

## 360° SERIES

VIEWFINDER: FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE PLAY, PLAYWRIGHT, AND PRODUCTION



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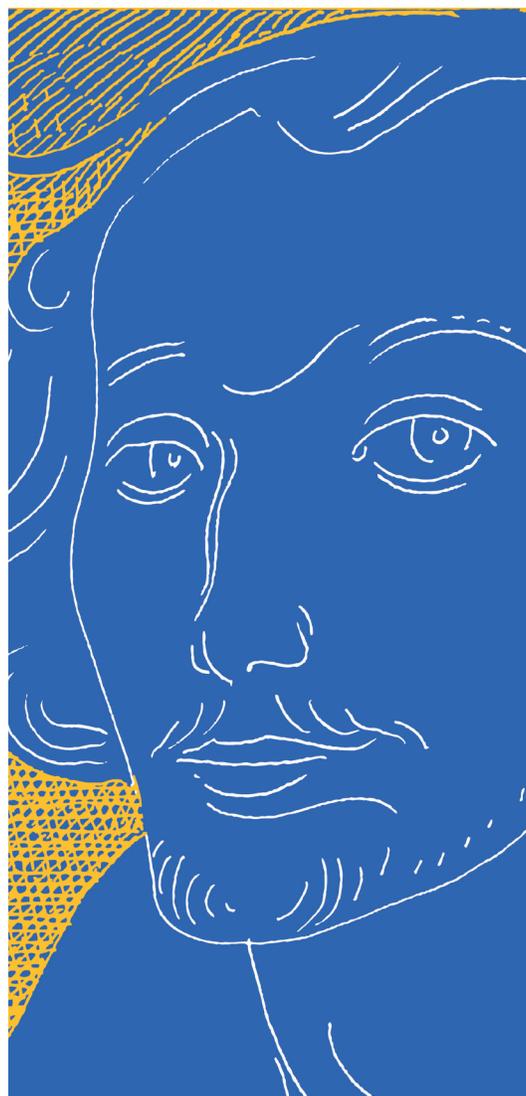
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# 360° VIEWFINDER *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*



Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Henry Grossman.

# PERSPECTIVES SEDUCTIONS OF TIMELESSNESS

JONATHAN KALB



Thomas Jay Ryan (*Angelo*), Jonathan Cake (*Duke Vincentio*), January LaVoy (*Escala*), and Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

Even among great classical plays renowned for their timelessness, *Measure for Measure* stands out for its astonishing contemporaneity. Consider how many events and tensions in its discontented and polarized world instantly recall our own:

- A head of state who has sexually harassed and otherwise mistreated women regards all criticism of him as slander and believes he can act with impunity.
- When the women he has abused confront him they are publicly vilified as irrational and treacherous.
- Using religion to excuse cruelty, this leader enforces archaic, draconian laws as a shock-cure for rampant social degeneracy.
- Another head of state lies, dissimulates and

secretly surveils his people, manipulating reality, he thinks, in the interests of true justice.

- Solemn political proceedings descend into vulgar personal bickering and snarling.
- Capital punishment gets merciless seriocomic scrutiny, casually exposing its repulsive physical mechanics, capricious application, and indignities for all involved.

If such specific foresight about today's hot-button issues is truly remarkable in a 413-year-old play, it's also grounds for caution. The more any great drama from another era seems to anticipate our world the greater the risk that the glaring congruences will distract us from the rich complexity in what the author wrote. Shakespeare was never slyer, subtler or more precisely ambiguous than in *Measure for Measure*.

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This perennially strange play begins in a rush of timeless outrageousness. We're introduced to a flagrantly dissolute Vienna and right away told of an outrageously extreme legal response to all that misbehavior. Then, just as we're wrapping our minds around Angelo's smooth justifications, his threat to Isabella raises the stakes and changes the focus: his extremity is more dangerous than anything in the city.

But that moral focus too is then superseded. The absconded Duke doesn't leave the scene. He dons a disguise and stays in town to... do what? Protect and correct others, like a god? Manipulate them like a puppeteer? Shape their destinies like a playwright? We're so curious about his game that outrage comes to seem less important than listening. Something much knottier than arresting and punishing criminals is clearly in play, and the tone of Shakespeare's disorienting mixture of jesting and gravity is itself a factor in blurring right and wrong.

What to make of Vincentio, the "fantastical duke of dark corners," as Lucio calls him? The director Simon Godwin, like many scholars, sees him as allied with his city's decadence rather than standing respectably outside it. The Duke is obviously on a quest or search of sorts, trying on high-minded behaviors and principles like costumes. But his inscrutable motivation is troubling, a blank field we can't help but fill with our own desires and inclinations.

What do his actions mean? Does the happy ending he contrives to wrap up his schemes amount to real or sham justice? And do all the disguisings and substitutions in the play ultimately bring anyone greater self-knowledge? We're given no definitive answers, as we never are in dramas of this caliber.

It was William Hazlitt, at the start of the industrial age, who first sounded the essential modern intuition in this rare play. "Shakespeare was the least moral of all writers," he wrote, "for morality (commonly so called) is made up of *antipathies*, and his talent consisted in *sympathy* with human

nature, in all its shapes, degrees, elevations, and depressions." [itals added]

The messy and disquieting truth about *Measure for Measure* is that no one in it, including Angelo and the condemned murderer Barnardine, is unequivocally villainous. Shakespeare was too interested in the variety of human nature to bother hating or even judging anyone—in his plays, at any rate.

Angelo may strike us as evil, but he provides a proto-Freudian portrait of repressed libido, a man unhinged by a sensual stirring that doesn't fit his cultivated self-image: "Most dangerous is that temptation that doth goad us on to sin in loving virtue." Barnardine, incessantly drunk and refusing both escape and execution, is the most resonant blockhead in all drama. Hilariously insensible, he represents an indictment of the very conceit of correction that Christian and secular orders have always given the law.

And then there is Isabella, idolized by 19th-century critics as an "angel of light" blessed with "pure zeal," "saintly grace" and "vestal dignity." Is this woman the victimized paragon of innocence and purity her advocates claim? Again we must answer with indeterminate questions. What sort of aspiring nun asks the austere female order in Christendom for "more strict restraint"? And how shocked can a virgin be who defies a sexual predator by saying she would wear "Th' impression of keen whips . . . as rubies,/ And strip myself to death as to a bed" rather than yield to him?

*Measure for Measure* presents fallible humans judging other fallible humans, and asks what sound basis they ever have for doing so. The inquiry is obviously bottomless, inexhaustible, and as seductively topical as it ever was. •

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# DIALOGUES THE APPEAL OF APPETITE

GAIL KERN PASTER



Illustrations from *Measure for Measure*, a set of seven original drawings (ca. 1900), by Byam Shaw (1872-1919). Images courtesy of LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library. Digital image file numbers (left to right) [#35124](#), [#35126](#), [#35129](#).

Actors and directors often find their way inside a Shakespeare play by focusing on a character to like. In the case of *Measure for Measure*, they may find such an approach tough sledding. At first glance, none of the characters seems very likeable and the three main characters—Duke Vincentio, his deputy Angelo, and the nun Isabella—may strike us as downright disagreeable.

Duke Vincentio announces the play's central themes in the very opening speech – "the nature of our people, / Our city's institutions, and the terms / For common justice." But rather than govern his people personally and directly, he has decided to take a temporary leave of absence from his responsibilities as ruler of Vienna. As a result of his own fourteen years of lax oversight, the city is given over to sexual license and irregularity, and he wants his new deputy Angelo to clean this city up. Angelo, who prides himself on rigorous self-control and abstinence from the sexual appetites of his fellow citizens, carries a chilling air of superiority. His blood "is snow broth," the gallant Lucio says, "one who never

feels / The wanton stings and motions of the sense." Once in power, Angelo instantly embarks on a ruthless campaign of prosecuting the city's "strict statutes and biting laws," which include executing anyone caught engaging in premarital sex. The third main character is Isabella, a novitiate with the Order of St. Clare, who enters the cloistered convent asking not for "farther privileges" but "a more strict restraint."

Even the minor characters of *Measure for Measure* seem lacking in human graces, whether because (like the bawd Mistress Overdone and her servant Pompey) they profit from the sex trade, or because (like the licentious gallant Lucio) they enjoy spreading malicious gossip about the Duke unfounded in truth. Perhaps the character most lacking in basic human graces is the prisoner Barnardine who spends his days in prison getting drunk and is "so insensible of mortality" that he cares not whether he lives or dies. As his jailer the Provost points out, "He hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not."

## THE APPEAL OF APPETITE GAIL KERN PASTER

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But if we cannot bring ourselves to like the characters of *Measure for Measure*, we may be able to feel pity and sympathy for their predicament—to live in a city where the government lurches from neglect of the laws to the sudden harsh prosecution of them and where the deputy mysteriously put in charge of their fate is shown to be the cruelest of hypocrites, prosecuting them for a sin which we see him commit. When the nun Isabella comes before deputy Angelo to plead for the life of her brother Claudio, condemned for impregnating his fiancée Juliet, Angelo finds himself irresistibly drawn to her: "What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?" he asks himself in horror, "Dost thou desire her foully for those things / That make her good?" He will spare Claudio's life, he tells Isabella, only if she will agree to have sex with him.

