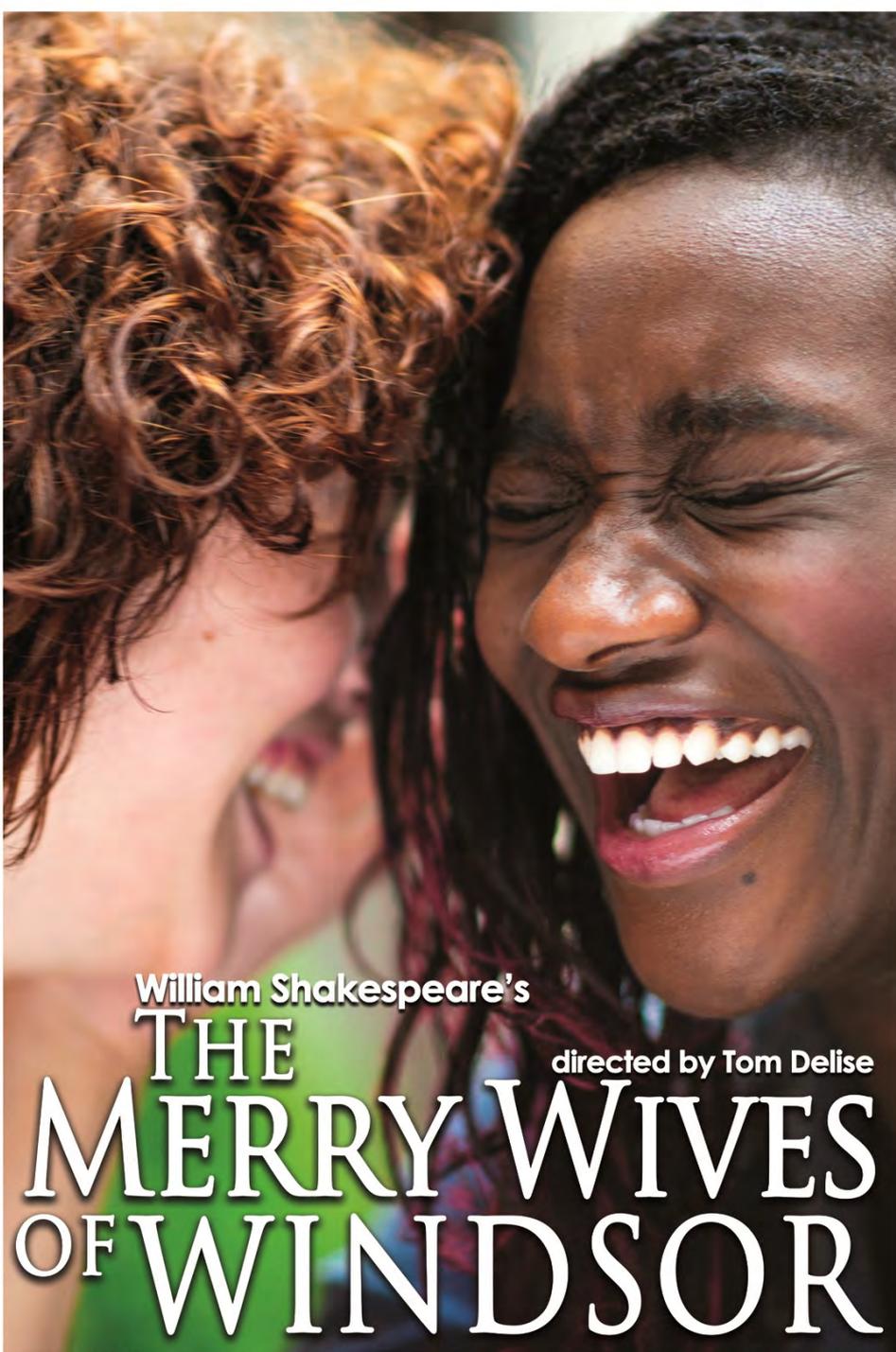


BALTIMORE SHAKESPEARE FACTORY



William Shakespeare's

THE
MERRY WIVES
OF WINDSOR

directed by Tom Delise

July 26 - August 18
Fridays and Saturdays at 8pm
Sundays at 4pm

BALTIMORE SHAKESPEARE FACTORY
BSF
BARD TO THE BONE

Baltimore Shakespeare Factory

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Baltimore Shakespeare Factory presents

