

Chase Park Theater

presents

King Lear



Lear mourns the hanged Cordelia, in Chase Park Theater's production. Photo by Jon Sevigny.

by William Shakespeare

Directed & Edited by Karen Fort

November 11 to December 10, 2005

Celebrating over thirty years of Chase Park Theater!
4701 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago

King Lear

by William Shakespeare

400th Anniversary edition (written in 1605)

Directed & edited: Karen Fort

Scenic design: Jeff Bauer Stage Manager: Kate Harrington
Lighting design : Jesse Klug Sound design: Keith Fort
Assistant director: Duane Davy Fight director: Dave Skvarla
Costume team: Skyler Shrempp (lead), Ameika Johnson, Lauren Petty, Doneisha Fulton, Christine Jones, Kathleen Cowell. Set Carpenters: Mike Grossman, Joel Gross. Scenic painting: Gershon Addo. Assistant Stage Manager: Joanne Worthy. Publicity: Judy Molloy, Cyndi Rhoads. Musicians: Nick "the Stick" Maronek, drums; Elise Newman, harp. Photography: Jon Sevigny

THE PLAYERS

LEAR, King of Britain.....Fred Wellisch
GONERIL, his eldest daughter.....LJ Hischier
REGAN, his second daughter.....Cyndi Rhoads
CORDELIA, his youngest daughter.....Tiffany Bedwell
DUKE OF ALBANY.....Rory Jobst
DUKE OF CORNWALL.....John Hornik
KING OF FRANCE, suitor to Cordelia / ENSEMBLE.....Charles Mueller
DUKE OF BURGUNDY, suitor to Cordelia.....Michael Zubb
EARL OF GLOUCESTER.....John Zimmerman
EDGAR, Gloucester's eldest son (Mad Tom).....David Sellers
EDMUND, Gloucester's younger bastard son.....Joshua Murphy
EARL OF KENT.....Peter Esposito
FOOL / SOLDIER.....Timothy Tsurutani
OSWALD, Steward to Goneril & Albany.....Michael Zubb
ENSEMBLE / PEASANT, of Gloucester / HEALER.....Sylvia Schluter
ENSEMBLE / CURAN, Servant to Goneril and Albany.....Michael Jones
ENSEMBLE./ Cordelia understudy / harpist.....Elise Newman
ENSEMBLE.....Dushanti Hassell
ENSEMBLE.....Julia Canter Wellish
ENSEMBLE.....Steven Simms
ENSEMBLE.....Joanne Worthy

Ensemble cast members each play many roles.

This performance will have one ten-minute intermission.

Director's Notes

Shakespeare's King Lear was adapted from a much older story-poem – the historic Lear lived about 800 BC. There was also a folk ballad, sung by the common folk long before Shakespeare wrote his masterpiece.

This sad, brave tale has remained popular because it touches ordinary people's feelings. Each of our fathers becomes an old patriarch, often blind to his own flaws of character, often wielding great if not absolute authority. Or perhaps it is our beloved yet imperfect mother who reigns as matriarch, showing favoritism to one sibling, and bestowing uneven gifts that fuel resentment. Families are aware that the will can be re-written, so when there arises – in us, or our parents, or old and powerful grandparents – a pressure from the elders for demonstrations of love, the younger siblings often feel conflicted. We are both tempted to flatter, and urged by our integrity to resist.

As our grandparents and parents age, and as we age, our families face whether or not we, alone or as siblings in turn, are strong enough to provide care, or take our parents into our home and negotiate a new equilibrium, or even make enough time to spend in their company. Sometimes the elders are fiercely independent curmudgeons who conceal their loss of ability. Bitter quarrels sometimes erupt within families, grudges are held, contact is broken off, and there seems no way to reconcile. Revenge may be sought.