Her agonized refusal—on the grounds that "more than my brother is my chastity"—leads the Duke, who has been spying on his citizens disguised as a friar, to concoct a sexual exchange or "bedtrick." He arranges matters so that, rather than sleep with Isabella, Angelo will—without knowing it—sleep with Mariana, the fiancée whom he has cruelly jilted and who mourns his loss still. Only the Duke's revelation of himself and of the desperate measures forced upon him by Angelo's hypocritical refusal to pardon Claudio bring the play to its conclusion. Angelo marries Mariana; Claudio's life is spared; Isabella's virginity is preserved; and the gallant Lucio will have to marry Kate Keepdown, whose child he has fathered. "Marrying a punk," he protests, "is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging." And, even more surprising in the midst of all these last-minute unions, is that the Duke feels moved to offer marriage to Isabella—"Give me your hand and say you will be mine"—an offer she greets with a silence that every Isabella and every production has to interpret for itself.

As scholars of the play have pointed out, *Measure for Measure* in its own time had a general air of topicality. Queen Elizabeth I's long reign ended in 1603, and James VI of Scotland succeeded

her as King James I. Shakespeare's company became the King's Men with a new royal patron replacing the Lord Chamberlain. Yet as much as he loved plays, the new monarch, like *Measure for Measure's* "Duke of dark corners" did "not like to stage me" before his subjects. Elizabeth had been a great crowd-pleaser for much of her reign. At her coronation, according to the official account, she transformed London into "a stage wherein was showed the wonderful spectacle of a noble hearted princess toward her most loving people." James's coronation was postponed by a year because of an outbreak of the plague and it went without incident. But during an attempt to visit the Royal Exchange incognito, James barred the door against the noisy crowds excited by his visit. Angelo's rigorous prosecution of moral laws may reflect the political and social rise of the "godly"—religiously observant, even radical Protestant reformers who

*Portrait of King James I of England & VI of Scotland* (ca. 1606), after John De Critz the Elder (1551/2-1642). National Portrait Gallery, London. [Wikimedia Commons](#).



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objected to theater and a whole raft of traditional holiday celebrations—aligning him with *Twelfth Night's* Malvolio, denounced as “a kind of Puritan.” And the Duke's behind-the-scenes machinations—however necessary and pragmatic we may find them to be—may suggest the surveillance practices of the Jacobean state. These same dark practices would succeed a year later in uncovering and thwarting the notorious Gunpowder Plot.

But the play's major interest in the nature of government and the ability of laws to correct behavior and to instill self-discipline in imperfect human beings transcends the particular circumstances of its own time and place. The lack of moral realism and

the inflexibility of the city's laws—an inflexibility in the penal code that the Duke seems unable to change—leaves the Duke with an unhappy choice between lax prosecution of his society's laws or rigorous enforcement of them. Asking the exasperated magistrate Escalus if he means “to geld and splay all the youth of the city?” the pimp Pompey points out tautologically that the sex trade would be legal “If the law would allow it.” And so the matter of the arbitrariness of law is raised.

Are laws governing personal morality arbitrary and unjust? How involved should any government be in the private behavior of its citizens? Should the sex trade be regulated or criminalized? We see the difficulty of the Duke's choice between enforcement or neglect and—in this crucial premise of the plot—we can recognize Shakespeare's way of posing tough, skeptical questions about the



Left: Illustration from *Measure for Measure*, a set of seven original drawings (ca. 1900), by Byam Shaw (1872-1919).  
Right: *Isabella Appealing to Angelo* (1793), by William Hamilton (1750-1801).  
Images courtesy of LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library. Digital image file numbers (left to right) [#35125](#), [#6504](#).



## THE APPEAL OF APPETITE GAIL KERN PASTER

efficacy of any society's penal code to reform human behavior, especially when it comes to the anarchic nature of sexual appetite.

Shakespeare's fictional Vienna seems preoccupied by sexuality even when—as in the case of Angelo and Isabella—the preoccupation takes the form of extreme self-abnegation or an unearned assumption of moral and spiritual superiority. Angelo's embrace of extreme personal self-discipline leaves him undefended against the sudden violence of his desire for Isabella, while Isabella seems to embrace religious asceticism

for the perverse pleasures of self-denial. She tells Angelo with unconscious sensuality,

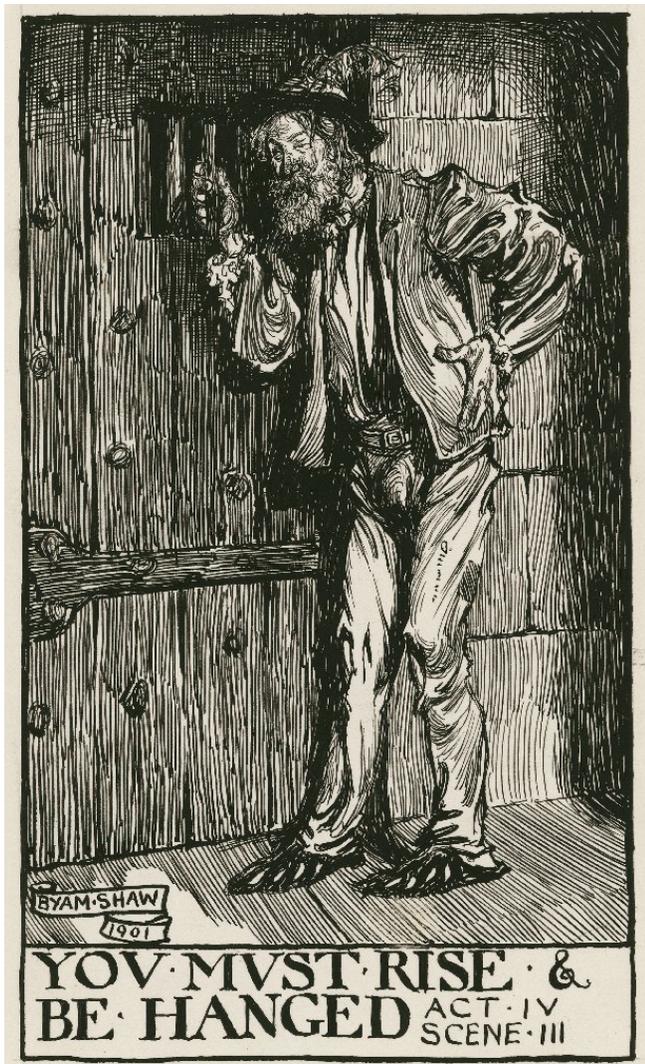
... [W]ere I under the terms of death,  
Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,  
And strip myself to death as to a bed  
That longing had been sick for, ere I'd yield  
My body up to shame.

But it is the prisoner Barnardine who best encapsulates the play's hard look at the inefficacy of law to instill virtue (or at least self-restraint) and to regulate appetite. The infantile Barnardine—who cares only for satisfying his need for food and especially drink, who cares not whether he lives or dies today—is impervious to the blandishments of any form of social discipline based on reward and punishment. Unafraid to die, he cannot be deterred and he seems indifferent to reward in any form beyond food or drink. In a word, he personifies all that is ungovernable in human behavior.

In its unsparing look at our human proclivity to evade social sanctions, to resist external restraints on all forms of bodily appetite but especially sexual appetite, and to avoid paying the consequences for our own secret vices, *Measure for Measure* may be Shakespeare's grimmest comedy. But it may also be one of his wisest. •

GAIL KERN PASTER is editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, the leading scholarly journal devoted to Shakespeare. She retired in July 2011 as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. She came to the directorship from George Washington University, where she was a Professor of English. She earned a B.A., *magna cum laude*, at Smith College, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and a Ph.D. at Yale University. She has won many national fellowships and awards, including fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, National Endowment from the Humanities, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. She was named to the Queen's Honours List as a Commander of the British Empire in May 2011. She has published widely—including three books (*The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* [1986]; *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* [1993]; and *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* [2004]). She continues to pursue her scholarly interests in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Illustration from *Measure for Measure*, a set of seven original drawings (ca. 1900), by Byam Shaw (1872-1919).  
Image courtesy of LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library. Digital image file number [#35128](#).



# TRADING AND EVADING IN *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

TANYA POLLARD



Above left: Merritt Janson (*Mariana*) and Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*); Above right: Sam Morales (*Juliet*); Opposite: Zachary Fine (*Barnardine*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

How do we know if we are married? The crisis that opens *Measure for Measure* hinges on the question of what gives legal weight to a bond between two people. Facing criminal charges for an unmarried pregnancy, Claudio protests that he and Juliet have already made “a true contract.” “You know the lady,” he tells Lucio; “she is fast my wife.” The tradition of hand-fasting that Claudio cites was still widely practiced in Shakespeare’s day, but Angelo, the acting duke, refuses to accept this private exchange of vows as binding. The disguised real duke, however, has more flexible ideas. Assuring the abandoned Mariana that she can lawfully trick her former fiancé into sleeping with her, he claims, “He is your husband on a pre-contract:/ To bring you thus together, ’tis no sin.” Their original betrothal, that is, has a binding force, even after deliberate renunciation. Who is right, and how can we tell?

