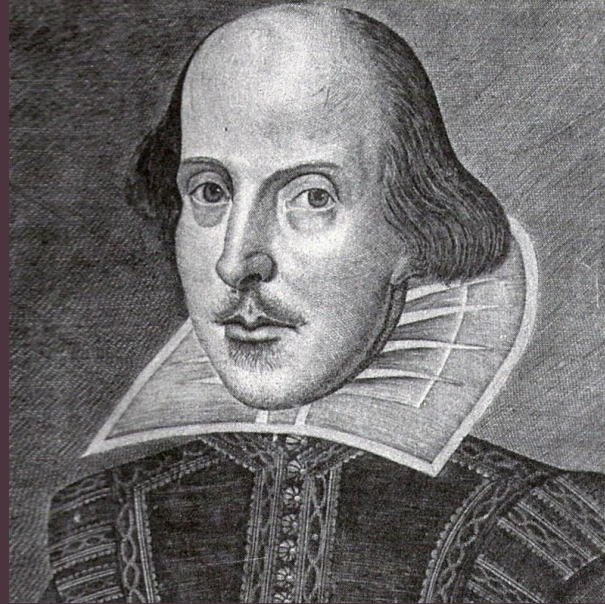
<https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/english-programs>

# Who Was William Shakespeare?

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, all the way back in 1564. The Shakespeares weren't a noble family, but his father did hold positions in local government and William was probably sent to the local grammar school as a child. At eighteen, he married a woman called Anne Hathaway (not that one!), and later moved to London. He made a name for himself as an actor and then as a playwright in the capital. He lived between London and his hometown, while his wife and kids stayed in Stratford.

Discuss and Debate.

# Is Shakespeare still relevant today?



(See the follow slides for some ways his work is still relevant.)



# 1. Shakespeare's Themes

A lot of Shakespeare's plays deal with really big, universal themes. Things like life, love, death and betrayal. He might write about them in slightly funny language and in the context of an England that existed 400 years ago, but they're topics that we can still relate to today.

One of the best-known speeches in the world begins 'To be or not to be.' It sees a young man struggle with questions of death and the afterlife in the face of crippling grief. You can set the monologue in any context, at any time and in any place; the emotion and rawness of the words will still resonate deeply with the audience. Similarly, Romeo and Juliet's professions of love are amongst the most beautiful in the English canon. And their story of a forbidden relationship is one with which many modern audience members can still sympathise. The topics that Shakespeare explores in his plays, then, are things that everyone throughout history can relate to. The fact we continue to identify with situations he writes about is one of the biggest reasons we still read him so widely today

## 2. Shakespeare's Characters

The themes covered in the plays are universal, but the relatability of the characters is even more impressive. It's not difficult for modern audiences to see themselves reflected in at least one character in any given Shakespeare production, even though they were written around the turn of the 17th century. How remarkable is that!

Viola, Sebastian and Duke from *She's the Man* are all believable high schoolers in the mid-2000s, but they're actually based on characters from Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*. Creating men and women who are able to slot into modern American football teams, or wield pistols instead of swords is no mean feat, but Shakespeare achieved it over and over again. His characters are beloved, despised, laughed at and most importantly remembered for their relatability.

# 3. Shakespeare's Impact on Linguistics

For those with an interest in learning the English language more than reading its literature, Shakespeare is still important. This is because of his contributions to the development of words and phrases that are now used on a daily basis. Shakespeare played a really important part in molding the language we speak today. If you've ever said 'all of a sudden', or spoken about jealousy as 'the green-eyed monster', then you have Shakespeare to thank. He even came up with whole new words – 422 of them, in fact, including bump, lonely and upstairs. That's not to say we'd still be without words for these things if Shakespeare had never written. But the sheer number of new words and phrases he coined makes him a core figure in the development of our language.

## 4. Shakespeare's Impact on Theatre

For many modern actors, acting in the main role in a Shakespeare production is a career-defining and impressive achievement. The Globe Theatre, the Elizabethan playhouse for which he produced his plays, is still an icon of London's rich cultural history.

Watching a Shakespeare play live on stage is an experience like no other. You're sure to find productions of his plays nearby, wherever you live, but there's nothing quite like an open-air production to really capture the original magic. If you enrol in our Oxford summer course, you'll get to watch a play performed live in the ruins of the ancient Oxford Castle and Prison, or you could watch a play in the reconstruction of Shakespeare's own Globe Theatre on the Southbank.

# What Can We Learn From Studying Shakespeare?

Shakespeare's plays offer timeless insights into human nature, society, and the complexities of relationships.