Lear's intense and sometimes irrational feelings bind him helplessly to living fully and to suffering fully. We can feel empathy for him, even when he makes mistakes and hurts others, as his critical and wise Fool lets Lear know. Lear loses his absolute patriarchal authority and forges a new, honest but ugly relationship with his daughters Goneril and Regan. He loses, unimaginably, his kingdom, power, wealth, status and sanity. He wanders among the wretched homeless, the madmen, the underclass. He learns how it feels to be cold, wet, hungry, tired, frightened, driven away as an outsider, ostracized and his point of view becomes anti-authority. He peels back layers of roles, and finds himself comforting his old blind friend, kneeling and begging forgiveness of his one loyal daughter, sadder but wiser.

Lear becomes compassionate and better understands true social justice, as many of us are trying to do. In the face of nihilism and despair, Cordelia, Kent and Edgar engage in acts of compassion and struggle for justice. There is no guarantee that our own acts of compassion and struggles for justice will win humanity a happy ending for our world. But each of us has the free will to choose to give our lives meaning and purpose. Our sacrifices and losses are still connected to a hopeful tomorrow. The future young King Edgar (sometimes Mad Tom) has known what it is to be poor, homeless and naked to the wrath of the elements, and he tells us, "speak what we feel, not what we ought to say". The historic Edgar rid the land of wolf packs.

The disparity of wealth in our city could end like a worn-out plague if we all choose social justice.

-- Karen Fort, director

The Players and Staff

Gershon Addo (scenic painter): was born in Patterson NJ. I traveled to my parents' homeland of Ghana in 7th grade, and received my high school diploma from the Accra High School. Gershon is joining the US Marine Corps, and begins his service on Oct 24. I would like to thank my parents and siblings for all their love and support. My final thanks goes to the almighty God for sparing my life 'til this day.

Jeff Bauer (scenic design): has designed for most of Chicago's professional theatre, opera and dance companies including: Court Theatre, Wisdom Bridge, Northlight, The Remains, Chicago Opera Theatre, The Lyric Opera Center, Hubbard Street Dance Theatre, Ballet Chicago, and over 30 shows at Victory Gardens. Mr. Bauer received the Joseph Jefferson Award for best scenery (*Pygmalion* - Court Theatre), as well as four nominations, and has created the designs for many world premiere operas, ballets and plays. Regionally, his designs have seen the stage from Anchorage to NYC. His television portfolio includes Gesualdo (PBS - Emmy Nomination). Recent projects include *Trying* at Victory Gardens & Promenade Theatre NYC, *Can Can* - Grand Rapids Ballet. Currently, his design projects include: *Trying* - Ford's Theatre (DC) and *Peter Pan* - Grand Rapids Ballet. Mr. Bauer received his BFA in Theatre and Music from Jacksonville University and an MFA in design from Northwestern University. He is co-founder and an Artistic Associate of RPM Productions and is on the design faculty at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Tiffany Bedwell (Cordelia): born and raised in Michigan, Tiffany holds a BFA in Theater from Wayne State University (Detroit). She also studied at The Moscow Art Theater School (Moscow) and toured *Trojan Women* (Cassandra) with The Athens Centre (Athens). Out-of-state credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), *The Wizard of Oz* (Glinda), and *Equus* (Jill) in Detroit, and a nine-month, three-show tour with the Repertory Theater of America (Baltimore). Her Chicago credits include Eclipse Theatre Company's *The Rimers of Eldritch*, Citadel Theatre Company's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, A Red Orchid Theatre's *Fastest Clock in the Universe*, The Boxer Rebellion's *New Works Festival*, and New Branch Theatre Company's *Overtones*. Tiffany just earned her diploma in Clinical Massage Therapy from The Soma Institute.



Duane Davy (asst director): After short career as a student (business, architecture and urban design) and as a pilot in the Air Force, Duane retired from his position as cartographer for the City of Chicago in April 2004. Thanks, Karen, for a start in yet another career.

Peter Esposito (Kent): Peter Esposito is delighted and honored to be performing Shakespeare for Chase Park Theatre. Recent credits include Circle Theatre's Jeff Recommended production of *Design for Living* (Ernest); Steep Theatre's excellent staging of *A Book of Days* (Walt); and Polarity Theatre Ensemble's *Macbeth* (Duncan). Thanks to all who have guided me along this ever-evolving journey.