When being legally married is a matter of life and death, this slipperiness can be terrifying. One man’s poison, though, is another man’s meat. Claudio, Juliet, and Mariana are eager to establish the legitimacy of their marriages, but others in the play have different instincts. Angelo breaks off his contract to Mariana after her dowry’s disappearance at sea, Lucio boasts of his success in avoiding nuptial commitments, and Isabella prefers a convent to the company of men. For these and other characters, ambiguity in promises can offer a useful escape route from an otherwise irrevocable commitment. In *As You Like It*, Touchstone seeks out a muddled priest, observing that “not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.” We might expect comedies to celebrate marriage, but Shakespeare stages plenty of reluctant brides and grooms; maybe most famously, in *Much Ado* it takes

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a village to prod Beatrice and Benedick towards their fate. If the potential strictures of marriage raise hackles in even the most festive comic settings, *Measure for Measure's* punitive Vienna inspires especially ardent interest in finding loopholes.

For all its apparent finality, marrying still strikes most people as less daunting than dying. Yet in *Measure for Measure*, death sentences prove just as slippery, and as potentially reversible, as marriage vows. Both rely on legal authority for validation, and just as the play's competing authorities disagree on who is married, their conflicting orders complicate Claudio's standing. Once their mandate becomes murky, prison officials have trouble enforcing other executions as well. The implacable Barnardine insists, "I swear I will not



die today for any man's persuasion," and the duke concedes his point: the man is "unprepared, unmeet for death." Under pressure to produce a severed head, the prison has a lucky break with the sudden death of the pirate Ragozine, whose uncanny resemblance to Claudio makes him an especially apt surrogate. Identifying which body is, or should be, in the coffin proves as hard as determining who is, or should be, in the marriage bed.

Vienna's apparently inflexible laws turn out to allow for surprising flexibility once you work out the loopholes. At the play's start, Duke Vincentio sets into motion his own escape by telling his reluctant replacement, Angelo, "No more evasion." Yet the plot develops through a series of evasive maneuvers; Claudio, Juliet, Mariana, Angelo, Duke Vincentio, and Isabella succeed improbably at evading marriages, deaths, the responsibilities of governing a lawless Vienna, and the unhappy choice of giving up either virginity or a brother's life. Faced with apparently insoluble problems, these characters manage to have their cake and eat it too through the miraculous resource of substitution, or surrogacy. Isabella's replacement with Mariana through a bed trick – an unsettling but oddly recurrent plot device in the period – finds a grotesque parallel in the prison's head trick, in which Ragozine's severed head stands in for Claudio's. The play opens with another sort of head trick, when Duke Vincentio announces that he has assigned Angelo to stand in for his authority, "Lent him our terror, dressed him with our love, / And given his deputation all the organs / Of our own power." By hiding behind a temporarily deputized alternate self, each of these characters discovers more freedom than initially seemed possible.

Vienna's tricksters are hardly the only Shakespearean characters to recognize the advantages of employing surrogates for their dirty work. In *As You Like It*, when Orlando responds to a hypothetical rejection from Rosalind by insisting, "Then in mine own person I die," Rosalind/Ganymede advises him to protect himself by outsourcing the job: "No, faith, die by attorney." Proxies prove similarly tempting

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for the pursuit of marriage, across a range of genres: *Much Ado*'s Claudio accepts Don Pedro's offer to woo Hero on his behalf, Troilus acquires Cressida's short-lived affections through the machinations of the notorious Pandar, and Othello damningly recalls to Iago that when he wooed Desdemona, Cassio "went between us very oft." By piling up substitutions and placing them at the heart of its plot, *Measure for Measure* reflects directly on the risks, attractions, and peculiar freedoms of letting oneself be represented by an agent in the intimate arenas of work, love, and death. Can a surrogate achieve something we can't tackle otherwise, or does this strategy inevitably lead to dangerous confusions?

These are uncomfortable reflections, and *Measure for Measure* can induce dread. Even the relief occasioned by its near escapes is uneasy, given the unresolved questions that hover over the play's ending. The prayers and petitions that eventually rescue Angelo from death may seem to consign him to marriage with Mariana whether he likes it or

not, but the duke receives no answer from Isabella to his proposal, which he frames as a command rather than a question: "Give me your hand and say you will be mine." Similarly, despite Lucio's plea, "I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a whore," the duke commands, "Upon mine honor, thou shalt marry her," but we don't see the marriage take place, and Lucio's consignment to prison seems to confirm his complaint that his fate is a kind of death: "Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging." Do these possible marriages constitute a happy ending?

According to dramatic convention, marriages mark the end of a comedy, while tragedies typically end in death. The play's evasiveness regarding both these categories makes it as hard to categorize as Mariana, whom the duke accosts, "Why, you are nothing then: neither maid, widow, nor wife?" Shakespeare took the play's plot from the Italian writer Giraldi Cinthio, whose advocacy of a mixed theatrical form he called "tragedy with a happy ending" prompted both theory



Oberon K.A. Adjepong (*Protest*) and Thomas Jay Ryan (*Angelo*) in *Theatre for a New Audience's* production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

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and practice of the genre now more familiarly known as tragicomedy. We don't typically identify *Measure for Measure* with Shakespeare's contributions to this genre, which are known for transforming tragic grief into comic pleasure in quasi-magical closing recognitions, reunions, and reconciliations. In stark contrast to the supernaturally-infused aristocratic realms of *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, the play's gritty urban setting highlights crime and punishment among everyday working people, apparently evading both tragedy's lofty grandeur and comedy's festive celebrations.

*Measure for Measure* does not give us the redemptive restorations typical of Shakespeare's tragicomic endings. If we want guidance in evading harsh constraints, though, the play provides a model. Like its characters, we can marry and die with impunity and still go free, as long as we do so through the theatrical device of the surrogate. Our proxies are both the plays' characters, who undertake these projects with their words, and the actors, who

do so with their bodies. We might have mixed feelings about letting these characters command our sympathies, but if we turn ourselves over to them temporarily, they can offer us forms of license we could never otherwise afford. Whether or not any of Vienna's inhabitants have their freedom at the end of the play, we're in even better positions than them to have our cake and eat it too. We can make the most of their resourcefulness, and escape any restrictive measures with the closing of the curtain. •

TANYA POLLARD is Professor of English at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center. Her books include *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages* (forthcoming 2017), *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), and *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook* (Blackwell, 2003); with Tania Demetriou she is co-editor of *Homer and Greek Tragedy in Early Modern England's Theaters* (2017) and *Milton, Drama, and Greek Texts* (2016), and with Katharine Craik she is co-editor of *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* (2013). A former Rhodes scholar, she has received fellowships from the NEH, Whiting and Mellon Foundations, and the Warburg Institute.



Jonathan Cake (*Duke Vincentio*) and Leland Fowler (*Claudius*) in *Theatre for a New Audience's* production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

# THE PLAYWRIGHT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

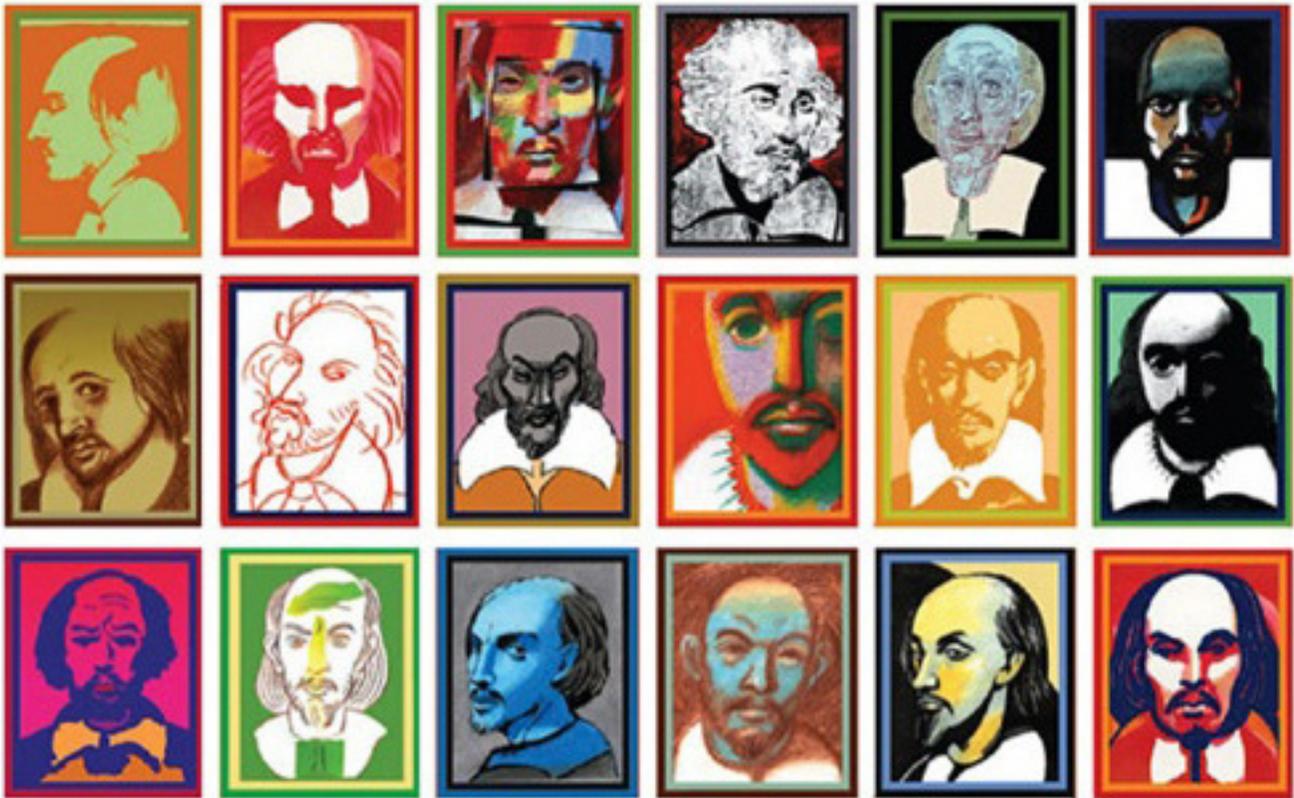


Illustration by Milton Glaser.