The Merry Wives of Windsor

by **William Shakespeare**

directed by **Tom Delise**

Cast (in alphabetical order)

Emily Classen.....Alice Ford/John Rugby
David Forrer.....Falstaff
Brian Gilbert.....Dr. Caius/Bardolph
Dominic Gladden.....Justice Robert Shallow
Adam Henricksen.....George Page
Jamil Johnson.....Fenton/Pistol/Robert
Melissa McGinley.....Sir Hugh Evans
Ali McIntosh.....Host of the Garter Inn/John
Bethany Mayo*.....Margaret Page
Jeff Miller.....Frank Ford/Peter Simple
Michael Mitchell.....Abraham Slender/Robin
Lauren Romagnano.....Ann Page/Nym/William Page
Kay-Megan Washington.....Mistress Quickly

Stage Manager **Rachel Tilley**

Music Director **Jim Stimson**

Costume Designer **Kendra Shapanus**

Production Interns **Elizabeth Currie** and **Makeima Freeland**

“A great cause of the night is lack of the sun.”

BSF wishes to thank **Charles Atwell** and **Bruce Kapplin** for their generous donation of time and talent to restore light to The Great Hall.

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

*BSF Resident Company Member

Drinking Down All Unkindness

by Tom Delise



George Cruikshank, *Herne's Oak from 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' V, v.* Oil on canvas, ca. 1857.

The Merry Wives of Windsor has a reputation; but unfortunately, among many distinguished Shakespeare scholars, that reputation is not a good one.

There are a number of arguments these scholars make to justify their ill opinion of this play. First and foremost among these arguments is their claim that the Sir John Falstaff who appears in this play is a woefully pale imitation of the majestic Falstaff that Shakespeare created for the two parts of the *Henry IV*. They also point to the fact that underdeveloped plot lines and characters abound in the play. In addition, some argue that the play has more prose (88%) than any other Shakespeare play because of the story, possibly apocryphal, that Queen Elizabeth ordered Shakespeare to write a play that showed Falstaff in love, and she only gave him two weeks to do it. Hence, the lack of verse lines and all the loose ends. Other arguments are legion, but this is meant to be a short essay.

Despite these assertions, I argue that *Merry Wives* is a woefully underrated play, and rather than go toe-to-toe with the nattering nabobs of negativism, I will simply allow these scholars to get on their literary high horses and ride off while I instead focus on what I think makes *Merry Wives* so much fun for actors and audiences alike.

First, the play is a wonderful glimpse into life as it was in a small 16th century English village. We see people visiting each other in their homes, planning hunting parties, discussing recreational activities such as dog racing, and match making, and yet we also get to see their

petty squabbles and disagreements. In other words, we get to feel the rhythms of life in a small community of people, all who seem know one another, at the least by reputation.

The play is also filled with a cast of eccentric, but charming, characters: the enigma that is Falstaff; the jealous, but repentant Frank Ford; the affable George Page; the doddering Justice Shallow; the young lovers Fenton and Anne Page; the socially awkward Abraham Slender; the babbling Hugh Evans; the bombastic Dr. Caius, the effervescent Host of the Garter Inn; the good-natured schemer, Mistress Quickly; and even the grungy, but strangely moral (at least at one point), Pistol and Nym.

And, of course, the action of the play revolves around the wonderfully witty and effervescent Merry Wives themselves, Margaret Page and Alice Ford. They are the true stars of this play, and they are the only women for whom Shakespeare titled a play, other than the ones where the woman is paired with a man who has top billing (ie, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Troilus and Cressida*). We delight in seeing them out-manuever and out-smart the men in a male oriented world.

