

SHAKESPEARE IN THE RUINS

SPRING 2015



ANTONY + CLEOPATRA

JUNE 4-JUNE 27 • EARLY BIRD SPECIAL! • Call 204-942-5483



Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1863-1912).
The Meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, 1884

JUNE 4-27 ANTONY & CLEOPATRA: The Challenge of Coexistence



This spring, SIR will be producing *Antony & Cleopatra* at the Trappist Monastery Provincial Heritage Park between June 4th and 27th. For the first time ever, we put out a national call for directors. We chose to hire Torontonians Sarah Kitz, whose pitch most closely touched upon all of the critical messages of the play we wanted to highlight. Set in pre-confederation Canada, Indigenous Manitobans will represent Cleopatra and her Egyptians, while European fur traders will represent Antony and the rest of the Romans. We believe the localization of the story makes it especially relevant in our community right now as it speaks to issues of colonization and its after-effects.

Recent media attention to racism in our city highlights that Winnipeg is a city standing at a crossroads, grappling with its past while looking to the future. The recent opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights has also brought human rights issues to the forefront of Winnipeg's zeitgeist. This adaptation has the potential to resonate locally, provincially and nationally and be embraced by many different people including: our loyal audience, the Winnipeg theatre community, our local Indigenous community, school groups, human rights supporters and history buffs.

SIR has also partnered with the Winnipeg Art Gallery to present a 45 minute version of *Antony & Cleopatra* at the WAG during *Olympus: The Greco-Roman Collections of Berlin* exhibit on July 8th and 9th. We are excited to take full advantage of the opportunity this partnership offers and plan to take our "stripped-down" *Antony & Cleopatra* on the road. We will give free performances of this condensed adaptation to the communities of the Forks and Central Park on July 10th and 11th. We will perform one matinee and one evening show at each location. This will be an important production. We want to share it widely.

We believe that the immutable truths of the human condition revealed through Shakespeare's writing remain relevant and transformative to a modern audience. We seek out parallels between the events of Shakespeare's plays and our current culture, consciously reflecting our modern reality through the lens of Shakespeare's work. Your support over the years has allowed us to develop our aesthetic and share our work with Winnipeg and the world. We couldn't do it without you.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We'll see you at the Ruins.

Michelle Boulet's BARD ON THE BEACH EXTRAVAGANZA



On March 31st, 2014 I boarded the Via Rail bound for Vancouver. The outside temperature was -35 with the wind chill. A good portion of the passengers had plenty to say about "Winterpeg", as many of them opted out of the short walk to the Forks during the layover, but their disparaging remarks could not dampen my ardent anticipation of the next three months.

Vancouver held the promise of balmy weather and what was sure to be a fantastic professional development experience at Bard on the Beach. My expectations were exceeded on both counts.

My participation in the Bard on the Beach Apprentice Directorship Program would see me assist Director Dean Paul Gibson on the production *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

I was not familiar with Dean Paul Gibson's work prior to working with him at Bard on the Beach but from the start of rehearsals he made my integration into the creative team seamless and was very open to utilizing my knowledge of Shakespeare verse. His enthusiastic and "attention to detail" style of directing made each and every day a delight. Serving as his "wing-lady" I was called upon to work one on one with some of the younger cast to ensure the clarity of the text was the best it could be, assist in imparting Dean's notes, and to offer up my own observations while working on all the various stages of rehearsal. My years of experience at Shakespeare in the Ruins served me well; I felt I really knew my stuff.

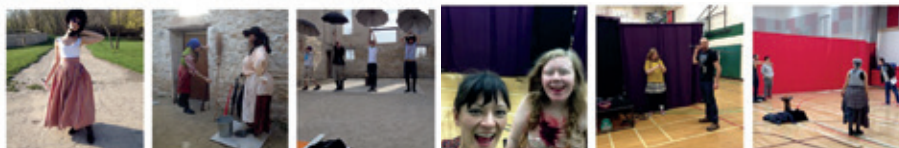
The show opened on June 21st to great response. As I ponder what I will bring away from this fantastic experience I am struck with the following observations: loyal audiences are everything and without them watching us *strut and fret our hour upon the stage* we are nothing; while Bard shows are stationary and SIR's are promenade-style (making SIR truly unique) a good story well told is everything and in that our two organizations are of one mind: and classical theatre continues to be as fresh and relevant as it ever was.