The most celebrated and widely produced of the world's great playwrights, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born and raised in the small country town of Stratford-upon-Avon, where his parents were prominent citizens, though his father, a tanner and glove-maker, seems to have suffered financial reverses around the time young William's formal education apparently ceased in 1577. He married a local girl, Anne Hathaway, in 1582, and over the next decade the marriage produced three children. Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, died at age 11, in 1596; his daughters Judith and Susanna survived him.

How and why Shakespeare entered the theatrical profession is unclear. He seems to have come to London in the late 1580s, and quickly made himself indispensable as a reviser of old plays and a supplier of new ones. By 1594, he had become a shareholder, along with the prominent actor Richard Burbage and the latter's business-manager brother, Cuthbert, in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the dominant theatre companies of its day, popular with the public and frequently in demand for performances at Queen Elizabeth's court. In the reign of her successor, King James I, the troupe was officially taken under royal protection and became the King's Men.

While he appeared regularly in works by others, Shakespeare's principal function seems to have been turning out new plays for his companies. Working in all the standard genres of the time—tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, and episodes from British history—he rapidly developed both remarkable expertise and a startlingly individual, innovative style. *Measure for Measure* was probably written in 1604, shortly after the accession of King James I, for whom it was performed on Dec. 26 of that year. It is one of Shakespeare's last comedies before his final career phase that produced a trail of great tragedies (*Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*) and romances (*Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Pericles*, *The Tempest*).

Shakespeare retired from the King's Men around 1612, spending the last years of his life with his family in Stratford, where he died in 1616. His plays have never been off the stage. Theatres return to them time and again for their brilliant storytelling, theatrical excitement, incisive character expression and memorably intense poetry. To this day, Shakespeare is still the most performed, translated, adapted, quoted, analyzed and discussed author in the entire history of dramatic literature. Figures from his plays like Hamlet, Falstaff, Lear, Macbeth, Rosalind, Viola, Shylock, Prospero, and Duke Vincentio have virtually taken on an independent existence in the world.

# INTERVIEW INVITING DILEMMAS

DIRECTOR SIMON GODWIN IN CONVERSATION WITH AYANNA THOMPSON



Thomas Jay Ryan (*Angelo*) and Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

*On a break from rehearsals, director **Simon Godwin** sat down for a conversation with **Ayanna Thompson**, a member of Theatre for a New Audience's Council of Scholars.*

**AYANNA THOMPSON** What is your relationship with *Measure for Measure*?

**SIMON GODWIN** Well, I've never done it before so it's a new thing for me. I guess like all of us I've known about it for all my adult life, but I guess the challenge in coming to it is to pretend that I don't know it and that I'm watching it and directing it and experiencing it for the very first time.

**AYANNA** So what have you learned as you're experiencing it for the first time?

**SIMON** Well, how to try and trust Shakespeare. When you get out of the way of the play, it seems to speak most competently. I suppose I mean

that it's so easy to bring so many judgments and preconceptions about the characters. And I am actually trying to let them follow through on their journey. For example, Angelo: we so associate him being a baddie because we know what he'll eventually do; yet none of us are baddies at the beginning. We're always filled with optimism and hope and good intentions until we're not anymore. So it's just trying to look at the characters a little, and realizing there are no heroes and villains; everyone's right, everyone's wrong. Everyone's trying to do their best. And really try to empathize, I suppose, with the characters fresh; and this is the work of the rehearsals.

**AYANNA** Can you talk a little bit about your process with your actors. What process do you use when you first enter the room together? And how does it develop as your production takes shape?

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**SIMON** Well, it begins with the language. It begins with putting the language of Shakespeare into the language of our own mouths insofar as paraphrasing the language. Not to make the language more approximate, but trying, in fact, to put very tight paraphrasing on the language. So that we're using it as a way of obliging us to get into the detail of the arguments. And yet it also simultaneously is an opportunity for saying, "I don't know what this means." A lot of it, we don't. With any process, you have to begin with an honest acknowledgement of that because we have to help each other have the courage to say, "I don't understand. I don't understand. I don't understand." And actually much of my time in rehearsals is spent going, "I don't yet understand. It's not yet clear to me. What are you actually saying?"

And as you work more and more of that you're trying to get to the stage where you are instruments

of Shakespeare's will. Because the moment we're instruments of our own will, our own agenda, and our own judgments, the Shakespearean text becomes minimized and reduced. We must clear away the baggage and try to allow the play to speak through us, and we must find this respect for the language while also working on character biographies: "I have a past. I have a context. I have a history with people." And we can create an environment and a context in which the language can make sense. It is sort of like a smeary window that you're just trying to clean to see through the language to the impulses and the feelings and the emotions that Shakespeare envisioned when he wrote the play.

**AYANNA** So do you work from an approach in which you're trying to get to a sort of psychological realism with the characters, or does that not factor in?

**SIMON** When I think of this play it is urban; it's an edgy play. And it's a play which unlike the romances, doesn't contain magic. There are no ghosts. There are only memories. There are only feelings. There are only dreams. It's also a play that can stand with the body, with perpetual sex workers, and with prisoners. It's a very earthy, gritty world. So yes, you are trying to find a realism of a kind that celebrates those wells of being and acknowledges and honors them. But the balance is also not to do a documentary. So it's grounded and



Left: Simon Godwin; Below, Godwin and Jonathan Cake in rehearsal. Photos by Gerry Goodstein. Opposite: Jonathan Cake in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Henry Grossman.



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realistic enough, but not to the place where the play can't fly once it wants to.

**AYANNA** At what moments do you think the play wants to fly? Have there been surprising moments for you?

**SIMON** I think there are—everyone wants to fly with the humor, the humor of Elbow, and the sort of surrealism of the *Alice in Wonderland* world of the criminals and the sex workers. And I think *Measure for Measure* ultimately flies when Isabella is shown her dead brother who is in fact not dead but alive. And that's the closest that they get to a miracle without being a miracle. And I think Shakespeare's interested in that moment between the two when the earthly becomes miraculous.

**AYANNA** Yes, this is a play that refuses to give you the miraculous and yet it is circling through all the themes that you see in the romances where—I'm thinking specifically of *Pericles* and all of the sex workers in that play as well—the only way the characters get to survive at the end is through the miraculous.

**SIMON** Yes, that's right. That's right.

**AYANNA** It's fascinating to be pitched into that world without Diana, right?

**SIMON** Exactly.

**AYANNA** Without divine intervention what we're left with are, as you said, incredibly complex, complicated, not-straightforward human beings, right?

**SIMON** It's funny how people complain about the complexity of the characters in *Measure for Measure*. It's good that we're talking about Diana and realizing and acknowledging that the play would be much more worthy of complaint if it was neat. That wouldn't be true at all. We know our lives, they're anything but neat.

**AYANNA** You mentioned Angelo as being a challenge because many audiences and readers come with preconceived ideas about him, but what about Isabella?



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**SIMON** Well, I suppose Isabella I find very acceptable insofar as she is an idealist. She's also a woman of faith who has very strong religious views. And I suppose like all of us, she's trying to reconcile her opinions and ideals with a very fallen world in which people don't share her values. And I guess in a way it's a very universal predicament. We've all got values and we're all living in a world that doesn't share our values. So do we change? Do we compromise? Or do we hold our values even more rigorously? And what Isabella does is to say: "I'm going to hold to my views ever more rigorously."

And from the outside that might seem like an extreme choice, but from her position, she genuinely is trying to live a good religious life in the eyes of God, whom she believes in 100% and whom she feels is there to help her.

**AYANNA** I'm gripped by your description of religious conviction because we're living in a moment in which religious conviction can go multiple ways, some of them incredibly frightening and some of

them redemptive. So I'm wondering what you think this particular play is telling us right now.

**SIMON** I think *Measure for Measure* invites us to live inside dilemmas which we are encouraged to think about from new perspectives. That when we step inside a character's mind, body, and experiences, we are slightly, fractionally, momentarily eased out of our certainties, unglued from our strongly held positions, and placed into a slightly more reflective or empathetic space. And that means being empathetic towards people who are gripped by sexual fanaticism, gripped by religious fervor, and ultimately introduced to a form of justice—which is not an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a measure for measure—but which allows us to go beyond that.