Karen Fort (director, editor, producer): Karen Fort's directing credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Life Is A Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Summer Brave*, *The Tempest*, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Oddkins*, *Sally and Marsha*, *Pastorale*, *Castanets*, and *Motherlove*. She has acted for Victory Gardens, Organic, Pheasant Run, St. Nicholas and Open Eye, and has taught at The Actor's Center, founded the Young Actor's Program of the Organic, and has been published in *The Reader*, textbooks, and poetry compilations. Special thanks to Sandy Shinner, Robert Scogin, Henry Godinez and Barbara Gaines.

Keith Fort (sound design, roustabout): Keith Fort is confused: he thought this was the train to Neverland, instead I'm on the bus to Shangri-La. He's been doing theatre sound since about 1970. He's a live event producer and production manager by trade, and travels widely on assignment. Recent accession to empty-nester has left him a little disoriented.

Doneisha Fulton (costume design): attends Prosser High School and worked last summer for Chase Park Theater through the Gallery 37 artist apprentice program. She played Glinda and the Scarecrow in "*The Wizard of Oz*". Doneisha helped to design costumes for *King Lear*, selecting material and patterns. She is learning HVAC skills and is a junior. Thanks to her son, Rawshaud, her parents, grandma and sister for all your love and support.

Joel Gross (carpentry): just arrived from Austin, TX and studies acting at the Act One Conservatory. Big thanks to Karen for having faith in his handiwork and for her surplus of sandwiches.

Mike Grossman (carpentry): helped to build the set for *King Lear*. He's a scenic carpenter and works in a number of theatres around the Chicago off-Loop scene.

Kate Harrington (stage manager): Kate is a recent transplant from Des Moines, Iowa, where she spent many active years in the theater community. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Theater Arts from The University of Iowa, and has put it to good use. This is her 3rd Chicago production as Stage Manager, with a list of many more to come....(hopefully). She would like to thank Karen for including her in this production. Thanks also to Loving Andy, without whom she would probably go mad.

Dushanti Hassell (Ensemble / Soldier): is twelve years old, and attends Walt Disney Magnet School. He played one of Oberon's henchmen in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chase Park Theater, and the Lion in *The Wizard of Oz* at Gill Park. He wants to be a rapper when he grows up, because he already knows how to freestyle. He can only stay in this play if he keeps up his homework and gets good grades. "I always had this dream of playing the part of Othello."



LJ Hischier (Goneril): LJ Hischier is an artist and actress hailing from the city of energy, Batavia, IL. Her family of scientists has long considered her a good subject for study and these days many directors and producers are feeling the same way. Encouraged by recent casting in the feature length film *Reversal*, as well as by numerous starring roles in short films such as the silent green-screen comedy *The Silver Heart*,



the action shooter *Deep Six*, and the touching *Eyes of an Artist* (where she plays a blind photographer who won't quit), LJ returned to theater this summer in *Late Flowering* at the Stage Center Theatre. She has adored Shakespeare since she was a little girl, and she feels that the chance to play one of Lear's lovely daughters is a personal honor.

John Hornik (Cornwall): John Hornik fell off the turnip truck yesterday. But no harm was done. Aside from a newly-formed aversion to turnips. To go along with his existing dislike for beets. And yams. Tubers in general really.



Rory Jobst (Albany): Rory is fabulously elated to return to Chase Park, having recently played the Wall in CP's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Some recent credits include Baden in Theater-Hikes' *Toad of Toadhall* and Master Ford in *Merry Wives of Windsor* at Saint Sebastian Players. He recently finished a pilot called *DVD Geeks* and reviews movies for *Bulldog's Rude Awakening Show* out of Ocean City MD. Rory Holds a BA in theater arts from Marymount Manhattan College. He was in New York for 4 years and has never been to Albany.