Finally, in the end, after good natured comeuppances are administered to the deserving, all of the characters readily accept an invitation to a dinner where all agree to forgive and forget all injustices and disagreements.

As I watched this play unfold before me each night at rehearsal, I found myself thinking, "Wouldn't it be nice if we all lived in a world like this -- a world where after all the 'prabbles and prabbles' of daily life, we can all simply gather together at the end of the day, and in the words of Master Page, 'drink down all unkindness'? O, 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

We hope you enjoy the world of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to life for you.

The Main Plot

Sir John Falstaff, in need of money, concocts a plan to "woo" both Margaret Page, wife of George Page, and Alice Ford, wife of Frank Ford, in order to get access to money from the rich husbands. The wives find out about his plan, are insulted, and devise three practical jokes on him in order to punish him for his effrontery.

At the same time Frank Ford, falsely believing that his wife is arranging a tryst with Falstaff, plots to catch them in the act.

The Minor Plot

Anne Page, the daughter of Margaret and George Page, is in love with Fenton. But her parents have other ideas: Margaret is arranging for her daughter to marry Dr. Caius, and George Page is arranging a marriage for his daughter with Abraham Slender. And the irrepressible Mistress Quickly is profiting by acting as the go-between between them all.

The Other Minor Plot

The jolly Host of the Garter Inn Other is playing a practical joke on Dr. Caius and the Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans. Knowing they are both cowards, he arranges for them to meet for a duel, to the great pleasure of the other men in Windsor.

All the plots come together in the Forest outside Windsor for the third and final practical joke that teaches Falstaff the lesson that "wives can be merry, and honest too."



In a Nutshell

Shakespeare's Stage

It is our objective to recreate, as closely as is possible, the staging conditions, spirit, and atmosphere created by Shakespeare's theatre company during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

Universal Lighting

Whether in the outdoor Globe Theatre or in the indoor Blackfriars Theatre, the lights were always on during a play in Shakespeare's time. Actors and audience could see one another and frequently interacted (see below). The "fourth wall" and proscenium arch present in most theatres today did not exist. That's why house lights are up in our indoor venues throughout the show.

Audience Interaction

Shakespeare's audiences were a PART of the play. Many speeches and comments in Shakespeare's plays were spoken directly to the audience in general or to specific audience members. With actors and audience all sharing the same light, there are many opportunities for this. Whether it is the funeral oration of Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* or the wedding in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the audience should feel like a part of the scene.

Doubling

Doubling parts (more than one part played by one actor) was a feature of theatre companies in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Without doubling, many of Shakespeare's plays would require a cast of over 30 actors

Genderless Casting

In Shakespeare's time, all the roles on professional stages in England were performed by men. Evidence indicates that most of Shakespeare's most famous female roles, such as Juliet and Cleopatra, were played by young boys. If gender-fluid casting was the norm then, we want to offer all our actors the opportunity to play all the roles today. After all, it's only fair, isn't it?

Sets

Very few set pieces seemed to have been used for a typical production in Shakespeare's time – the theatre itself was the set, and audiences were expected to use their imaginations. We think that is a good thing; it puts the focus on the language, the acting, and the story. Therefore, we also keep sets to a minimum, using only what actors can carry on and off with them.

Costumes

Whereas the sets were meager, costumes were often elaborate and colorful. Costumes were also important in order for an audience to immediately identify a character type or to differentiate between characters that are doubled. However, the costumes used in that time were often a mixture of historically inaccurate styles; for example, a typical play such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* may have some actors dressed in Greek garb and others dressed in the clothes of a typical Englishman.

Length

In the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare does make reference to the play being the "two hours' traffic of our stage." Does this mean that the average play ran two hours? Hard to believe if you think about *Hamlet*. However, BSF believes that our productions must be FUN and FAST to keep the audience engaged, so we employ quick pacing and a continuous flow of action to keep the performance of our plays as close to two hours as is possible.

Music

Shakespeare's plays are filled with music, and we also want our productions to include musical entertainment. That is not to say that we have to use the songs that Shakespeare did. For the songs that appear in the world of the play, we stick to what Shakespeare gave us, but since he used the popular music of his time, we use the music of our time in our pre-show and interludes. You may hear Prince, the Sex Pistols, Taylor Swift, Johnny Cash, or Beyoncé.