And it's interesting that as a culture we still are trying to understand punishment. What's appropriate punishment, and essentially what therefore is justice? I suspect we probably will never resolve that question, but all we can hope for is to be as sensitive as we can to the complexity



Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*) and Leland Fowler (*Claudio*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

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of the issues that face us. Because I think we all agree that when we go, “This is a black and white issue,” we’re not doing the human being justice. And what Shakespeare wants to remind us of is easy judgments: black and white decisions are disappointing and painful, probably unsatisfactory. And we go to the theater perhaps to be reminded, shown, and essentially forced to experience the crooked. Kant had this nice phrase: “Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made.”

**AYANNA** And do you think Shakespeare gives us the “crooked” better than any other playwright, or just effectively still 400 years later?

**SIMON** Well, I think that his genius lies in sewing the crooked into his characterizations, his plotting, and most extraordinarily of all into his language. And I don’t think that another playwright has managed to work in such a holistic and total way since Shakespeare.

**AYANNA** That’s great because I’ve heard various directors talk about this topic, but not as clearly as you have about the fact that the language itself is incredibly crooked, the way that the metaphors and similes will stray and go in bizarre directions. And sometimes you think, “Was this a mistake? Did he forget where he started?” But, in fact, I think you’re absolutely right to say that what he’s giving us is the way that the brain of a real human being works—it starts one place and ends up in another.

**SIMON** That’s right. And I think that basically he was suggesting that absolutism, be it religious, sexual, political, is the crookedness. Our mercy lies in the recognition of our flaws and our messiness and not living under the lie that we are impervious or perfect or impeccable.

**AYANNA** Or that that’s even desirable?

**SIMON** Exactly.

**AYANNA** Do you want to talk about the ending of your production and how you read her silence at



Christopher Michael McFarland (*Pimp*) and Kenneth De Abrew (*Proph*) in *Theatre for a New Audience's* production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

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the end? Because of course people who approach *Measure for Measure* as one of the problem plays, I think, often land on the ending as one of the most problematic moments. So how did you work through that?

**SIMON** I'm trying to see the play through the idea of empowered choices on behalf of the women because that is an interest that I have in my own life and in the time that we live in. I mean it's a small thing to do, but I have to help out. Any efforts help, I hope. It begins with the actress that's playing the part and asking her how she feels and what she wants from that moment. I feel it's almost become a cliché that the play ends in a dysfunctional silence. And I'm curious about looking again at when silence can be both a rejection and also a decision, a positive decision. And Shakespeare is interested in the idea of the Duke traveling, moving from a position of a bachelor, moving from being a failed ruler, to being a responsible father, becoming a

figure that we respect and want to follow.

So whether that's to do with him also being in a stable relationship at the end, being committed to one person and that being Isabella, I think we need to give that its proper due because the play is a play of rebirth – we could even say a fertility ritual. I'm beginning to think it might be actually. I've seen enough *Measures* where I'm reminded that we are living in an impossibly dark, fallen, and broken universe. And I'm curious about the *Measure for Measure* which yes, accepts the darkness, but also ushers in a more positive way forward for us all.

**AYANNA** That's fascinating. You're reading it closer to *Pericles* than to the darker tragedies?

**SIMON** Yes. That's right.

**AYANNA** Can you talk a bit about the *mise en scène* that you created for this production?

**SIMON** Well, it's set in Vienna. It's in a modern



Jonathan Cake (*Duke Vincentio*) and Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

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Vienna, but I've chosen to make it a modern Vienna rather than a contemporary Vienna. There could be a very brilliant digital production of *Measure for Measure*, but I decided to keep the language of letters, keep the language of Catholicism, and keep the language of a Vienna which is of now. But it isn't, if you like, hemmed in by the mobile phone. It still has kept its stylization, its romance, which means I hope that it can operate as a modern play and also a poem about desire and justice.

**AYANNA** And how does your very diverse cast play into your vision for this modern Vienna?

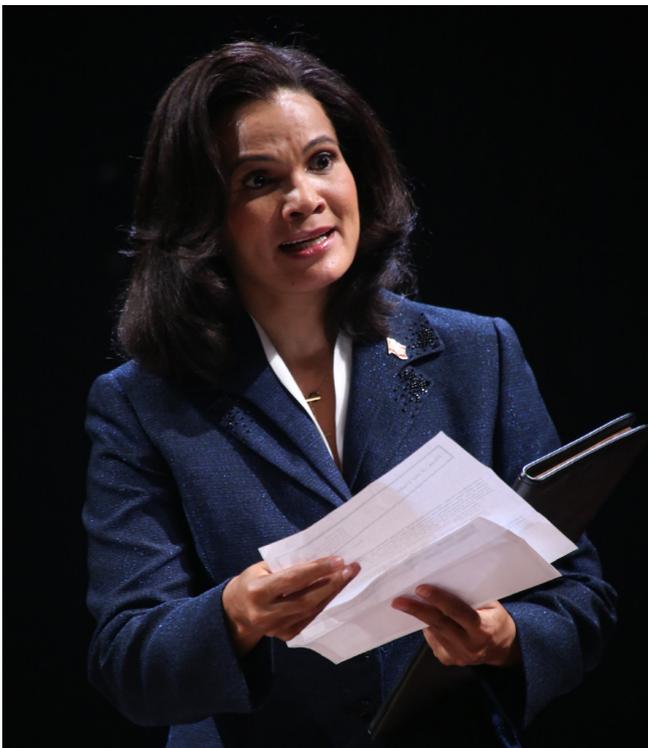
**SIMON** Well, I feel that in Europe our modern cities are extremely diverse. So to portray a modern city on the stage is to show its diversity. That's something that I feel like I'm trying to do with all the work that I do now, to be honest about our diverse world. I'm excited about the diverse world that we live in and therefore I bring that all onto the stage.

**AYANNA** I feel like what I see so often on British stages is a kind of easy colorblind approach to casting that is based on an assumption that the audience is not going to notice the races of the

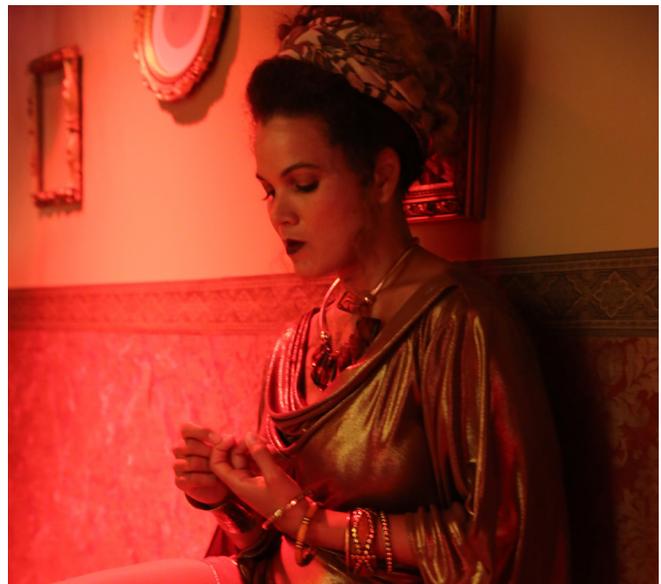
actors on stage. And what I think you're describing is that you want the audience to engage with the diversity onstage because that is part of the modern world that you are reflecting through this production. Is that correct?

**SIMON** I think there is a huge debate right now in Europe and America about colorblind casting versus color-conscious casting. And we're all trying to walk that line. When I did *Hamlet* in the RSC a couple of years ago and I set the play in West Africa with an almost entirely black company, it was very much about celebrating the heritage of Africa. I wanted to look at questions of Africa and Europe and how they interrelate and talk to each other. Now, that's not what I'm doing with this production. Certainly, I don't just want actors of color to be playing servants, like we saw ten years ago on the national stage in Britain. In this production, we're saying, of course, people of all colors can take up positions of power. People of all colors can be sex workers. They might be black, they might be white.

I'm not making color-conscious comments about there being Jamaican or a Canadian Isabella, but I am saying there's no reason a Canadian, Jamaican actress cannot be Isabella above everyone else. So I'm trying to acknowledge race, acknowledge



January LaVoy as Escala (left) and Mistress Overdone (below) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.



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diversity, but not necessarily have my narrative led by those choices.

**AYANNA** Can you compare directing *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*? Obviously *Hamlet* has a whole set of baggage that you have to either check at the door or work through, and *Measure for Measure* has different baggage. But I imagine that your approach must be very different, or the way that you interact with your cast must be different. Can you talk about that?