Ameika Johnson (costume design team): is eighteen years old, a graduate of Foreman High School. She is now a college freshman in Rockford. She worked for the last two summers for Karen Fort at Chase Park through the Gallery 37 apprentice artist program, serving as a group counselor for the kids, a production assistant, and an actor in a touring performance of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Christine Jones (costume design): has provided costumes for Second City. She owns *A Stitch in Time*, and is a professional seamstress.

Michael Jones (Ensemble): wanted to be an actor since before he was born. He was raised in Coal Valley, IL and is a June 1997 graduate of Moline High School and is proud to be an alumni of the "greatest school of all time" Western Illinois University. He graduated W.I. U. in 2001 with a BA in Theater and a minor in broadcasting. After graduating Michael worked two full time jobs for a year and moved to Oak Park to pursue a professional acting career. Since moving to Oak Park Michael has been in *Flowers for Algernon* at Village of Oak Park Players and *Merry Wives of Windsor* at St Sebastian Players. Michael can be seen working at the Melrose Park Menards while he pursues his dream in acting and everything else that is attached to it.



Jesse Klug (lighting design): is delighted to be joining the *King Lear* team, his second Chase Park Theater project, where he also contributed his design skills to *Twelfth Night*. His work has been seen at Theatres and with Theatre companies such as Marriott Lincolnshire, Lookingglass, Chicago Center for the Performing Arts, Strawdog, Respect Productions, Storefront Theatre, The Dunes Theatre, Bob Cuillo Center for the Arts, Breadline, Journeymen Theatre, Harris Theatre, Theatre Building Field House Lab, Stage Left, The Atheneum, The Vittum, Harold Washington, and many more. Jesse received his BFA from Columbia College Chicago. He would like to thank Sara for her love and support.

Charles Mueller (France, Ensemble): was born in Mishawaka, Indiana. He trained in acting and English literature at Indiana University, at Actor's Center (with Kyle Donnelly and Karen Fort), and at Second City (with Martin DeMaat, Sheldon Patinkin, Del Close, and Don De Pollo). His acting work includes appearances in the film *The Package*, the television series *Crime Story* and *Jack & Mike*, and he's been an Assistant Director (DGA) for TV and the movies. As a newswriter, he's worked with UPI, associate editor for *down beat* magazine, written for the Chicago Reader. He has written for off-Loop theater, documentary narrations for children's film, direct-response TV commercials and infomercials, and most recently wrote and directed "*Stalingrad*," a rock-historical, travelogue, video documentary. Charles is presently an asset and liability analyst, who moons away his days thinking about Lear, France, and why David Lean could afford to wait for the light. He is is posthumously fond of Dickens, Gram Parsons, and E. B. White, this June graduated from DePaul University with a liberal arts BA, and in September of 2005 married the former Lisa Coleman.



Joshua Murphy (Edmund, the bastard): is an eclectic fellow. He can often be found sculpting ice or pedaling bicycles up severe inclines with unflossing speed. He can hurl tennis rackets at a small moving object with deadly accuracy. He is a veteran in love, an expert in stucco, and an outlaw in Peru. He has cliff-dived in Sri Lanka, danced a jig in the Kremlin and can now say delightfully that he has performed Shakespeare at the Chase Park Theater.



Elise Newman (Ensemble, harpist): played Cobweb in Chase Park Theater's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She is an eleven year old and began her acting career in 2004. Elise goes to LaSalle Language Academy where she concentrates in Spanish. She has acted in excerpts of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*, and she has played the roles of Titania, Viola, Maria, and Fabian. Elise hopes to be in many other plays in the future. She has played the harp for about a year. She loves music and travel.



Lauren Petty (costume design): is fifteen years old, and came to Chase Park Theater through the Gallery 37 artist apprentice program last summer. She is a student at Sullivan High School, and helped select fabrics, patterns, and garments for the King Lear cast. She sings in her church choir and plans to attend UIC.