OUR BARD BRETHREN

Mike Lawrenchuk, who played Othello in Shakespeare in the Ruins' 2009 production will reprise the role for Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan running from July 8th-August 23rd, 2015.



OUTSIDE / INSIDE



Charlene Van Buekenhout

Warriors for art. This is what we affectionately dub all of our audience and all of the artists that work with us. SIR demands more from our audience and artists than most theatre companies. If you're reading this newsletter, you've been with us through storms, mosquitoes and many different parks; you understand why you're a warrior. We've asked Charlene Van Buekenhout to share her experiences of working on both our spring show and fall tour this past year. During *The Comedy of Errors*, she faced turkeys and unpredictable weather. *Stripped-Down Macbeth* found her performing for thousands of students across Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. She writes:

I recently had the extreme pleasure of performing *The Comedy of Errors* (COE) outside at the Trappist Monastery Provincial Heritage Park, and *Stripped-Down Macbeth* (SDM) in school gyms across Manitoba and Ontario, for SIR. The productions were both challenging and rewarding which is why I loved both so much!

Performing outside requires a lot of vocal power and some intense enunciating. Wind can scoop up your voice and send it in the other direction, rain is noisy, and mosquitos, well ... having a strong voice to contend with nature is key. After a month of that, I had me some pretty serious diaphragm muscles.

In addition to the action of the show and the demands of our characters, the touring show required our 5 person strong company to load in, set up, tear down, and load out the set once, twice or (though rarely) three times a day. After a month of that, I could really go to town on those pickle jars.

Giving our all in a school performance in the face of hormones and smart-phones, it can be disheartening to think no one is paying attention. But more

often the opposite is true, and the students are engaged and affected. A simple **"That was awesome"** made my day. After a month of that, I felt pretty good about my chosen profession.

Performing inside on tour and outside at the Ruins always offered opportunities for on the fly action. Some schools didn't have a gym available, and there we were, in the cafeteria, library or front office. The change of space kept us on our toes and in the moment, as it did in our final weekend of COE, when it started to pound rain. Moving under the tent was not an option as the ground was soft and muddy and dangerous for all involved. Fortunately we moved inside the St. Norbert Arts Centre, but we had never staged the show in there and so all of our blocking, entrances and exits were either hurriedly discussed beforehand, or created and dealt with on the spot, in front of the audience. The energy that show created was electric, exciting and intense. It was one of the most memorable experiences I've had, and could never have been matched inside a theatre.

NEXT QUESTION

By Lisa Nelson
and Andrew Cecon

Artistic Co-Chair Andrew Cecon asks new General Manager Lisa Nelson about Shakespeare, SIR, and how to dress for success.



Andrew: What's your favourite Shakespeare play and why?

Lisa: *Twelfth Night*. Probably because it was my first real

exposure to Shakespeare—I played Viola when I was 15 way back in high school. I fell in love with the language and the grandness of Shakespeare's characters—they live life large. I still identify with Viola all these years later. She's a strong woman who does what she needs to do to survive and get what she wants in life.

Andrew: Why did you want to be the new GM of SIR?

Lisa: I feel really passionate about what SIR does and has to offer – we are such a unique company with incredible potential. I was thrilled when I was asked to be part of SIR's Artistic Ensemble last fall, but I always knew that stage managing was a stepping stone in my career, not an end goal. When I found out that Matt was leaving us I knew the GM position with SIR was the right fit for me and I had to apply. I'm incredibly excited to be at the head of the company. I'm looking forward to settling into my new role, as well as connecting and meeting with our sponsors, donors and dedicated audience members. My door is always open and I encourage anyone to drop by or call me with questions, concerns, or suggestions to help us do what we do better!

Andrew: You have an intimate knowledge of the SIR Artistic Ensemble. You're about to be their new boss. Discuss.

Lisa: I think I have a serious advantage over a brand new GM who doesn't know the Ensemble. I already have a terrific working relationship with everyone. It's one thing I don't have

to worry about as I transition from the production staff and the Ensemble into the office. And I actually don't like the term "boss". We're a team. Each of us serves different functions of the team and we work together to strengthen and grow the company.