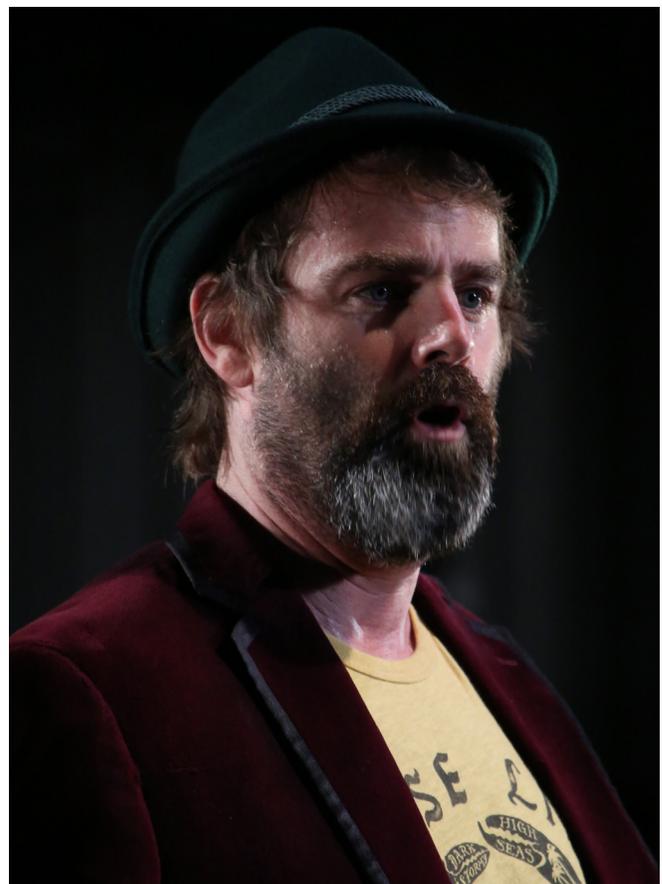
**SIMON** I think you're right. *Hamlet* is so performed, you can't go into it without something new to say not just about the storytelling, but also about the world. So we had this idea of *Hamlet* studying in Europe at the beginning and then he is called backed to "Denmark," which was a state in transition that was resonant of West Africa with its belief in the supernatural. If you go to modern day Ghana the belief in ghosts is prevalent. So we were able to open up a new series of images and storytelling and resonances by setting the play in

West Africa.

*Measure for Measure* is less over-exposed than *Hamlet*. I don't think there's a need to thoroughly rehash the landscape or context. What did seem important to me is to revisit and rethink emotional politics and the psychological movement of the play. So my experience has been much more centered around that than in the kind of bigger, more epic recasting of the universe which *Hamlet* demanded.

**AYANNA** What has the cast struggled with most do you think?

**SIMON** Well, the cast struggles with making the language clear and with freeing themselves of the cultural baggage around how the play should be performed or done. And they struggle with sufficiently trusting the somersaults that Shakespeare asks the characters to do. Because Shakespeare gives them the language and the material, he looks after us. And the struggle is to trust him and really to believe that he will look



Left: Zachary Fine (*Elbow*); Right: Haynes Thigpen (*Lucio*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

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after us. And that we don't need to pump our way through it.

**AYANNA** Shakespeare was a man of the theater, and we think he was probably an actor himself.

**SIMON** Definitely, and he knew audiences and he knew what audiences would respond to. We don't need to add additional ketchup or sauces or packaging. We just need to get to what he was thinking.

**AYANNA** I feel like I've seen so many *Measures* that are just dark and that leave you in the deep abyss at the end. And reframing it through redemption is really powerful, especially when thinking about the prison industrial complex here in the United States.

**SIMON** Yes, exactly.

**AYANNA** And the way that our justice system is so broken right now.

**SIMON** It's just too awful. But I think you're right. What I hope to do is to say we need light in the

darkness to give all of us hope, to carry on for the good of those people who need us; rather than being reminded that we're in a world of hopelessness. That doesn't help anyone, I don't think anymore.

**AYANNA** And that we're all broken in some way.

**SIMON** Exactly. And that humanity that we have in common. ●

*This interview has been edited and condensed.*

AYANNA THOMPSON is Professor of English at George Washington University. She specializes in Renaissance drama and focuses on issues of race and performance. She is the author of *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centered Approach* (Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016, co-authored with Laura Turchi), *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America* (Oxford University Press, 2011), and *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage* (Routledge, 2008); she wrote the introduction to the revised Arden3 *Othello* (Arden Shakespeare, 2016); and she is the editor of *Weyward Macbeth: Intersections of Race and Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), co-edited with Scott Newstok) and *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance* (Routledge, 2006). Professor Thompson is the Vice-President (and President-elect) of the Shakespeare Association of America



Left: Oberon K.A. Adjepong (*Prometheus*); Right: Sam Morales (*Julius*) and Leland Fowler (*Claudius*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

# THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

OBERON K.A. ADJEPONG (*Provost*). New York: *Party People* (Public Theater); *Pericles* (TFANA); *12 Angry Men* (Billie Holiday); *Tamburlaine* (TFANA); *Like I Say, Cellophane* (Flea); *Mother Courage, The Blacks* (Classic Stage, CTH); *Wabenzi* (New Ohio); *Hamlet Project* (La MaMa); *Sango* (Audelco nomination/NBT). Regional: *Civil War Christmas* (Centerstage); *Electric Baby* (Two Rivers); *Good Goods* (Yale Rep); *Ruined* (La Jolla Playhouse, Huntington Theatre/IRNE Award, Berkeley Rep); *Timon of Athens, Coriolanus* (Shakespeare Theatre); *Rhyme Deferred* (Kennedy Center). TV/Film: "Blacklist," "The Knick," "Louie," *Tallulah, Freedom, Crazy Famous, Colin Warner*. Training: BADA & Howard University.

JONATHAN CAKE (*Duke Vincentio*) studied English at Cambridge University and trained at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. On Broadway Mr. Cake has played Jason in *Medea* (Theatre World Award), Iachimo in *Cymbeline* at Lincoln Center, and Braham in *The Philanthropist*. Off-Broadway, his credits include Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (TFANA, 2013 Joe A. Callaway Award for Best Classical Performance), Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* (The Public Theater, RSC), and plays by Jez Butterworth, Ethan Coen, and Claudia Shear. In London he has played Silva Vaccaro in *Baby Doll* (National Theatre, Barclays Theatre Award), the title role in *Coriolanus* (Shakespeare's Globe), and roles at The Old Vic, the West End, and Off West End. He has appeared in many television shows in both the UK and US, including "Extras," "Desperate Housewives," "Chuck," "Angie Tribeca," every type of "Law & Order," "Doll and Em" on HBO, and most recently "The Affair." His film work includes *Brideshead Revisited, True Blue, Honest, The One and Only, and First Knight*.

KENNETH DE ABREW (*Froth | Abhorson | Friar Peter*) is a stage, film, and TV actor originally from Sri Lanka. His recent credits include Stage: *Petrol Station* (Kennedy Center), *Guards at the Taj* (Woolly Mammoth), and *Indian Ink* (ACT San Francisco); TV: "Atlanta," "Detour," "Gotham," and "Orange is the New Black;" and Film: *This Is Where I Leave You* and *Submission*. De Abrew possesses an MFA in Acting from Louisiana State University and a BA in Theater and Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan University. De Abrew is excited to be performing at TFANA for the first time!

ZACHARY FINE (*Friar Thomas | Elbow | Barnardine | Gentleman*). Broadway: *China Doll* (with Al Pacino). Off-Broadway: *Vanity Fair* (Pearl), *Coriolanus* (Red Bull), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (TFANA/Folger, Helen Hayes Award Winner); *Fashions For Men* (The Mint Theater), *Julius Caesar* (The Acting Company); Writer/Creator of *Walled In* and *Manifest Destiny* (Frances Black Projects/IRT); Regional: Folger, Guthrie, Playmakers, Asolo, Franklin Stage, Fulton, Great River Shakespeare Festival, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. Television/Film: "Person of Interest," "Blackbox." Adjunct Faculty at NYU.



Above: Kenneth De Abrew (*Gentleman*) and January LaVoy (*Mistress Overdone*); Below: Zachary Fine (*Elbow*) and Christopher Michael McFarland (*Pompey*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

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LELAND FOWLER (*Claudio*) is thrilled to be making his TFANA and Off-Broadway debut. Theatre credits include *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Tiny Houses* (Chautauqua Theatre Company); *Seven Guitars*, *Familiar* (Yale Rep); *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (Alliance Theatre). BA: Morehouse College. MFA: Yale School of Drama.

MERRITT JANSON (*Mariana*). Off-Broadway: *Coriolanus* (Red Bull Theater); *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Notes from Underground* (Theatre for a New Audience); *House For Sale* (Transport Group), *The Last Will* (Abingdon Theatre), *Built* (59E59). Regional credits includes work at Yale Rep, ART (IRNE Nomination), La Jolla Playhouse, Shakespeare Theatre DC, Westport Country Playhouse, Two River Theater, Shakespeare & Company, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Denver Center, Wilma, Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Film: *Otto + Anna*, *Mail Order Wife*. TV: "Billions," "Madam Secretary," "Quantico."

JANUARY LAVOY (*Mistress Overdone* / *Escala* / *Francisca*). Broadway: *ENRON*. Off Broadway: *Wakey, Wakey*, *Signature Plays*, *Home*, *Two Trains Running* (Signature); *Wings* (2ST); *Coraline* (MCC). Regional: Mark Taper Forum, McCarter, Alliance, Denver Center, Wilma, City Theatre, Pittsburgh Public. TV: "Blue Bloods," "L&O," Noelle Ortiz on "One Life to Live." Voice: Dozens of commercial campaigns, over 100 audiobooks, multiple Audie awards, and Publishers Weekly Audiobook Narrator of the Year. MFA: Denver. Thanks to DBA, Innovative, and most of all, MH. [www.januarylavoy.com](http://www.januarylavoy.com)

CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL MCFARLAND (*Pompey*). New York: *As You Like It*, *Of Mice and Men* (The Acting Company); *Spacebar* (The Wild Project); *The Winter's Tale* (Smith Street Stage); *King John* (NY Shakespeare Exchange); *Even Maybe Tammy* (The Flea). Regional: Yale Repertory Theatre; the Guthrie Theater; Signature Theatre; Pittsburgh Public Theater; the Kennedy Center; Philadelphia Theatre Company; Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey; Opera House Arts; Arizona Shakespeare Festival. Film/TV: "Sneaky Pete", Upcoming Netflix Series. Training: MFA, Yale School of Drama.

