ACTORS FROM THE LONDON STAGE

Genuine | Dynamic | Shakespeare
Peter Holland
Academic Director, Actors From The London Stage; McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies; Associate Dean for the Arts, College of Arts and Letters, University of Notre Dame.

"This week was unbelievable. It was the most successful, wonderful, exciting, and thoroughly professional experience we could have wished for. (The actors) were stupendous in the classroom, on stage, and in person. We have never had such a response from students and faculty."
Nora Hussey, Director of Theatre and Theatre Studies, Wellesley College

"Our goal is simple: to make exciting Shakespeare, performed by the finest professional actors, available to American universities in the context of an extraordinary, week-long teaching experience.

Our actors are uniquely prepared. For the Shakespeare production, each of the five actors take on two or three major roles and several minor ones; each is unusually responsible for the whole play, for there is no director.

During the teaching week, the actors bring their knowledge to a wide variety of classes, not only for courses on Shakespeare, but also anything from law to communications to engineering. They get students up out of their chairs and act with them to teach them how Shakespeare's texts become scripts, words become actions, and actions become meaning."
ON STAGE

Each residency is highlighted by multiple performances of a full-length Shakespeare production. Featuring minimal props, costumes, and set, the clever staging showcases the talents of this unique five-member ensemble while keeping the focus where it belongs – on Shakespeare’s words.

Prospero’s island never seemed so close or his charms so potent as in the five-actor performance on a bare stage, with attention to language and physicality that made magic. One of the Top 10 Theatrical Wonders of 2011.

Austin Chronicle

The actors from The London Stage simply insist that you play with them, in the magic of Shakespeare and the combined gift of creative imaginations. It’s a wonderful experience, literally creating the play along with the actors...

The Daily Texan

IN THE CLASSROOM

"Jennifer Higham came to two of my courses. For my first course, "Dramatic Texts in Performance" she explored scenes from Twelfth Night from the point of view of the actor. She did extraordinary work with them! She got them on their feet for a warm-up and some improvisations and then had them approach the text with those exercises in mind. The students clearly gained a more profound understanding of the text by working with her. In addition, their experience of watching the show was so much more engaging and critical. I would recommend working with the AFTLS to any professor who teaches Shakespeare.

For my "Playwriting" class, Jennifer prepared a completely different lesson. Upon my request, she spoke about her considerable experience in premiering new plays, including The Pillowman in the West End. She talked to my students, who are young aspiring playwrights, about the challenges and joys of premiering new work from the point of view of the actor. One thing that I am constantly trying to get my writing students to understand is the notion of playwriting as a form of collaboration. It was so helpful for my students to hear a professional (and incredibly experienced) actress talk about the process of interpreting and performing new plays. Jennifer also handed out scenes from two new plays (both premiered in London this past year). We read the scenes and talked about the elements of the playwriting. Jennifer not only helped them to further understand the intensely collaborative nature of playwriting, she also gave them two exciting examples of contemporary playwrights who are creating exciting work in terms of theme, language and staging. As one of my students commented after her visit, “When Jen was with us, it felt like the room was expanding outward and the space was getting bigger and bigger.” The students clearly felt their creative minds expanding in her presence!

Rebekah Maggor - Vanderbilt University

The actors can teach in dozens of disciplines, including literature and theatre, business and law, psychology and gender studies, classics and romance languages, architecture and engineering, and history and theology.

"I have participated in this program for many years and have had nothing but wonderful experiences with the actors, but the way Neil interacted with my class this year was simply phenomenal! I now have 18 students who want to be actors! AFTLS gets better all the time, and it has become a necessary part of my world literature curriculum. I can’t wait until next year.

George Christian – University of Texas – Austin

Superior involvement, meaningful activities and thoughtful feedback to the class & their year end project. What expertise & energy they brought with them. We would welcome AFTLS back any time!

Donell Stines - UNC Charlotte
Patrick Stewart
Founding Director,
Actors From The London Stage.

"...the work is open to the concepts of what dramatic literature can be to young people, to students – that they hear another legit voice besides the voice of the academic, the teacher, the editor of the text, or the scholar. It is more than the simple experience of going to a theatre and watching a play. The actors have a personal connection with those dramatic texts, which is distinctive and different from the scholars.

Our program gives the actor a unique platform from which to explore with professors and students what he or she does and why it is done. That exciting exchange is what Actors From The London Stage would like to bring to your campus.

Each Actors From The London Stage residency includes three full-length performances and up to thirty-five classroom sessions.

For more information and to book a residency contact: AFTLS, 574.631.3777 or visit shakespeare.nd.edu