Andrew: How would you like to be addressed now that you're in charge?

Lisa: Ha! Please just call me Lisa.

Andrew: Matt had his office filled with Star Wars and Superhero paraphernalia. What kind of geek are you?

Lisa: I'm a fashion history geek. With a particular love for mid-century modern fashion – anything between 1945 to 1963. I've been collecting and wearing vintage clothing for over 15 years. I have a large collection of vintage and antique women's clothing dating from the 20's to the 80's—about 500 pieces. So you won't find any Star Wars paraphernalia in my office, but you might find posters of old Hollywood movie stars.

Andrew: Matt believed appropriate business attire consisted of shorts, a clean T-shirt and a pair of Vans. Do you think differently?

Lisa: Most days you'll probably find me wearing black jeans and a t-shirt, but I'll trade the Vans for black high top Chuck Taylor's. And you'll rarely find me at work without lipstick.

Andrew: Tell us about your favourite accessory.

Lisa: It's a toss-up between my iPhone and red lipstick.

Andrew: Who's your favourite Ensemble member?

Lisa: I could never pick a favourite. The honest, cheesy truth is that every single Ensemble member has a special place in my heart for different reasons.



SHAKESPEARE IN the City

We know the young people in our Shakespeare in the City program will experience trauma and loss, hurt and grief. We know they will face barriers and hardships. And yet, year after year they commit to our program and to each other. They are an unlikely troupe of Shakespearean actors, but they bring an incredible amount of courage and passion to the stage.

“When’s Shakespeare starting?” “What play are we doing?” And, “Do you have copies of the script yet?” These are not the type of questions you’d expect from your “typical North-End teenager.” These are special kids. They’re thinking about how it feels to perform on stage and they recognize the importance of ‘doing’ Shakespeare... right.

Most hold modest goals for themselves—something as simple as memorizing all their lines, but it’s not as easy as it sounds and the implications of success are extraordinary.

Through their Shakespeare in the City experience young people from low-income communities find confidence and a sense of themselves. This helps them graduate from

high schools and successfully transition into post-secondary education. Thanks to your support, SIR works with the CEDA-Pathways to Education program to provide kids with a creative outlet through acting and a deeper understanding of Shakespeare. “To be or not to be” is most certainly the question!

In 2015 the Shakespeare in the City received support from the Lount Family Foundation that helped SIR extend the program by three months. Together with your support SIR has empowered these young people to gain foundational acting skills, improve their literacy, and build self-confidence. Together we were able to identify each child’s strength and comprehension level. The 13 students in this year’s program are almost ready. They have been amazing pupils to work with and we’re confident they’ll present a dazzling *Romeo and Juliet* on May 7.

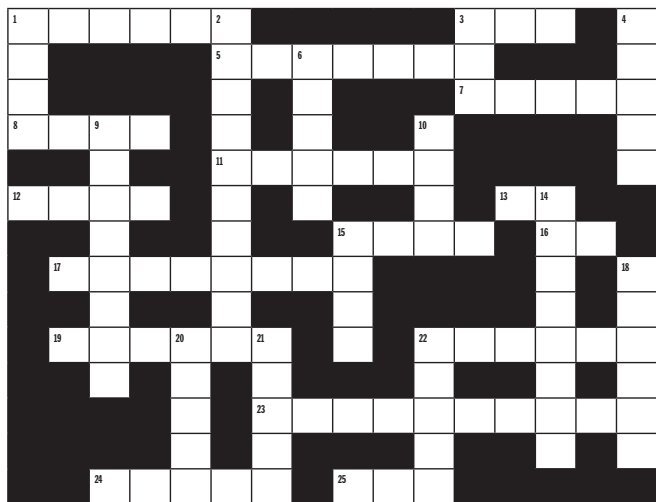
Thank you for building this program and helping these young people.

Wish them well!