SAM MORALES (*Juliet*). TFANA: *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Pericles* (dir. Trevor Nunn). Other NYC: Halley Feiffer's *It's Just Weird Now...* Regional: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tavern*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Scranton Shakespeare Festival). Thanks to TFANA and Harden-Curtis. For Ant.

CARA RICKETTS (*Isabella*). Cara Ricketts is a celebrated Canadian theatre actress being named as Now Magazine's 10 Artists of the Year and having starred for several seasons at the acclaimed Stratford Festival in roles such as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Ruth in *The Homecoming* opposite Brian Dennehy, Portia in *Julius Caesar* and Maria in *Twelfth Night*, directed by Des McAnuff, among many other productions. Ms. Ricketts other selected credits include Queenie in *The Wild Party* (Acting



Above: Drew Bastian (musician) and Merritt Janson (*Mariana*); Below: Haynes Thigpen (*Lucio*) and January LaVoy (*Mistress Overdone*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

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UpStage/Dora Award nom. for Outstanding Performance), Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* (Necessary Angel), Marianne in *Constellations* and Susan in *Race* (Canadian Stage). For film and television Cara is best known for portraying the role of Bertilda in the E1 mini-series "Book of Negroes," as well as appearing in the feature films *Jean of the Joneses*, *Across the Line*, and *The Anniversary*. Her television credits include guest appearances on fan favorite BBC America's "Orphan Black," CTV's "Saving Hope," CBC's "Murdoch Mysteries" and CTV's "Satisfaction."



THOMAS JAY RYAN (*Angelo*). Broadway: *The Crucible*, *In the Next Room...* Recent Off Broadway: *Travels With My Aunt*, *10 Out Of 12*, *A Month In The Country*, *The Lady From Dubuque*, *The Little Foxes*, *The Temperamentals*. Films: *Burn Country*, *Strange Culture*, *Eternal Sunshine...*, *Degas and The Dancer* (title role, HBO), title role in Hal Hartley's *Henry Fool* trilogy. He has guest starred on many television series and has received Drama Desk and Callaway Awards; Drama League and Gemini nominations.

HAYNES THIGPEN (*Lucio*). Broadway: *Dead Accounts* by Theresa Rebeck, *Misalliance* (Roundabout). Off-Broadway: *An Octoroon* (TFANA), *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Roundabout Underground), *Our House* and *The Patron Saint of Sea Monsters* (Playwrights Horizons), *Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi* (Red Bull), *To the Bone* (Cherry Lane). Regional: *Hamlet* (McCarter Theatre), *The Aliens* (San Francisco Playhouse), *August: Osage County* (The Old Globe), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre), *The Black Monk* (Yale Rep), *The Black Sheep* (Barrington). TV/Film: "Horace and Pete," "Elementary," "The Good Wife," "Law & Order," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," *Blackbird*, *Terror Firmer*.

DREW BASTIAN (Musician) is ecstatic to join the cast of *Measure for Measure!* Favorites behind the kit: *Hair* (Nat'l. Tour, ensemble; u/s Woof), *Rent* (PA Centre Stage), *Somewhere With You* (NYMF). On stage: *Romeo and Juliet* (Paris), *The Fantasticks* (Matt), *Buddy...* (Jerry Allison). When not in theatre, he can be found playing guitar with Manic Pixi. Drew is a proud Penn Stater. Love to Mom, Dad, and D. [www.drewbastiandrums.com](http://www.drewbastiandrums.com)



ROBERT COWIE (Music Director/Musician) is a multi-instrumentalist/composer/ band leader. He has composed, played, and produced music for theatre: *Commedia Dell'Artichoke* (Francis Black Projects), *By Degrees: Six Plays Of Separation* (The 52nd Street Project), Brett C. Leonard's *Harold's Harem* (Labyrinth Theater's Barn Series), and Nidia Medina's *Every Love Story Ends in Tears* (NYC Fringe Fest) -- for circus/ variety: The Bindlestiff Family Circus and The Box (music director 2007-09) -and for cabaret: Lady Rizo (music director 2010-13). More at [www.robertcowiemusic.com](http://www.robertcowiemusic.com)

OSEI ESSED (Musician) is a film composer and singer-songwriter. Recent composer credits include the award-winning films *Tower*, *Jim: The James Foley Story* (2016 Emmy Winner) and *Finders Keepers*. Essed's music is the centerpiece of Benh Zeitlin's (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*) short film *Glory At*

Above: Thomas Jay Ryan (*Angelo*); Below: Drew Bastian and Osei Essed (musicians) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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*Sea*. In addition to scoring documentaries and feature films, Essed leads the Brooklyn-based bands The Woes and Big Hands Rhythm and Blues Band.

SIMON GODWIN (Director) is an Associate Director at the National Theatre, where he has directed: *Twelfth Night*, *Sunset at the Villa Thalia*, *The Beaux Stratagem*, *Man and Superman*, and *Strange Interlude*. Other theatre includes: *Hamlet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (RSC); *Occupational Hazards* (Hampstead Theatre); *The Cherry Orchard* (Roundabout); *Richard II* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Regeneration* (Royal & Derngate/Tour); *Routes*; *If You Don't Let Us Dream, We Won't Let You Sleep*; *NSFW*; *The Witness*; *Goodbye to All That*; *The Acid Test*; and *Wanderlust* (Royal Court); *The Little Mermaid*, *Krapp's Last Tapel* *A Kind of Alaska*, *Faith Healer*, and *Far Away* (Bristol Old Vic).

BRIAN BROOKS (Choreographer) has recently been appointed as the inaugural Choreographer in Residence at Chicago's Harris Theater for Music and Dance, supporting commissions with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and Miami City Ballet, among several others. The recipient of a 2013 Guggenheim Fellowship, Brooks' NY-based company has had recent presentations by the Joyce Theater, Jacob's Pillow, and BAM's Next Wave Festival. This marks his third production with Theatre for a New Audience.

PAUL WILLS (Scenic & Costume Designer). Theatre: *American Buffalo*, *Di and Viv and Rose*, *Mrs Henderson Presents* (West End); *Hamlet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (RSC); *Anna Christie*, *Making Noise Quietly*, *The Man Who Had All The Luck*, *The Cut* (Donmar Warehouse); *King Lear*, *First Light* (Chichester); *A Human Being Died That Night* (BAM); *Prometheus Bound* (Classic Stage Company); *King Kong* (The Fugard, South Africa); *My Fair Lady* (Sheffield Crucible); *Richard II*, *Dr Faustus*, *Front Line* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Saved*, *Blasted* (Lyric Theatre).

MATTHEW RICHARDS (Lighting Designer). Broadway: *Ann*. Opera: *Macbeth* for L.A. Opera. Off-Broadway: *The Curvy Widow*, and *Absolute Brightness...* at Westside Arts; *Measure For Measure*, *Tamberlaine*, and *The Killer* for Theatre For A New Audience; *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Gynecologic Oncology Unit...* for MCC; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Lincoln Center; Playwrights Horizons; Rattlestick; Second Stage. Regional: Actor's Theater of Louisville, Arena Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, Dallas Theater Center, Ford's Theatre, The Goodman, The Guthrie, Hartford Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf, New York Stage and Film, The Old Globe, Repertory Ensemble Players, Studio Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Westport Playhouse, Williamstown, Yale Repertory Theatre.

JANE SHAW (Composer & Sound Designer). TFANA: *The Killer*, *Tamburlaine*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure*, *Jew of Malta*, *Antony and Cleopatra*.



Above: Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*); Below: Jonathan Cake (*Duke Vincentio*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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New York: *Men on Boats* (Clubbed Thumb, Playwrights Horizons/ Drama Desk Nomination), *Ironbound* (Rattlestick, Women's Project), New York Theater Workshop, Mint, Pearl. Regional: Cleveland Play House, Hartford Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep. Recipient: Drama Desk, Connecticut Critics Circle, Henry, Premios ACE 2012, Bessie. Nominations: Lortel, Henry Hewes. Graduate: Harvard, Yale School of Drama.

**ALISON BOMBER** (Voice & Text Coach) spent seven years with the Royal Shakespeare Company, five of those as Senior Text & Voice Coach. Productions included Michael Boyd's award-winning *Histories Cycle*. Now freelance, shows have included *King Charles III* for the Almeida, London and Broadway, *Tamburlaine* for TFANA in New York, *Othello* at the RSC, the Cumberbatch *Hamlet* at the Barbican, London, and collaborations with Polish company, Pieśń Kozła. Alison is an Associate Artist of the RSC.

