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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES LARGEST GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF PLAYWRIGHT'S
400-YEAR LEGACY IN 2016: SHAKESPEARE 400 CHICAGO**

Will Engage Top Chicago Cultural Institutions in Yearlong International Festival

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel was joined by Chicago Shakespeare Theater Artistic Director Barbara Gaines, Executive Director Criss Henderson, and leaders of the City's cultural institutions today to announce [Shakespeare 400 Chicago](#), a yearlong international arts festival in 2016 celebrating the vibrancy, relevance and reach of Shakespeare. As the world commemorates the four hundred years since Shakespeare's death in 1616, Shakespeare 400 Chicago brings together our city's resident world-class institutions across disciplines, and welcomes leading artists from around the globe to make Chicago their stage. Anticipated to be the world's largest and most comprehensive celebration of Shakespeare's enduring legacy, Shakespeare 400 Chicago is making "no small plans."

"Chicago will take center stage in 2016, as more than 1,000 local and international artists will create a global celebration of Shakespeare like no other in the world," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "During this landmark year, Shakespeare will be alive on our stages, in our schools and across our neighborhoods. The power of our world-class cultural institutions uniting behind one theme serves to amplify Chicago's role as a global destination for cultural tourism."

Spearheaded by Chicago Shakespeare Theater, this yearlong Quadricentennial festival will engage more than 500,000 Chicagoans and visitors to our City through 850 events exploring how Shakespeare's words continue to live in Chicago and throughout the world's great theater, dance, literature, music, cuisine and spectacle.

With leading support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, a diverse array of work across artistic disciplines will highlight Shakespeare's timeless inspiration of playwrights, painters and poets, composers and choreographers. Among the more than 60 Chicago institutions joining Chicago Shakespeare in offering performances, events and exhibitions are: the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago Humanities Festival, Chicago Mariachi Project, Chicago Park District, Chicago

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Public Libraries, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Illinois Humanities, Joffrey Ballet, Logan Center for the Arts, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Negaunee Music Institute, Newberry Library and WTTW.

Highlights from Chicago partners: Lyric Opera of Chicago's presents Charles Gounod's soaring *Romeo and Juliet*; Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Maestro Riccardo Muti culminates his cycle of Verdi's Shakespeare operas with *Falstaff*; Art Institute of Chicago highlights Shakespeare-inspired visual art in a special exhibition; Chicago chefs and restaurateurs, including Rick Bayless, Alpana Singh and Ryan McCaskey, will create a culinary "Complete Works" in restaurants across the city; and Newberry Library's "Creating Shakespeare" exhibition will bring together treasures from the British Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library alongside the Newberry's own renowned Shakespeare collection. Chicago Shakespeare's centerpiece of the celebration is Barbara Gaines' electrifying six-play history cycle, *Tug of War*, including *Edward III*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI, Parts 1, 2 and 3*, and *Richard III*. Two action-packed dramas in the spring and fall of 2016 trace the rise and fall of kings—and the uncommon courage of common men.

"Chicago Shakespeare has been honored to serve as a cultural ambassador for our city—importing astonishing work from around the world and exporting our work to leading international festivals," reflected CST Executive Director Criss Henderson. "Shakespeare 400 Chicago deepens our role as a global theater reflective of our global city—and demonstrates how Shakespeare's timeless words continue to inspire artists across disciplines and across cultures."

International artists participating in Shakespeare 400 Chicago will hail from Australia, Belarus, Belgium, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and beyond. International highlights include: Shakespeare's Globe Theatre's *The Merchant of Venice*, starring Jonathan Pryce at Chicago Shakespeare; Shanghai Peking Opera's *The Revenge of Prince Zidan* (based on *Hamlet*) and the Hamburg Ballet's *Othello* at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance; (In)Complete Works: *Table Top Shakespeare* from Forced Entertainment at the Museum of Contemporary Art; Also, the Cheek by Jowl/Pushkin Theatre of Moscow production of Declan Donnellan's *Measure for Measure*; Belarus Free Theatre's *King Lear*; National Theatre Studio's *Sancho: An Act of Remembrance*, written by and starring Paterson Joseph; The Company Theatre of Mumbai's Hindi translation of *Twelfth Night—Piya Behrupiya*; *Songs of Lear* from Poland's Song of the Goat; and Filter and the Royal Shakespeare Company's music-infused *Twelfth Night*—all at Chicago Shakespeare.

"The poetry of Shakespeare's words and his brilliant characters from all walks of life weave universal stories, speaking to artists across continents, cultures and centuries," remarked the Theater's founder and Artistic Director Barbara Gaines. "We're thrilled that our colleagues in Chicago and from across the world will join us in 2016 to bring his work to life in our global city. Shakespeare's words move artists in every creative medium."

Shakespeare will be celebrated across communities and throughout the City's classrooms. Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Public Libraries and the Chicago Park District will highlight Shakespeare's work in free programming for students and families. CPS students and teachers citywide can participate in the "Battle of the Bard"—a slam-style showcase designed in partnership with Chicago Youth Shakespeare to build community across neighborhoods and celebrate Shakespeare's language through performance. A.B.L.E., an ensemble of adolescents with Down's syndrome, is

developing their own production of *Twelfth Night*. Partners including the Newberry Library, Chicago Humanities Festival, Illinois Humanities and Chicago Shakespeare have slated thought-provoking lecture and discussion series, classes and educational initiatives to foster a citywide conversation about the playwright's legacy. Chicagoans and the world can engage with Shakespeare 400 Chicago and access vast digital resources and archives released around the festival across platforms—including online at www.shakespeare400chicago.com, on Facebook (www.facebook.com/shakespeare400chicago), Twitter (@shakes400chi) and Instagram (@shakes400chi).

“We look forward to welcoming international artists from all corners of the world to use our city as their stage in 2016, and to work with a broad group of arts and humanities organizations to celebrate Shakespeare’s legacy and make this ambitious program a success,” said Julia Stasch, president of John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, lead supporter of Shakespeare 400 Chicago.

The full line-up of Shakespeare 400 Chicago productions, events and programs will be announced in January 2016. More information can be found at www.shakespeare400chicago.com.

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