

# **Scenery:** **A Staged Reading of Scenes by William Shakespeare**

## **Cast & Crew Bios**

### **Chris Bartol** (Duke of York, *Richard II*)

Chris is honored to be on the stage with so many talented actors. He has been in as many as 18 TLT productions since returning to Tryon in '85 after a 35 year absence (Having been raised in Tryon before heading off to school and a career in commercial photography). His favorite role was Booley in "Driving Miss Daisy" and his last show was "Tuna Texas" with 2 actors playing 20 parts.....7 men, 2 women and a dog! Talk about fast costume changes. Chris lives close by with his beautiful and talented wife and spoiled cat Leo.

### **Marty Bernstein** (Bagot, *Richard II*)

Marty is happy to be making his second appearance with Shakespeare & Friends in Rogers Park. Thanks to Andy, Michelle and Catherine for their hard work in making this an enjoyable experience for all.

### **Andy Booth** (Ursula, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Citizen, *Julius Caesar*. Bishop of Carlisle, *Richard II*)

Having, last year, sworn off further thespian pursuits because they taxed his meager store of still-active brain cells far too much, Andy has—unfortunately for you—reneged on that resolution since they told him he could carry around a few sheets of paper to prompt his memory. So be warned, gentle theater goer: He's back! And better than ever! He is ecstatic to have the opportunity to participate in this summer's Shakespeare and Friends' production and feels that his portrayals of a cross-dressing party animal, an irate and rather rabble-raising Roman resident, and an incensed, overly dramatic cleric may even surpass his tour-de-force presentation as a drunken butler from last summer, though it could never match his interpretation of a wall in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (You had to be there. IYKYK.) That being said, I truly want to thank all my directors, fellow actors, the members of the Academy, and...oh, never mind. I also truly hope that you who have come to join us have a most pleasant and enthralling evening as we fling you through drama, comedy, tragedy, farce, and who knows what else.

**Ellie Booth** (Don John & Director, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Citizen, *Julius Caesar*. Witch, *Macbeth*. Horatio, *Hamlet*)

I'm an actor! I'm a director! I'm confused? In May, I made my journey back home from the University of Alabama, where I am a rising senior, with much trial and tribulation and.... Ahh, but that's another story; this is all about me and my getting to once again participate in a production with the wonderful crowd of Shakespeare and Friends, who have been my friends, mentors, and so much more. I have really enjoyed getting to continue my arc in drama from actor to producer/choreographer and now director, and I truly appreciate this chance to expand my repertoire while still having the opportunity to get in a little acting. I have especially relished the occasion to direct both my parents, even though they have (only a few times) been just a wee bit on the difficult side (really, I mean it, only a few times). (Parents these days!) Be that as it may, I know you will enjoy our truly resplendent array of Scenery from the Bard and am so, so happy to be a part of it all. Thank you for joining us. (No, really, I mean that with all sincerity!)

**Rita Booth** (Claudio, *Much Ado About Nothing*)

A mother should never have to see tears of worry and stress in her daughter's eyes. But especially not when their sole purpose is to blackmail her mom. But that's why I'm here doing my first Shakespeare and Friends production—because my daughter, the director, begged me not only to take a part in her production but to also play a male role to boot. Oh, the irony of it all, that I, a shy, retiring school teacher, should be out here making her debut under duress! It is just so stressful! My only comfort is that my husband has to dress up in that pink, flower-laden mask to pretend he's a woman. I hope that you, the audience, truly appreciate the pain here. I also hope that you will take a modicum of pleasure from all our Shakespearean scenes and laugh when we're funny, be moved by our drama, and cry with our tragedy. (And it's appears that I really, really shouldn't have let my husband help write my bio!)

**Darlene Cah** (Antonio, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Citizen, *Julius Caesar*. Grave Digger, *Hamlet*)

Native New Yorker Darlene Cah is a writer and improv actor. She performed longform and musical improv regularly at NYC's Gotham City Improv, wrote and performed sketch comedy, and appeared in NY Revels shows at Symphony Space. In Tryon, she's had roles in Solstice Theatre's "A Mad, Mad Madrigal," and in the Shakespeare & Friends productions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Light

in the Piazza,” “The Tempest,” and most recently, she conjured up her wooden spoon-wielding grandmother to play the part of Costanza in “Enchanted April.” She’s excited to be part of the innovative staged reading, Scenery, to work with, and learn from, so many talented directors and actors.