About the Ensemble

Emily Classen (Alice Ford/John Rugby) is originally from New Orleans and has her BFA in Acting from The University of Southern Mississippi. This is her fourth production with BSF, seen most recently in last fall's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Other local theatre credits include work with the Baltimore Rock Opera Society and Cohesion Theatre. She'll be seen on stage next in Baltimore Rock Opera Society's upcoming *Welcome to Shakesville*. Film credits include *The Forgiving* (Marketing For Change, post-prod); *Ape Canyon* (MindInMotion LLC, post-prod); *Quakers* (Charm City Film, 2018); *Appearances* (Charm City Film, 2018).

David Forrer (Falstaff) David's past roles with BSF include Pompey and Dolabella in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale*, and Duke Senior and Corin in *As You Like It*. His two most recent non-BSF appearances have been as Troy Whitworth in *Jerusalem* at Fells Point Corner Theater and as Satan in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* at Memorial Players. He thanks his beautiful family.

Brian Gilbert (Dr. Caius/Bardolf) is thrilled to be making his BSF debut! Previous Shakespeare credits include Prince Hal in *Henry IV* parts 1 and 2. Other major acting credits include Caractacus Potts in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and Tommy Albright in *Brigadoon*. He is a physics teacher from York that is enjoying the summer off pursuing another passion of his. Thanks to the always supportive friends and family who have gotten him to where he is today.

Dominic Gladden (Justice Robert Shallow), Baltimore Shakespeare Factory: *Love Labour's Lost* (2012, Longaville), *Complete Deaths of William Shakespeare* (Ensemble); Arena Players: *Hamlet* (Claudius), *The Katrina Monologues* (Man on Roof), *A Father's Love* (Thomas), *Witness For The Prosecution* (Lt. Hearnest), *Jitney* (Shealy), *Sleuth* (Milo Tindle), *Blue* (Young Reuben/ Blue Jr); Fells Point Corner Theater: *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* (Hamlet); Single Carrot Theatre Company: *Peter Pan* (Twins/Cecco), *Promenade* (Ensemble); Chesapeake Theatre Company: *A Christmas Carol* (Robert Long, Young Scrooge, Old Joe); Cradle Theatre Company: *Macbeth*(Macbeth); Cohesion Theatre Company: *Thirteen Dead Husbands* (Dr. Seamus Delaney);Annex Theatre Company: *Double Consciousness* (Ensemble), *Insurrection: Holding History* (TJ); Theatre Morgan: *The Merchant of Venice* (Shylock), *Spunk* (Jelly/Joe) Education: BA Theatre Arts, Morgan State University.

Adam Henricksen (George Page) Seeing the BSF's production of *King John* in August 2018 inspired Adam to make the jump from improv to Shakespeare's theater, first appearing in the BSF production of *Cymbeline* (Posthumous Leonatus) earlier this year. In addition to improv and stage, Adam also works various production assistant jobs on TV/Digital commercials, shows and films in and around DC and Baltimore. He has an obsession with Film Noir and dreams of one day swimming with dolphins.

Jamil Johnson (Fenton/Pistol/Robert) Jamil is excited to be making his Baltimore Shakespeare Factory debut, a Baltimore native who started theater locally in high school with companies such as Phoenix Festival Theatre (*High School Musical*) and Cockpit in Court at CCBC Essex (*Hairspray*). Jamil then studied and received his BFA in theatre from New England College in Henniker, New Hampshire where he also directed two productions (*Dog sees God*), (*Bachelorette*) and assistant directed the schools main stage production (*Angels in America* part 2: Perestroika). His other theatrical credits include: *Midsummer Nights Dream*

(NEC theatre), *Approaching Zanzibar* (NEC theatre), *Stranger Kindness* (The Acme Corporation), *Fucking A* (Iron Crow Theatre), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Spotlighters Theatre), *Equus* (NEC theatre).