Through his masterful storytelling, we learn about the enduring themes of love, power, jealousy, betrayal, and the human condition. His characters, from the tragic hero to the comic fool, provide a mirror to our own lives, teaching us about empathy, understanding different perspectives, and the consequences of our actions.

Shakespeare also enriches our understanding of language and its power, showing how words can convey deep emotions, create vivid imagery, and express complex ideas.

<http://www.oxfordscholastica.com>



# The Globe Theatre

The Globe Theatre you see today in London is the third Globe.

The first opened in 1599 and was built by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company that William Shakespeare wrote for and part-owned.

We think that the first play Shakespeare wrote for the original Globe was *Julius Caesar* in spring 1599. Later that year he also wrote *As You Like It* and made a start on *Hamlet*. Over the next fourteen years Shakespeare wrote some of his greatest plays, including *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Other playwrights wrote for the Globe during this time too, including Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton and John Fletcher.

# The Globe Theatre

In 1613, during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (co-written by Fletcher), a mis-fired prop cannon caused the thatch roof to catch fire. The entire theatre burnt down within two hours, according to eyewitness reports (miraculously, no one was killed). The company rebuilt the Globe in a year – with a tiled roof. The second Globe operated until it was closed down by parliamentary decree in 1642.

In 1609 Shakespeare's company started performing in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse as well as the Globe. It was here that Shakespeare conceived his final great plays, including *The Tempest*.

The current Globe Theatre opened in 1997, after many years of campaigning by the founder of the Shakespeare's Globe Trust, Sam Wanamaker.

<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/about-us/globe-theatre/>

# The Globe Theatre



# What is a Soliloquy?

A soliloquy is a kind of monologue in drama where the character speaks to their innermost thoughts and feelings aloud.

Unlike a monologue, which could be directed to other characters or the audience, a soliloquy is a conversation with oneself.

It's like a window into the character's soul, give the audience direct access to their private thoughts and emotions.



## It's a solo act:

Soliloquies are performed by one actor on stage. The character is often alone, or at least they believe they are, which allows them to express their feelings freely.

## It's meant for the audience:

Although the character is talking to themselves, the soliloquy is really meant for the audience. It is a way to let the audience in on the character's secrets, fears, hopes, and plans.

## It's meant for character development:

Soliloquies reveal more about the character than what's on the visible surface. They show what is going on inside the character's mind, revealing their motivations, conflicts, and personality traits.



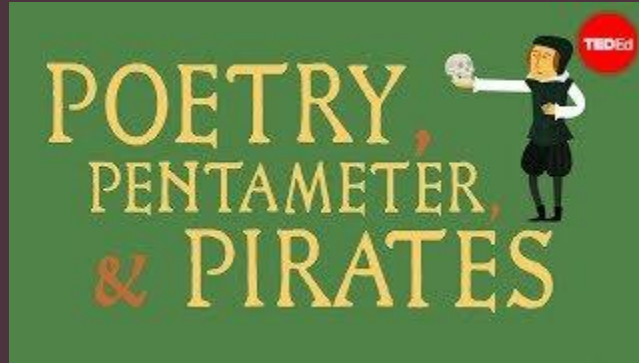
# Pre-Show Activity: Shakespearean Language

Using the PDF linked below, try to translate some of  
Shakespeare's lines into Modern English.

Once complete, reverse the task and try to write some modern  
phrases into Shakespearean Old English!

<https://schoolnova.org/classes/ay2020/advengB3/advengB3-2021-05-02-file1.pdf>

# Post-Show Activity: Iambic Pentameter



Following the instructions linked below, try out Iambic Pentameter!

[https://cdscloud.stratfordfestival.ca/uploadedFiles/Learn/Teachers/Teaching\\_Resources/Content/Iambic%20Name%20Game.pdf](https://cdscloud.stratfordfestival.ca/uploadedFiles/Learn/Teachers/Teaching_Resources/Content/Iambic%20Name%20Game.pdf)



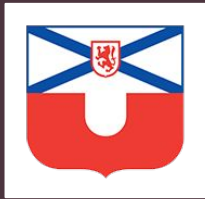
For more information on Neptune's Education Department  
go to [neptunetheatre.com/school](https://neptunetheatre.com/school)

For more information on our touring company go to  
[neptunetheatre.com/tourco](https://neptunetheatre.com/tourco)

To reach us directly with questions, concerns or ideas you  
can contact us at [tour@neptunetheatre.com](mailto:tour@neptunetheatre.com) or  
[school@neptunetheatre.com](mailto:school@neptunetheatre.com)

Follow us @neptunetheatreschool

# Thank you to our sponsors!



THROUGH THE GENEROUS DONATIONS OF  
JASON ROTH AND  
CHERYL STEADMAN ROTH

**AVIS®**

canada **life**™