**Marianne Carruth** (*Gravedigger, Hamlet*)

Marianne grew up in Tryon, graduated from Spartanburg Day School, and attended Trinity University in San Antonio, TX, with a BA in Speech and Drama. After spending studying and performing in London, NYC & San Antonio, Marianne returned to Tryon where she has spent the last few decades raising a family with her husband Mike, teaching theater, and directing children’s theater throughout the area. She chaired Children’s Theater Festival (Super Saturday) for many wonderful years and was on the Board at TLT. As an actor with TLT she played Nurse Ratched in “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” Grace in “Grace & Glory.” With Shakespeare and Friends, she enjoyed playing Antonia in “The Tempest,” Signora Nacarelli in “Light in the Piazza” and performed with the Ensemble in “A Christmas Carol.” She has played multiple Arts Admin and Directing roles with Tryon Fine Arts Center since 2008 and has served as Executive Director of the organization since 2014.

**Lori Corda** (*Witch, Macbeth. Leonato, Much Ado About Nothing. Lady Anne, Richard III*)

Lori had sworn off Shakespeare after her short introduction in high school, "What are they talking about?" Thankfully, Michelle Newman saw a strong, Queen of the Fairies in her while singing with the band, Zendetta and cast her as Titania/Hippolyta in “A Midsummer Night's Dream.” Since then, she has worked with Shakespeare and Friends in “A Christmas Carol,” “A Light in the Piazza” as Margaret Johnson and most recently, Lady Caroline Bramble in “Enchanted April.”

**Sofia Corda** (*Director, Macbeth*)

Sofia is a 6th grader at Polk County Middle School. She enjoys baking, playing the trumpet and is very involved in her Girl Scout troop. Sofia has had the opportunity to work with Shakespeare and Friends in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” as Mustard Seed and in “A Christmas Carol” as Tiny Tim. Many thanks and gratitude to Catherine, Michelle and Andy for giving her the opportunity to direct her very first play.

**Tim Daniels** (Mark Antony, *Julius Caesar*)

Fresh off of playing Bobby Dwayne in TLT's Halleluiah Girls, Tim is giving drama a shot. You may also have seen him previously alongside his (super-talented) son, Liam, years ago in A Christmas Story and Peter and the Starcatcher. When he isn't issuing zoning permits for the Town of Tryon or hosting trivia Thursday nights at Iron Key Brewing, he's usually drawing, watching good and bad movies, or wrangling some corgis.

**Strat Douglas** (Northumberland, *Richard II*)

Strat began his acting career in the role of Great Big Billy Goat Gruff in Mrs. Cobb's first grade class play at Tryon Elementary School. He had several leading roles in high school plays, and he enjoyed a two-year career as announcer at WTYN radio. Since high school he has participated in theater only as a member of the audience, though his acting experience came in handy during his careers as whitewater raft guide and university professor. He and his wife Jodie moved back to Tryon in 2020, where they appreciate the opportunity to participate in Tryon's friendly, active, and very talented theater community.

**Hillary Fleming** (Hamlet, *Hamlet*)

Hillary graduated from Converse College with a BA in theatre in 2015. As punishment, she has spent a majority of the last ten years working in the service industry. Recently, her life has started to make a turn around for the better and you can catch her in season one of Tom Swift, a new TV show for the CW. Hillary has also done a couple of productions with Shakespeare and Friends, including a portrayal of Ariel in last year's The Tempest. Hamlet is one of Hillary's dream roles and has been such an honor to touch upon.

**Remy Fifield** (Benedick, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Witch, *Macbeth*. Citizen, *Julius Caesar*)

Remy is a junior at UNC Asheville and majors in Music Technology. Remy has performed at Blue Ridge Community College, Tryon Little Theatre, Tryon Summer Youth Theatre, and Spartanburg Youth Theatre.

**Cathy Fischer** (Don Pedro, *Much Ado About Nothing*)

Cathy is excited to be performing in her first production with Shakespeare and Friends. She began her acting career in Rome, Italy, performing with two English-speaking theaters, and continued back in NY with Off and Off-Off-Broadway

productions as well as performances of musicals and straight plays with community theatre productions throughout Westchester County. Her favorite roles include Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* and Emma in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Locally, she has performed in two productions with the Tryon Little Theater: *Calendar Girls* and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, and with the Hendersonville Theatre in *The Gin Game*. Cathy is also active in the local music and arts community. She sings with Asheville Symphony Chorus and the Carolina Community Chorus, is a member of the TLT and Tryon Concert Association Boards, and is the former Executive Director of Tryon Arts & Crafts.

**Iain Fitch** (*Richard II, Richard II*)

Iain is British born and emigrated to the US 1978. He enjoys nature and plays the Native American flute. Iain currently enjoys living in Tryon and being part of Bonnie Brae veterinary hospital. His wife Theresa and he attend St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. He has 2 grown children and a recent granddaughter. He would like to thank all involved in the play for their patient encouragement.