**ERIC REYNOLDS** (Properties Supervision). TFANA: *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Pericles*, *Tamburlaine*. Broadway: *Sunset Boulevard*; *Oh, Hello*; *Fully Committed*; *An American in Paris*; *On Your Feet*. Off-Broadway: *Terms of Endearment* (Directors Co), *Himself and Nora* (Minetta Lane), Atlantic Theater, Ars Nova, Public Theater, NYMF. Regional: *The Servant of Two Masters* (Shakespeare Theatre, DC), *Austen's Pride* (Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival).

**JONATHAN KALB** (Production Dramaturg) is Resident Dramaturg and Resident Artist at Theatre for a New Audience and Professor of Theatre at Hunter College, CUNY. He has twice won the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism. The author of five books and hundreds of articles, essays, translations and other works, he writes about theatre on his blog "Something the Dust Said" at [www.jonathankalb.com](http://www.jonathankalb.com).

**MEGAN SCHWARZ DICKERT** (Production Stage Manager). New York: Lincoln Center/LCT3, Playwrights Horizons, NYTW, Public, Vineyard, Page 73, Clubbed Thumb (affiliated artist), Playwrights Realm, Play Company, Juilliard, Rattlestick, Foundry, Working Theater, 13P, Civilians, Flea, Builders Association, New Georges. Regional: Bard SummerScape, Hartford Stage, Williamstown, NYSAF, Long Wharf, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Trinity Rep, Adirondack Theatre Festival, Big Apple Circus, Capital Rep, and Idaho, North Carolina, Utah, and Nebraska Shakespeare Festivals. Megan is an advanced open water scuba diver and has run five marathons. [www.megandickert.com](http://www.megandickert.com)

**RACHEL GROSS** (Assistant Stage Manager). Off-Broadway: *Everybody* (Signature Theatre); *WAR* (LCT3); *Isolde*, *An Octoroon* (TFANA); *Samara*, *Duat*, *10 Out Of 12*, *An Octoroon*, *Marie Antoinette* (Soho Rep.); *Once Upon A Mattress* (Transport Group); *While I Yet Live*, *Harbor*, *All In The Timing* (Primary Stages). Regional: *Cloudlands*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Borrowers*, and *Jane of the Jungle* (South Coast Repertory). Additional: *Isolde*, *The Evening*



Above: Thomas Jay Ryan (*Angelo*) and Cara Ricketts (*Isabella*); Below: Jonathan Cake (*Duke Vincentio*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of MEASURE FOR MEASURE by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

## THE PRODUCTION CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

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(New York City Players); *Shiner, Do Like The Kids Do* (IAMA). Rachel is thrilled to return to TFANA for this production of *Measure for Measure*.

**DEBORAH BROWN** (Casting Director). This is Deborah Brown's 25th season with Theatre for a New Audience. She has cast for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and many of the leading regional theatres in the country. She shared an Emmy for the HBO series "From the Earth to the Moon." Other television includes "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" and New York casting on "Band of Brothers."

**BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES** (Press Representative) is a Brooklyn-based public relations firm representing artists, companies and institutions spanning a variety of disciplines. Clients include St. Ann's Warehouse, Soho Rep, The Kitchen, Ars Nova, BRIC, P.S.122, Abrons Arts Center, Taylor Mac, LAByrinth Theater Company, StoryCorps, Irish Arts Center, Café Carlyle, Peak Performances, Batsheva Dance Company, The Playwrights Realm, Stephen Petronio Company, The Play Company, and FIAF's Crossing the Line Festival.

**JEFFREY HOROWITZ** (Founding Artistic Director) began his career in theatre as an actor and appeared on Broadway, Off Broadway, and in regional theatre. In 1979, he founded Theatre for a New Audience. Horowitz has served on the Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts and on the Board of Directors of Theatre Communications Group. He is currently on the Advisory Board of The Shakespeare Society and the Artistic Directorate of London's Globe Theatre. He received the John Houseman Award in 2003 and The Breukelein Institute's 2004 Gaudium Award.

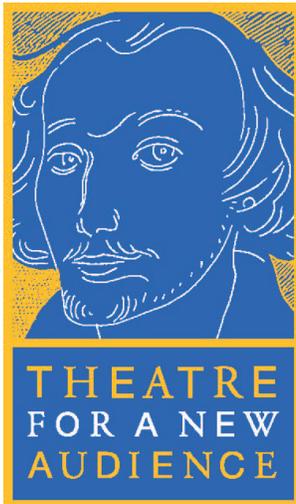
**DOROTHY RYAN** (Managing Director) joined Theatre for a New Audience in 2003. She spent the previous ten years devoted to fundraising for the 92nd Street Y and the Brooklyn Museum. Ryan began her career in classical music artist management and has also served as company manager for Chautauqua Opera, managing director for the Opera Ensemble of New York, and general manager of Eugene Opera. She is a 2014 Brooklyn Women of Distinction honoree from Community Newspaper Group.

**MICHAEL PAGE** (General Manager) joined Theater for a New Audience in 2013. TFANA credits include *King Lear*, *The Killer*, Peter Brook's *The Valley of Astonishment*, *Tamburlaine*, Soho Rep's *An Octoroon*, Fiasco Theater's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Isolde*, *Pericles*, *A Doll's House*, *The Father*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and Yale Rep's *Happy Days*. Prior to TFANA Michael was the general manager of the Tony Award winning Vineyard Theatre and managing director of Barrow Street Theatre where he managed the US premiere of Nina Raine's *Tribes* and David Cromer's landmark production of *Our Town*, among others.



Above: Leland Fowler (*Claudio*); Below: Christopher Michael McFarland (*Pompey*) in Theatre for a New Audience's production of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* by William Shakespeare, directed by Simon Godwin. Photos by Gerry Goodstein.

## ABOUT THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE



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### About Theatre for a New Audience

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, the mission of Theatre for a New Audience is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. Theatre for a New Audience produces for audiences Off-Broadway and has also toured nationally, internationally and to Broadway. We are guided in our work by five core values: a reverence for language, a spirit of adventure, a commitment to diversity, a dedication to learning, and a spirit of service. These values inform what we do with artists, how we interact with audiences, and how we manage our organization.

### Theatre for a New Audience Education Programs

Theatre for a New Audience is an award-winning company recognized for artistic excellence. Our education programs introduce students to Shakespeare and other classics with the same artistic integrity that we apply to our productions. Through our unique and exciting methodology, students engage in hands-on learning that involves all aspects of literacy set in the context of theatre education. Our residencies are structured to address City and State Learning Standards both in English Language Arts and the Arts, the New York City DOE's Curriculum Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater, and the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Begun in 1984, our programs have served more than 126,000 students, ages 9 through 18, in New York City Public Schools city-wide.

### A New Home in Brooklyn: Polonsky Shakespeare Center

After 33 seasons of award-winning and internationally-acclaimed productions, Theatre for a New Audience's new home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center, is a centerpiece of the Brooklyn Cultural District.

Designed by celebrated architect Hugh Hardy, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is the first theatre in New York designed and built expressly for classic drama since Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont in the 1960s. The 27,500 square-foot facility is a unique performance space in New York. The 299-seat Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage, inspired by the Cottesloe at London's National Theatre, combines an Elizabethan courtyard theatre with modern theatre technology that allows the stage and seating to be arranged in seven configurations. The new facility also includes the Theodore C. Rogers Studio (a 50-seat rehearsal/performance studio), and theatrical support spaces. The City of New York-developed Arts Plaza, designed by landscape architect Ken Smith, creates a natural gathering place around the building. In addition, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is also one of the few sustainable (green) theatres in the country, with an anticipated LEED-NC Silver rating from the United States Green Building Council.

Now with a home of its own, Theatre for a New Audience is contributing to the continued renaissance of Downtown Brooklyn. In addition to its season of plays, the Theatre is expanding its education and humanities offerings to include lectures and activities for families, as well as seminars, workshops, and other activities for artists, scholars, and families. When not in use by the Theatre, its new facility is available for rental, bringing much needed affordable performing and rehearsal space to the community.

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## THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE MAJOR SUPPORTERS

*Even with capacity audiences, ticket sales account for a small portion of our operating costs. The Theatre expresses its deepest thanks to the following Foundations, Corporations Government Agencies and Individuals for their generous support of the Theatre's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs.*

The 360° Series: Viewfinders has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this Viewfinder do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A Challenge Grant from the NEH established a Humanities endowment fund at Theatre for a New Audience to support these programs in perpetuity. Leading matching gifts to the NEH grant were provided by Joan and Robert Arnow, Norman and Elaine Brodsky, The Durst Organization, Perry and Marty Granoff, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, John J. Kerr & Nora Wren Kerr, Litowitz Foundation, Inc., Robert and Wendy MacDonald, Sandy and Stephen Perl binder, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Inc., Theodore C. Rogers, and from purchasers in the Theatre's Seat for Shakespeare Campaign.

Theatre for a New Audience's Humanities, Education, and Outreach programs are supported, in part, by The Elayne P. Bernstein Education Fund.

For more information on naming a seat or making a gift to the Education or Humanities endowments, please contact James Lynes, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 212-229-2819 x29, or by email at [jlynes@tfana.org](mailto:jlynes@tfana.org).

Theatre for a New Audience's productions and education programs receive support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



**Council on  
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*Additional support for these programs is provided by the generosity of the following Foundations and Corporations through either their general operating support or direct support of the Theatre's arts in education programs:*

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