

## Canadian Stage announces full casting for the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of Shakespeare in High Park: *King Lear & Twelfth Night*

Stage veterans Diane D'Aquila and Robert Persichini return to High Park roots June 29–September 3

May 17, 2017 – Toronto, ON – Canadian Stage is proud to announce the casting details for the 35<sup>th</sup> season of Shakespeare in High Park, returning to the High Park Amphitheatre from June 29 to September 3 with bold contemporary takes on *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* under the stars.

Multiple award-winning actor and stage veteran **Diane D'Aquila** will take on one of the most monumental roles in the history of English drama as Queen Lear in director **Alistair Newton's** production of *King Lear* – the first staging of Shakespeare's towering family drama in the history of the popular open-air theatre event. On this anniversary year, D'Aquila revisits Canadian Stage's outdoor amphitheatre after starring as Titania in the inaugural production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1983.

She is joined by Stratford and Shaw veteran **Robert Persichini** as Lear's Fool and Malvolio in the topsy-turvy comedy of mistaken identity and role reversal *Twelfth Night*, directed by **Tanja Jacobs**. No stranger to High Park, Persichini gave memorable performances in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on two occasions: in 1996 and again in 2002's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary production directed by Richard Greenblatt.

Other returning alumni include **Richard Lee** (*Comedy of Errors*–06.07 | *Dream*–02.03), **Michael Man** (*As You Like It* | *Titus Andronicus*–14.15) and **Naomi Wright** (*Julius Caesar* | *Comedy of Errors*–15.16), alongside fresh faces **Jenni Burke**, **Jason Cadieux**, **Brett Dahl**, **Peter Fernandes**, **Amelia Sargisson** and newcomers **Kristiaan Hansen** and **Hannah Wayne-Phillips**, recent graduates of the York University Theatre Program. Sharing a total of 26 roles, the multitasking ensemble will perform *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night* in repertory on alternating evenings from Tuesdays to Sundays.

A beloved seasonal event, Canadian Stage's Shakespeare in High Park is Canada's largest and longest-running professional outdoor theatre experience, attracting over 30,000 people each year. Founded as Dream in High Park in 1983, the series evolved into *Shakespeare in High Park* in 2013, presenting two alternating productions throughout the summer – one comedy, one tragedy – in bold and innovative takes on Bard classics.

Canadian Stage continues its unique partnership with the **School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design** at York University to integrate undergraduate and graduate talent and

alumni into the Shakespeare in High Park creative team. Directors Alistair Newton and Tanja Jacobs, 2017 graduating candidates of the York/Canadian Stage MFA in Stage Direction, take the helm under the mentorship of Peter Hinton, lead Canadian Stage mentor for the MFA program.

*King Lear* runs from June 29 to September 2 with performances on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 pm. Opening night will be July 13 with previews June 29, July 1, 4, 6, 8 and 11. *Twelfth Night* runs from June 30 to September 3 with performances on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 8 pm. Opening night will be July 14 with previews June 30, July 2, 5, 7, 9, and 12. Both performances run at the High Park Amphitheatre (1873 Bloor St. W). Gates open at 6 pm. Each performance is pay-what-you can (suggested \$25 contribution) and premium seats can be reserved by donation online in advance for \$25.

Facebook: Canadian Stage | Twitter/Instagram: @CanadianStage | #SiHp, #csLear, #csTwelfth  
Website: [www.canadianstage.com/online/Shakespeare](http://www.canadianstage.com/online/Shakespeare)  
Photography: [Cast photography](#) | [2017 promo image](#) | [General High Park Photography](#)

For more information or interview requests, please contact: Andrea Elalouf, Associate Director of Communications, Canadian Stage, 416. 367.8243 x 250, <mailto:aelalouf@canadianstage.com>

#### SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH PARK: KING LEAR & TWELFTH NIGHT

A Canadian Stage production in collaboration with the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University