**Catherine Gillet** (*Director, Hamlet*)

Catherine is also a playwright, whose published and award winning plays have been produced in numerous venues Off Broadway and around the country. While a member of the Playwrights Project at Circle Repertory Company she studied with Craig Lucas, Paula Vogel, and Lanford Wilson. Happily re-located from NY to Tryon, she is a co-founder of Shakespeare & Friends (*Our Town, The Light in the Piazza*) and has directed plays at TLT (*Outside Mullingar, Dancing at Lughnasa, The Climate Change Plays*) and most recently, *Enchanted April*, presented at TFAC, where she has directed staged readings and multi-media performances. She would like to thank all of the fearless creative teams involved in "Scenery" and her co-conspirators in the park, Michelle and Andy.

**Brian Holcomb** (*Director, Richard III*)

Brian is an Assistant Professor of English at Limestone University, specializing in 20th century British literature...so Shakespeare is WAY out of his comfort zone! He has been active in local theater since moving here eight years ago. He has stage managed many productions with Tryon Little Theater, and has been assistant director on *Dancing at Lughnasa, The Humans, and I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Previously with Shakespeare and Friends, Brian has been

an assistant director on *Our Town* and an assistant stage manager on *Enchanted April*.

**Josh Luria** (*Mercutio, Romeo & Juliet. Lord Fitzwater, Richard II*)

Josh began his theater journey in his hometown, Asheboro, NC, later attending Governor's School for drama. He studied at Atlantic Theater Company, and spent several following years acting in, producing, and directing shows in NYC, primarily with the company he co-founded, EBE Ensemble. The company focused on new works, with a summer Shakespeare repertory series in Prospect Park. Josh would like to thank Andy and Michelle for the opportunity to reconnect with this old love of his.

**Andy Millard** (*Director, Richard II.*)

Andy is part of Shakespeare & Friends, having directed last year's production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. He has had roles in *A Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *Enchanted April*. He's grateful that Catherine Gillet and Michelle Newman have supported him in getting back in touch with his creative roots, and he also thanks his incredibly supportive wife Sharon.

**Michelle Newman** (*Director, Rome & Juliet. Producer, Scenery*)

Michelle is delighted to share this lovely show with the community. She is a cofounder of Shakespeare & Friends and has produced six successful show in Rogers Park with Catherine and Andy. She has appeared on stage and behind the scenes across WNC and upstate SC, and works with the Polk County SilverArts, Explore Tryon TDA, and NC Folklife Institute. She is the Communication Manager for GSP Airport and a proud Converse College graduate. Lots of love to her community, friends, and family for supporting her and to the talented team who have brought this show to life.

**Travis Newman** (*Romeo, Romeo & Juliet. Duke of Surrey, Richard II*)

Travis is make a triumphant return to the stage after roles in Shakespeare & Friend's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. He grew up in Polk County and graduated from UNC Asheville.

**Mark Sawyer** (Director, *Julius Caesar*. Lord Aumerle, *Richard II*)

Mark is delighted by the opportunity to participate in this production of Shakespeare scenes, featuring some of literature's most iconic characters. Mark returned to theater after a long hiatus by playing Will in The Book Club Play at Tryon Little Theater. He has since appeared in Mad Mad Madrigal, in Bright Star as Daddy Murphy, as fictional Tryon attorney Roy Wilcox in the movie Christmas at the Gray Horse Inn (hopefully out this fall), as Sherlock Holmes in Baskerville, and Burl in Smoke on the Mountain. Much thanks to Catherine and Michelle for this chance to act and direct the Bard in the open air. An opportunity not to be missed!

**Ken Snart** (Hero, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Brutus, *Julius Caesar*. Henry Percy, *Richard II*)

Ken moved to North Carolina in 2020 and has been excited about getting back into theater after COVID. He was born and raised in Wisconsin. He began his experience with theater in high school and college where he was involved as an actor and behind the scenes work in many shows. Ken worked for the State of Wisconsin for 30+ years as an Administrator and Program Director for Substance Abuse services in the Mental Health setting as well as the Department of Corrections. He retired in 2015 and since then has been active in many shows with several community groups. He has his Bachelors Degree in Music Education and two Masters Degrees, one in music and one in counseling. Among his favorite roles are playing Jesus in "Godspell", Mayor Shinn in "The Music Man", Ali Hakim in "Oklahoma", Captain Keller in "The Miracle Worker" and many others. Ken, his husband Jerry, and their black lab Oliver are avid campers. Ken also enjoys golf, gardening, and singing with various groups. He is thrilled to be a part of Scenery and looks forward to many more shows.

**Dean Trakas** (Henry Bolingbroke, *Richard II*)

Since moving to Tryon to form Brady Trakas Architects, Dean has been a unique, positive force in Downtown Tryon. As an architect, Dean was instrumental in the rehabilitation of the Missildines, Bank, and Jackson Buildings, St. Luke's Plaza, Stott's Ford, the historic Tryon Depot, and many more. His projects led to the downtown district becoming a National Register Historic District. Dean is also an entertainer and musician.