Bethany Mayo (Margaret Page) is an actor, singer, dancer and teacher who hails from the Mighty Mid-West. She has worked all over town at Cohesion Theater, Fells Point Corner Theater, Strand Theater, Chesapeake Shakespeare Company and Annapolis Shakespeare Company because she loves working new places and meeting new people. This is her third show as a performer with BSF, where she is also Director of Education. She has her bachelor's degree in musical theater from William Woods University in Fulton, MO and is working towards her Masters in Theater Education from The Catholic University of America. She has a husband, a dog, and 2 plants, none of whom help her run lines.

Melissa McGinley (Sir Hugh Evans) is happy to be back at BSF for the second time, having appeared as Banquo/Macduff's Wife/Seyton in last season's *Macbeth*. Favorite roles include: the Marquise de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Spots), Myrrhine in *Lysistrata* (Spots), Angustias in *The House of Bernarda Alba* (FPCT), Hermione/Mopsa in *The Winter's Tale* (OMSC), The Duke in *Measure for Measure* (OMSC), Doll Tearsheet in *Henry 4 Part 2* (OMSC) and Germaine in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* (OMP.) Melissa is the company dramaturge for the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company in Dover, PA, and will direct their upcoming production of *Coriolanus* this winter. She is a graduate of Marymount Manhattan College's Theatre Department. Love to Colin and Sasha (also Rory and Nino.)

Ali R. McIntosh (Host of the Garter Inn/John) is thrilled to be a part of her first show with BSF. She has most recently worked props for *Steel Magnolias* and *Vinegar Tom* at Spotlighters Theatre. Ali is a latinx, native Baltimorean with a passion for theatre, especially Shakespeare. She got her AA in Technical Theatre at CCBC Essex and completed her BA in Linguistics at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. She can be commonly found as stage manager for Open Space Arts productions. She is grateful for this opportunity to perform!

Jeff Miller (Master Ford/Peter Simple) is pleased to be returning to BSF for his fourth show. With BSF previously, Jeff has been Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Francis Flute/Peaseblossom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Stephano in *The Tempest*. Jeff has been an actor, and director, and teaching artist throughout Maryland, and is currently in Mary Baldwin University's Shakespeare and Performance Master's Program.

Michael Mitchell (Abraham Slender/Robin) is a 23-year-old recent graduate of Salisbury University and this will be his first production with the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory! He is very excited to work with the wonderful cast and crew of this production and hopes to return for many more to come.

Lauren Romagnano (Ann Page/Nym/William Page) is a recent graduate of Mary Baldwin's Shakespeare and Performance Program, where she earned her Master of Letters and is still enrolled to earn her Master of Fine Arts next May. She is very excited to be returning to the BSF stage, where she appeared last summer as 3rd Witch in *Macbeth*, but some of her other recent credits include Lafew in *All's Well That Ends Well* and Francis/Glendower in *1 Henry IV* (both at Mary Baldwin). Lauren wants to thank her friends and family for their continuous

support, especially while she juggles the life of student actor and professional actor at the same time, and give a shout out to the Steadfast Shakespeare Company--her new MFA cohort that she will spend the next year performing five plays in repertory with in Staunton. Enjoy the show!

Kay-Megan Washington (Mistress Quickly) is thrilled to return to Baltimore Shakespeare Factory after her debut in 2016 as Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part 1*. Although she lost that part to David Forrer this time, she will make the best of the hilarious cards she's been dealt. Favorite recent roles include Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Joanne in *Company*, Madame de Volanges in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and The Witch in *Into The Woods*.

Tom Delise (Director) founded BSF in 2006 and for the company he has directed Shakespeare's *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard III*, *Measure For Measure*, *Henry IV, Part One* and the first original pronunciation productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello* since Shakespeare's time. He has also directed *The Shoemaker's Holiday* by Thomas Dekker, a stage reading of the anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry V* performed at the American Shakespeare Center, and co-directed an original work written by Alice Stanley, *The Complete Deaths of William Shakespeare*. He is the author of the book *That Is the Question: The Ultimate Shakespeare Quiz Book*.

