WHO WE ARE

Crooked Figure Theatre is a professional summer-stock company housed in the Theatre Department of Northern Arizona University. We marry direct, honest storytelling with experimentation and audience engagement.

Our site-specific company tells both old and new stories in culturally relevant and imaginative ways, pushing the creative boundaries of what a theatre can be and the impact it can and should have on everyday lives.

We hope you enjoy KING LEAR and please join us next summer to see EVERYMAN.

Thank you,

Crooked Figure Theatre
CAST

King Lear ---------------------- Ben Alexander
Earl of Gloucester ------------- Tracey Mayer Hayes
    ADVISOR TO KING LEAR
Earl of Kent ------------------ Jed Hayes
   ADVISOR TO KING LEAR
Goneril ----------------------- Erin Harroun
    ELDEST DAUGHTER OF KING LEAR
Regan ------------------------- Kacie Debevc
    MIDDLE DAUGHTER OF KING LEAR
Cordelia ---------------------- Emily Wood
    YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF KING LEAR
Duke of Albany ---------------- Bob Crawford
    HUSBAND OF GONERIL
Duke of Cornwall ------------- Skyllar Huskisson
    HUSBAND OF REGAN
Edmund ----------------------- Gillian Norton
    DAUGHTER OF GLOUCESTER
Edgar ------------------------ Nate Gayan
    SON OF GLOUCESTER
Oswald ---------------------- Morgan Gallob
    SERVANT TO GONERIL
Duke of Burgundy ------------- Morgan Gallob
King of France/Gentleman ----- Alexis Gibbs
Lear’s Fool ------------------ Emily Wood

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION
PLEASE BE AWARE THERE ARE SCENES OF VIOLENCE
CREATIVE TEAM

Christina Gutierrez-Dennehy, Director
Jennifer Peterson, Scenographer
Teresa Wise, Stage Manager
Allison Fluckey, Assistant Stage Manager
Gabrielle Lux, Assistant Designer
Kassi Post, Assistant Designer
Janet Ayala, Production Assistant
Tori Niemiec, Craft Artisan/Blood Master
Kathryn Frketich, Production Assistant
Kacie Debevc, Event Promotions

SNEAK PEEK IN THE SHOP
Dost Thou Call Me Fool? Directing King Lear for American Audiences

In June of 2017, I had the privilege to see a one-woman version of *King Lear* at the Sam Wannamaker Playhouse in London. Performer Debs Newbold narrated Shakespeare's story in addition to performing most of the principle characters, creating a version of the iconic tragedy that was stunning in its simplicity and clarity. Newbold performed on a bare stage, transforming her body into the aged king, his scheming daughters, and nature itself as Lear confronted the storm on the heath. The exception to Newbold's relative adherence to Shakespeare's text came in her treatment of the Fool. Rather than a member of Lear's court, as he appears in the original text, Newbold's Fool was a voice in Lear's head, born of his newfound self-doubt after banishing his youngest child, Cordelia. Lear is a king used to commanding respect, and he believes himself to be infallible. The error he comes to realize he has made in banishing Cordelia fractures his brain, as he cannot believe simultaneously that he can be both king and wrong. The result is a Fool-voice, which no one but Lear himself can hear.

Newbold's notion of the Fool struck me as an exciting way to solve what I see as two of the play's challenges. First, Shakespeare is famously unclear about the causes and particularities of Lear's madness, hinting only that it arises from his fear of women or of lost masculinity. This gendered reading of madness is problematic for today's audiences, who understand mental health in a much different way than Shakespeare's original audiences. Secondly, American audiences are primed to see leaders as inherently flawed people susceptible to external pressures and internal biases. The notion of an infallible ruler—the kind Lear believes himself to be—is disturbing to democratic citizens. Newbold's notion of the Fool-voice addresses both of these concerns, resulting in a Lear whose madness is self-created, and who learns to recognize his own vulnerability.

Of course, Newbold created her Lear as a one-woman show. The version you are about to see adapts the Fool-voice concept to a full production, combining Newbold's work with our own questions about mental illness, power, age, and gender. Rather than a voice, our Fool is a fully embodied character, visible only to Lear, who might remind audiences (and Lear himself) of a particular character who plays a key role in the king's madness. Additionally, we've re-imagined a few of Shakespeare's characters in an effort to ask questions about the gendered nature of power both in Lear's world and in ours.

Like the Fool-voice in Newbold's version, Lear has been a near-constant presence in my head as I've worked with Shakespeare's other kings. I hope that the spark I felt when I saw Newbold's production lives for you here as you encounter Shakespeare's tragic masterpiece about a king who finds himself to be little more than a "foolish old man."

—Christina Gutierrez-Dennehy, Director
CFT NEWS

NEXT SUMMER

Crooked Figure Presents *EVERYMAN*. In this high energy reimagining of the play, Everyman is forced to account for his materialistic, hedonistic lifestyle when confronted by Death. Directly confronting our modern technology-driven lifestyles, the play asks highly current questions about morality, mortality, and meaning. Our next staged reading will be Jed Hayes’ new adaptation of *OEDIPUS*. Keep up with our Facebook page @ Crooked Figure Theatre for upcoming dates and times.