Cyndi Rhoads (Regan): Cyndi Rhoads is very happy to return to the Chase Park stage, last seen here in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The past year's credits include this spring's acclaimed *Kentucky Cycle* with Infamous Commonwealth, Collage Productions' *Man Who Came to Dinner*, North Lakeside Players' *Ancestral Voices*, and Organic Theater's *Member of the Wedding*. Other stage credits include: *Season's Greetings and the Santaland Diaries*, (Roadworks), *The State of Mississippi and the Face of Emmett Till* (Pegasus Players), *Einstein's Dreams* (National Pastime), *Crimes of the Heart* (Thirsty Theater), *Billy* (Chicago Theatre Company) and *Without Subtitles* (Playwrights' Center). Independent film credits include *Sylvia's Baklava*, *Sunset Town*, *Flat Iron Blues*, *The Family Tie*, and *The Devolution of Ethan Chadwick*.



Sylvia Schluter (Healer, Ensemble): is happy returning to the challenge presented to explore Shakespeare. She played Quince in Chase Park Theater's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has also appeared in: *A Raisin In the Sun*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Sorry*, *Wrong Number*, *Gifts of the Season* and *Hud* at Scriptworks. As an active senior citizen, she plans to grow from here.



Skyler Schremp (costume design lead): Skyler Schremp was born and raised in the city of Chicago. She attended Hampshire College where she studied performance, design and Victorian children. She loves designing and acting, and in a perfect world would do both at the same time. Favorite shows she's designed include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Two to Tango* (film) and *What Happened in Between*. Thanks to Kiki Smith for being a wonderful teacher and to Karen for this opportunity.

David Sellers (Edgar): David is pleased to be working Shakespeare again with Karen. Their first show together, he played Claudius in her *Hamlet*. Since then, he's been seen at Victory Garden's in Fat Kid Productions' *The White House Murder Case*, the role of Boaz in Lifeline's *The Sirens of Titan* and various Shakespearean roles for the wonderful company A Crew Of Patches. Most recently he's understudied for Court Theatre's production of *Endgame*. David holds an MFA from Louisiana State University. Geaux Tigers! He wishes much love to his wife and to the City of New Orleans.



Jon Sevigny (publicity photography): Jon was extremely pleased to do the photography for this production of King Lear. Jon was a founding member of Open Eye Productions and has done photo shoots many times for them over the past ten years. He continues to work with them and hopefully many other artists and art groups. He thanks Karen & Kate for the wonderful opportunity.

Steven Simms (Ensemble / Second Servant): played an Elf Henchman in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* here last spring, and painted the set for *Twelfth Night* here last fall. Steven is seventeen years old, attends Sullivan High School, was nominated for Junior Citizen by the Chase Park Staff, and was employed as a Recreational Leader during Summer Camp. His interest in theater took him by surprise, as he was repeatedly invited to join in the projects unfolding on the second floor. "So you guys basically devote your lives to this stuff. That's kind of amazing!"

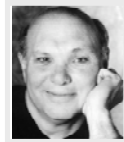


Dave Skvarla (Fight Director/SFX): Dave studied theater at Columbia College Chicago and stage combat there with David Wooley, a Maestro of the Society of American Fight Directors. He has directed violence for Open Eye Productions, Mary Arrchie, Defiant, The Hypocrites, Trap Door, Red Orchid, Big Game, and Careening Theatre, and has also performed with most of the above as well as Lifeline, Shaw Chicago, Rising Moon, Open Cage Ensemble, Shakespeare's Motley Crew, Shakespeare Machine, Theatre O, Hope and Non-Things and Theatre Hikes. Dave can be seen this October and November as Bill Walker in Shaw Chicago's *Major Barbara* at the Cultural Center, and in Chicago Festival Theatre's production of *Nathan the Wise* at the Theatre Building in November and December.

Timothy Tsurutani (Fool): Timothy Tsurutani is a guinea and rabbit enthusiast. He's a graduate of Northside College Prep High School. He's been accepted into Emerson College.



