UT students take the Bard to London

Summer program to perform three plays, including "King Lear"

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William Shakespeare did not write books. He did not write articles or essays or brochures or blogs or research papers. He wrote plays. Shakespeare wanted his work to be alive. He wanted real people with breath in their bodies to speak; nay, announce his lines to the world at hand. Shakespeare is something to be watched and experienced and appreciated with fellow man, not read in solitude.

This is something The University of Texas understands. This summer, 17 students will have the opportunity to perform three Shakespeare plays at Gray’s Inn Hall in London, one of only a few existing buildings in which it is known that Shakespeare and his company staged one of his plays. Gray’s Inn is one of the Inns of Court, the law schools of England since medieval times.

"We’ll literally be performing on the same floorboards Shakespeare did," said English senior David Boss, a member of the 2006 Shakespeare Through Performance class. "On one level it’s intimidating; on another level it’s incredibly exciting."

"All learning starts with ignorance," said Shakespeare at Winedale founder and recently retired professor James Ayres. What began in 1970 as a course under the University of Texas’ English department has expanded into a program that reaches many students and even more theatergoers. Dedicated to bringing Shakespeare to life for students and audiences, the course gives students the opportunity to explore his rich writings through the creative act of play.

Performance provides a unique educational approach to the plays of Shakespeare, even studying and memorizing the texts, staging scenes, making costumes, composing music. At the end of the summer, they give public performances of the plays Shakespeare plays for an audience drawn from around the state.

Shakespeare at Winedale has gained international recognition in recent years. In 1998, the program was invited to perform "Hamlet" on the stage of the newly restored Globe Theatre. Since then, students have traveled to England at the end of each summer, supported by private donations, performing at the Orange Tree and the Swan Theatres, working with members of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and seeing a wide variety of theater performances.

Shakespeare, Shakespeare, Shakespeare..." Shear makes that the program’s reputation has helped them earn the chance to perform at the historic Gray’s Inn Banquet Hall this year. Winedale has had a partnership with several places, including Shakespeare in the Park, and one of their goals is to continue to bring Shakespeare to life.

Shakespeare at Winedale Schedule:

- The 2006 summer class is performing "As You Like It," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and "King Lear."
- Performances are at 8:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and at 2:00 p.m. on Sundays.
- For reservations, call the Shakespeare Through Performance office at (512) 471-4726 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily).
- Winedale is located approximately halfway between Austin and Houston.
- Winedale Historical Center is just down the road from Round Top, a town full of antique shops, and it’s a breakfast menu.
- Performance hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.
- Tickets for each of the plays are $10 for adults and $5 for students.

Season Finale and Reception:

August 12 at 7:30 p.m.
Location: Theatre Barn
Tickets are $20 and include both the performance and evening entertainment of "As You Like It."
All proceeds benefit the Shakespeare in the Park Foundation.
www.shakespeare-at-winedale.org

For students with no previous experience in theater or literary study, this program provides the opportunity to experience Shakespeare’s plays in the practical laboratory of an Elizabethan-style theater. Winedale students do everything necessary to bring Shakespeare to life.
SHAKESPEARE: UT students will perform 'As You Like It' in London

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acting companies for a while now, he said.

"We're working with the Globe Company this year on how to improve our acting abilities," Boss said. "I hope to think that our reputation has helped us with that... We're going, and we're very happy.

"I don't want to say we deserve it, but it's a reward you definitely feel like you've worked hard for."

The University of Texas Shakespeare at Winedale program will perform in the historic Banqueting Hall of Gray's Inn, London, this summer. Seventeen students from Texas will perform "As You Like It" on Thursday, Aug. 24th, in this historic venue, where Shakespeare and his company performed over 400 years ago.

The performance will include a buffet reception with wine and canapés. Tickets will be £20 per person; the reception will begin at 7 p.m., with the performance following at 8 p.m. Gray's Inn is located on Gray's Inn Road in Central London, near the Chancery Lane tube stop (Central Line). Reservations can be made with Sarah Bayne; call (512) 471-4726, or e-mail smbayne@mail.utexas.edu.