

# SHAKESPEARE LIVES IN 2016



## Shakespeare Lives in Madrid

### **All the World's a Stage: A Celebration of William Shakespeare**

A performance based on a dozen works of the greatest writer in the English language, for the delight and instruction of teachers and students who 'creep unwillingly to school'. However, most of the text is based on the workers' scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'A most lamentable comedy about the love and most cruel death of Romeo and Juliet, performed by Peter Quince, the carpenter, and Bottom the weaver – 'And they let kids watch this?'

[Shakespeare's original: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Peter Quince, a carpenter, and his fellow amateur actors plan to put on a play for the wedding of the Duke and the Duchess, 'The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe'. Quince reads the names of the characters and tells the players their roles. Nick Bottom, who is playing the main role of Pyramus, is over-enthusiastic and wants to dominate the others by suggesting himself for several parts: the male hero, Pyramus, the female lead, Thisbe, and the Lion, which he thinks he can play all at the same time. The actors meet in the forest to rehearse. They are unsure how to represent

parts of the story, such as the hero killing himself with a sword, the lion, the moon and the wall between which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe whisper. At the wedding feast, the performers are terrible playing their roles and the tragedy soon becomes a comedy...]

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### **Shakespeare's unruly women: language, voice, identity.**

In this interactive talk, we examine closely the language deployed by Shakespeare's heroines as a medium of self-expression and gender equality. We explore the way Shakespeare creates heroines who are defined by their capacity for critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In his approach to women, he challenges tradition with innovation, uniformity with diversity, masculine authority with the creative freedom of women. In his perception of gender, Shakespeare was both part of his time and ahead of his time— and for language teachers today, he is also the greatest practitioner ever of the English language. We will identify ways in which Shakespeare's language (choice of words, collocations, puns and ambiguity) function to redefine and expand the boundaries of gender and in particular the capacity of women to act on and transform their world, a world hitherto dominated largely by men.

We will also consider the impact of the convention of the boy actor on gender roles and how the techniques of theatrical disguise blurred the distinction between male and female, thus disturbing the established order.

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### **Spain in Shakespeare**

In this interactive talk, we explore Shakespeare's perception and use of Spanish culture and characters in his plays. Spain had, in a number of ways, an important impact on English life in the 16th and 17th centuries and in a few but significant Shakespeare texts. Katherine of Aragon, the Spanish armada, the Gunpowder Plot and other aspects of the 'Spanish connection', find their way, directly or indirectly, into Shakespeare's plays. Even Cervantes and Don Quixote make a last minute, mysterious, appearance in the Shakespeare story. From his earliest work - *Love's Labour's Lost* - to his last play: *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare presents both a fascinating comic and a tragic view of Spanish culture and identity.

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### **Teaching Shakespeare's Sonnets: a practical approach**

In this interactive and highly practical session, we explore a selection of Shakespeare's sonnets in depth, illustrating possible classroom approaches. Participants will discover the unique power and beauty of these poems through a close examination of the language, themes and Shakespeare's daring and innovative approach to a conventional poetic form - daring for his contemporaries and daring today, in the 21st century. These are not lectures but problem-solving workshops, where participants will be actively involved and will go away with a wide range of activities ready to be used in the classroom and adapted to the teacher's own pedagogic context.