“Shakespeare in the Ruins surpassed my expectations like you wouldn’t believe! The players, the scenery, the weather, all made up one amazing night.” **CINDY LEE CRAIG**

Share with us—please give us a call, drop us a line, or tweet!
www.shakespeareintheruins.com

CROSSWORD



ACROSS:

1. Antony's wife.
3. "I am fire and ____; my other elements I give to baser life."
5. The third triumvir.
7. "Get me ink and ____:
He shall have every day a
several greeting..."
8. "Purple the sails, and so
perfumed, that
The winds were love-____
with them,"
11. Cleo's man.
12. "In time we hate that which we
often ____."
13. (with 16 across) beginning of a
great speech.
15. Everyone "Had gone to ____
on Cleopatra"
16. see 13 across
17. What kind of longings
Cleopatra had.
19. Octavius
22. Quizzically, Richard III wanted
to know if this was easier than
it was. (V,iii)
23. Cleopatra's sleeping tonic.
24. A dish for the gods.
25. What can't wither Cleopatra?

DOWN:

1. 9 down loves long life better
than this.
2. Where Cleopatra lives.
3. The worm.
4. Antony's is happy to bear
his weight.
6. One man in his time
plays many.
9. Cleopatra's bestie
10. Gene, our Mercutio, Bottom,
Macbeth, Macheath, Orsino....
14. "O, my _____ is a
very Antony,
And I am all forgotten."
15. Mr. Thompson, our Bottom,
Nym, Master Ford and
Father Capulet.
18. Matt, our Romeo, Demetrius,
Malcolm, Dogberry and
General Manager.
20. What the mosquitos do.
21. The empire.
22. Cleopatra's watercraft.

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 us know why you'd be a great asset to SIR.

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DID YOU KNOW

Cleopatra was actually Cleopatra VII. There were six other Cleopatras before her, not including the original Cleopatra-Alexander the Great's sister.

Cleopatra was a writer. She wrote a medical treatise called, *Cosmetics*. It was a medical and pharmacological work including several remedies for hair loss and dandruff.

Cleopatra murdered two of her siblings. Cleopatra had Marcus Antonius kill her younger sister, Arsinoë IV and Cleopatra allegedly poisoned Ptolemy XIV after the birth of her son, Caesar.

Cleopatra had four children-only one survived to adulthood. Cleopatra's first child was a son by Caesar. She also had twins, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, as well as another son, Ptolemy Philadelphos, all by Marcus Antonius. Cleopatra Selene eventually became the Queen of Mauretania.


Cleopatra was not Egyptian. Cleopatra was a member of the Ptolemaic dynasty, a family of Macedonian Greek origin that ruled Egypt after Alexander the Great's death during the Hellenistic period. Cleopatra represented herself as the reincarnation of an Egyptian goddess, Isis.



SHAKESPEARE
IN THE RUINS

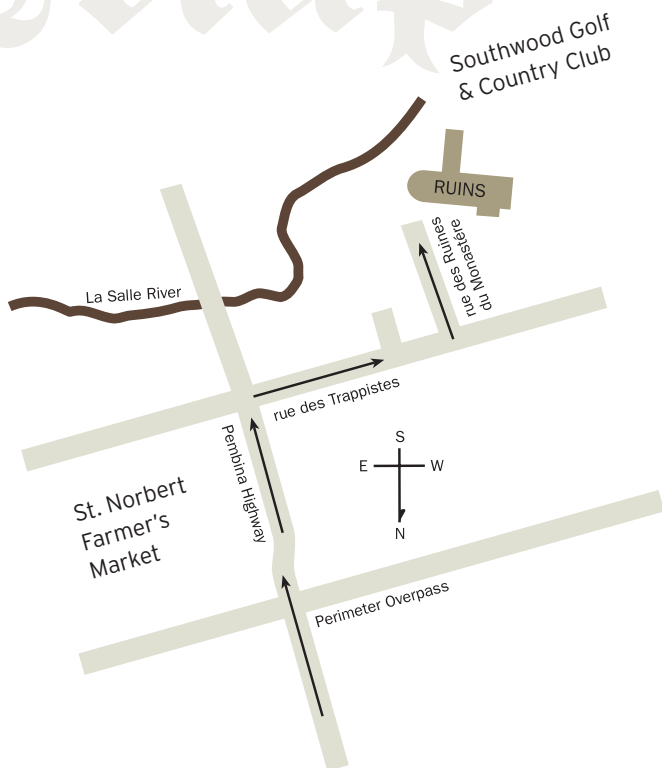
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