

Actors from The London Stage recreate 'Hamlet' at East Tennessee State University

Although in America, Sir Patrick Stewart may be best known for his leadership of the starship Enterprise on "Star Trek: The Next Generation," he got his start at the Old Vic Theatre School in Bristol, England, and joined the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company in 1966.

He toured with "As You Like It," "Much Ado About Nothing" and "King Lear," and he debuted on Broadway in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He won an Olivier Award for Actor of the Year in 1979 for "Antony and Cleopatra."

Stewart took his Shakespearean talents to warp speed as a founding director of Actors From The London Stage, an educational program developed in 1975 by Homer Swander at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Now based in London and at the University of Notre Dame, the artists – five British Shakespearean actors – provide educational experiences for students and faculty at American colleges and universities through residencies, which include lectures, workshops, seminars and performances.

In October, to culminate six days of residency, Actors From The London Stage bring "Hamlet" to East Tennessee

State University for three performances in the Bud Frank Theatre, Thursday and Friday, Oct. 25 and 26, at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m.

The performances feature minimal props, costumes and set to showcase the ensemble's talents yet keep the focus on Shakespeare's words.

Regarded as one of Shakespeare's finest works, "Hamlet" continues to resonate with audiences some 400 years after it was originally produced, and these actors, says Stewart, bring a "personal connection with dramatic texts."

The play begins shortly after King Hamlet of Denmark has died. His brother, Claudius, has become king and married King Hamlet's widow, Gertrude. Young Hamlet has come home from university for his father's funeral and his mother's rapid remarriage. Meanwhile, Denmark is preparing for war with Norway. The play quickly becomes complicated as the dead king's ghost urges young Hamlet to avenge his death, and more murders and madness ensue.

While actors can no longer collaborate directly with Shakespeare,

all theatre is collaborative, says Peter Holland, McMeel Family Chair in Shakespeare Studies and associate dean for the arts at the University of Notre Dame. "The actors From The London Stage company always aim to work with [Shakespeare], respectfully and creatively, throughout the rehearsal process," he says.

"Our company's aim is to make his words exert their magic and their power in performance, but we do this in a vital, and perhaps unconventional way," he continues. "We have no massive sets to tower over the performers and no directorial concept to tower over the text of Shakespeare's play. In fact, AFTLS does not have a director at all, instead, the play has been rehearsed by the actors, working together to create theater, cooperating with each other in their imaginative engagement with the play's words."

Artists in this residency and production are Grace Andrews as Ophelia, Peter Bray as Polonius, Ben Eagle as Ghost, Madeleine Hyland as Hamlet and Wendy Morgan as Horatio. In true Shakespearean style, each actor portrays numerous other characters, as well.

AAME speaker series continues

Arts Alliance Mountain Empire continues its Speaker Series with talks by Libby Falk Jones and Chris Slaughter.

Jones speaks at the Bristol Public Library, Bristol, Va., Oct. 2 at 7 p.m. Jones is a photographer and retired professor of English at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky. She speaks about "To the Ice: Images of Antarctica."

As a professor at Berea College, she taught courses in creative, academic, professional and contemplative writing. She's published extensively in the fields of writing and learning, visual learning, women's academic vocations, utopian communities and faculty development. Her poems and essays have appeared in "Low Explosions: Writings on the Body," "New Growth: Recent Kentucky Writings," "Connecticut Review," "Poetry as Prayer: Appalachian Women Speak" and "I To I: Life Writing by Kentucky Feminists," among others. Her photography has been exhibited locally and regionally and is part of the permanent "Art As Healing" collections at three Kentucky hospitals.

In photographing ice, mountains, sea, sky and wildlife in the Antarctic summer, she investigates the surprising beauty of this unique landscape. She will talk about these

photographs and the experience of Antarctica.

Chris Slaughter speaks about "Radio Frankenstein: 20th-Century Madmen and Their Monsters" Oct. 30 at 7 p.m.

Slaughter is an associate professor of theatrical design and theater history at King University, Bristol, Tenn., and is also the artistic director of King University's Twin City Radio Theatre. Celebrating its 10th year, the Twin City Radio Theatre's mission is to produce classic old-time radio plays and provide a unique theatrical experience for contemporary audiences, not unlike what studio audiences might have experienced during a live broadcast in the 1940s or '50s.

In honor of the 200th anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," Slaughter discusses the ways that novel has been adapted for radio. Twin City Radio Theatre presents live performances from selected productions to illustrate the talk and entertain the audience. *A!*



Chris Slaughter

"This kind of residency is not something that we typically do, but it's such a great experience for us to have such a well-known group with well-trained actors come to campus, not only to share their experiences with our students, but also enable the rest of us to see some great performances," says Anita DeAngelis, director of ETSU's Mary B. Martin School of the Arts, which is sponsoring the event.

Tickets are \$20 for general admission, \$15 for seniors and \$5 for students of any age with ID.

For more information about Actors From The London Stage, visit shakepeare.nd.edu/AFTLS.

For more information about the Martin School of the Arts or to purchase tickets, visit www.etsu.edu/martin or call 423-439-8587. For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at 423-439-8346. Follow the Martin School of the Arts on Twitter, @artsatetsu, and on Facebook.

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Christina Bieber Lake

Clyde S. Kilby professor of English at Wheaton College

Marking the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

October 29, 2018

9:15 a.m. | King Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Public Library, Bristol, Va.

FREE ADMISSION

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This event is paired with Arts Alliance Mountain Empire's presentation of "The Monster on the Airwaves: Radio Adaptations of Frankenstein," by Christopher Slaughter, Oct. 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bristol Public Library.

Special thanks to the '18-'19 Series Co-Sponsor Bristol Herald Courier