Rachel Tilley (Stage Manager) has been with the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory as Resident Stage Manager since 2015. Other shows she has done with BSF include *Henry IV Part I*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Sea Voyage*, and *Othello*. She also worked on the Factory's joint production of the *Complete Deaths of William Shakespeare* with Cohesion Theatre Company.

Jim Stimson (Music Director) - Jim plays lute, guitar, cittern, bandora, shawm, crumhorn, recorder and percussion. He has provided music for 20 Shakespeare Factory productions. Jim has played with numerous early music and folk ensembles and is a founding member of the Devil's Tailors, a Scottish folk band. A student of Ronn McFarlane and Pat O'Brien, Jim has made an extensive study of Elizabethan lute and theater music.

Kendra Shapanus (Costume Designer) Combining her loves of theatre, art and sewing, Kendra designs and makes costumes in Towson, MD. After she received her BS in Theatre from Towson University, she moved to Philadelphia and earned an MFA in Costume Design and Construction from Temple University. Since returning to MD, she collaborates with artists at Goucher College as the Theatre Program Costume Shop Manager, and at Towson University as the Dance Department's Costume Coordinator and Designer, while also freelancing for schools and dance companies.

Elizabeth Currie (Production Intern) is a rising senior at Roland Park Country School where she is a member of the audition-only singing ensemble, the Semiquavers. Elizabeth has appeared in Roland Park's productions of *Almost Maine*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, as well as Boys Latin's School's production of *Leading Ladies* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Elizabeth is an intern for the BSF and hopes to pursue acting in college.

Makeima Elise Freeland (Production Intern) is a first-year student at Notre Dame of Maryland University who aspires to become a screenwriter, director, producer, filmmaker, and playwright. She is from Hyattsville, Maryland, and is currently a Philosophy and Communication Arts double-major and an English and Religious Studies double-minor. Productions at NDMU include *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Valentine) and *The Moors* (Agatha).

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Tag us in your posts! #BSFMerryWives

Theatre should be seen, not read.



With the school year just around the corner, Baltimore Shakespeare Factory is delighted to announce the return of our student matinees!

Classes, clubs, and homeschool groups are welcome!

For rates and more information, email Bethany Mayo, Education Director:

bethany@baltimoreshakespearefactory.org

Knight of the Burning Pestle

Wednesday November 6, 2019

Thursday November 14, 2019

King Lear in Original Pronunciation

Wednesday November 6, 2019

Thursday November 14, 2019

Henry V

Wednesday February 19, 2020

Thursday February 27, 2020

Much Ado About Nothing

Wednesday June 10, 2020

Thursday June 18, 2020

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Justyne Paxton had become a fan of Baltimore Shakespeare Factory due to a love of the Bard and a passion for performance art. She is a graduate of Towson University and holds a bachelor's degree in English. She is now a revenue manager for Marriott International after spending most of her career in planning, managing, and executing events. Justyne lives in Parkville with her husband, Eric, their daughter Sophia, and many reptiles. She has a deep passion for cooking, reading, gardening, dancing, and is a lifetime member of the Jane Austen Society of North America. She grew up in Olney, Maryland but fell in love with Baltimore- and her husband- while attending Towson and never left.

She is a firm believer in the power of BSF as it makes Shakespeare available to the masses. The desire to support this accessibility is what led Justyne to join the board and thus chair the events committee. See her work in action at our upcoming gala; more information at www.baltimoreshakespearefactory.org/gala

Thanks to our Donors for making this work possible.

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On September 21st we're throwing a party to celebrate and officially name Baltimore's most beautiful stage, and we want you to be there.

Beguile the Time: Party Like It's 1599!

Libations, festival fare, spectacle, revels, and silent auction!

Gala: 7-10pm

Afterparty and Bawdy Good Fun: 9pm-Midnight

Proceeds to benefit BSF's ongoing programs in Baltimore City.



For info and tickets, please visit:
www.baltimoreshakespearefactory.org/gala