Fred Wellisch (King Lear): Fred Wellisch appeared most recently as Skelly Mannor in Eclipse Theatre's Jeff-recommended production of *The Rimers of Eldritch*. He has performed at Steppenwolf (*Winesburg, Ohio* and *Uncle Vanya*); Apple Tree (*Nine Armenians*); Live Bait (*Nelson and Simone*); Shakespeare on the Green (*Measure for Measure*); Profiles (*True West, Glengarry Glen Ross*, and *Popcorn*); Teatro Vista (*Santos and Santos*); Red Orchid (*Born Guilty*); Porchlight (*Amadeus*); and Strawdog (*Detective Story*). He has also performed at the Chicago Historical Society, where he played Stephen Douglas in *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*. His directing credits include *The Laramie Project* at the Lincoln Square Theater Company and *The Open Meeting, Stop Kiss* and *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, all at Act One Studios. He will be directing *The Zoo Story* for Lincoln Square in January. He is thrilled and delighted to be sharing the stage with his daughter Julia.



Julia Canter Wellisch (Ensemble): Julia Canter Wellisch is a third-grader at Rogers Park Montessori School. She has lots of good friends and likes to make them laugh. She loves playing violin and having piano lessons with her dad. At school, her favorite activity is drama. She also enjoys making up songs. She has been in the following plays: *The Magic Hurricane, The Cannibal Monster, The Strongest One, Anansi the Spider* and *The Three Little Pigs*. She thanks Karen Fort for the chance to be in her first Shakespeare play.



Joanne Worthy (assistant stage manager): is returning for her second production at Chase Park Theater. She's interested in cooking, reading, and learning more about Shakespeare. She still plans to head to Florida: hurricanes, watch out!

John Zimmerman (Gloucester): John has appeared in numerous plays throughout the west and Northwest suburbs, including *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, On Golden Pond, Same Time Next Year, Arsenic and Old Lace, Ten Little Indians, Lovers and Other Strangers* and *A Christmas Carol*. He last played the role of Felix Ungar in *The Odd Couple* at the Five Star Performing Arts theater in Roselle, in the fall of 2004. John is an editorial writer, columnist and an assistant editor at the Daily Herald newspaper. He lives in Carol Stream.



Michael Zubb (Burgundy, Oswald): Michael recently completed a successful run as Tranio in Elk Grove Center for the Performing Arts' summer production of another work by the same playwright that you're seeing today. He has acted on stages as distant as Palatine and Riverwoods, and as close as Saint Sebastian Players and UIC. Favorite roles include Peachy in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Michael in *Alone Together*, and the psychotic artist guy in Darknight Theatrical Production's 24-hour one-act festival. When not at the theater, Michael can be found buried in policy files at the insurance company where he works.



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- The Chicago Park District's **Chase Park, Gill Park** and **North Region** management & staff for all their teamwork.
- All of the previous Chase Park Theatre professional designers (especially **Simon Lashford, Matt Bourque, Sara Tauer, and Richie Norwood**), some of whose design effort is represented onstage here tonight. We use repertory design elements and what you see tonight is the accumulated efforts of many designers who have contributed to our productions in the past.
- **Fort Production Management, Inc.** for pro bono technical services and equipment funding. Special thanks to FPM's clients for making these contributions possible.
- **Bob Scogin** (Artistic Director, Shaw Chicago) for cast training in the First Folio text analysis technique.
- **Gallery 37** for bringing us Ameika Johnson, Lauren Petty and Doneisha Fulton, who have contributed to our costume design.
- **Barbara Gaines** (Artistic Director) and **Deb Acker** (Production Stage Manager) from Chicago Shakespeare Theatre for their continuing insight, inspiration, and invaluable contributions (including the crowns that you see tonight).
- **Henry Godinez** (Artistic Collective, Goodman Theatre) for artistic insight.
- **Sandy Shinner** (Associate Artistic Director, Victory Gardens Theater) for her special guidance of our troupe at Chase Park Theater.
- **Jon Sevigny** for publicity photography. Jon is available for press photos for arts groups, and can be reached at: jon@jonsevigny.ws
- **Friends of Chase Park Theater** for our new website, www.chaseparktheater.org. For information about volunteering with our Friends, call Karen Fort at 312-742-4701.