#### CAST

Jenni Burke	Countess of Kent ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Feste ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Jason Cadieux	Earl of Gloucester ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Sir Toby ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Brett Dahl	Edmund ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Sebastian ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Diane D'Aquila	Lear ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Fabiana ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Peter Fernandes	Oswald, Duke of Burgundy ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Sir Andrew ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Kristiaan Hansen	Duke of Cornwall ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Antonio, Captain ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Richard Lee	Duke of Albany ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Orsino ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Michael Man	Edgar ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Valentine ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Robert Persichini	The Fool ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Malvolio ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Amelia Sargisson	Cordelia ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Viola ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Naomi Wright	Goneril ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Olivia ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Hannah Wayne-Phillips	Regan ( <i>King Lear</i> ) / Maria ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Director ( <i>King Lear</i> )	Alistair Newton
Director ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )	Tanja Jacobs
Assistant Directors	Sadie Epstein-Fine ( <i>King Lear</i> ), Adam Bromley ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Set Designer	Claire Hill

Costume Designers	Carolyn Smith ( <i>King Lear</i> ), Victoria Wallace ( <i>Twelfth Night</i> )
Lighting Designer	Rebecca Picherak
Sound Designer	Lyon Smith
Production Stage Manager	Elizabeth McDermott
Stage Manager	Krista MacIsaac Barclay
Assistant Stage Manager	Sandi Becker

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **JENNI BURKE** Countess of Kent (*King Lear*) / Feste (*Twelfth Night*)

Jenni Burke is an award-winning actress and has appeared on stage and screen across Canada. Canadian Stage: *Little Shop of Horrors*. Other credits include: *Funny Girl* (Segal Centre); *Mamma Mia*, *All Shook Up*, *Les Misérables*, *Cinderella* (Drayton Entertainment); *Mary Poppins*, *Drowsy Chaperone*, *Shout Sister* (Globe); *The Buddy Holly Story* (Chemainus), *Chicago* (Mayfield); *Toute Comme Elle* (Luminato); *Vagina Monologues* (Stage West); *Bat Boy* (Bathurst Theatre); *The Miracle Worker* (Theatre Aquarius); *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre New Brunswick); *Bemused*. Film and Television credits include: *Sensitive Skin*, *Rookie Blue*, *If I were You*, *Da Kink In my Hair*, *Blues Brothers 2000*, *Half Baked*, *Under Cover Brother*, *The Music Man*, and *This is Wonderland*. Upcoming: the feature film *Put Your Lips On* and *A Christmas Carol* at the National Arts Centre.

### **JASON CADIEUX** Earl of Gloucester (*King Lear*) / Sir Toby (*Twelfth Night*)

Jason Cadieux is an actor, playwright and a co-founder of The Essential Collective Theatre, a professional theatre in St. Catharines. Canadian Stage credits include *Poor Superman* (co-pro with MTC). Other theatre credits include: *The Wedding Party* (Crow's Theatre), *Hosanna* (Soulpepper), *Wrong for Each Other* (Public Theatre of Maine), *Reconciliation*, *Happy & Play Murder* (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre), *Romeo & Juliet* and *Oedipus* (Die in Debt), *Leo* (Great Canadian Theatre Co). Jason has written and produced two plays which have toured nationally and internationally: *17.5*, directed by Sara Garton Stanley, received 4 stars from *Time Out Magazine* (UK), and *Hard Ways* (also directed by Stanley) which *the Ottawa Citizen* called "a rich and fascinating piece of work".

### **BRETT DAHL** Edmund (*King Lear*) / Sebastian (*Twelfth Night*)

Brett is a graduate of the BFA Acting Program from the University of Alberta and was briefly seen (on film) in *Helen Lawrence* with Canadian Stage. Other selected acting credits include: *The Circle* (Alberta Theatre Projects); *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Shakespeare Company); *A Worthy Opponent* (Lunchbox Theatre); *What The Thunder Said* (One Yellow Rabbit); *A Thought in Three Parts*, *The Birth of Casper G. Schmidt* (Theatre Outré); Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare in the Park/Theatre Calgary); *The Soul Collector* (Catalyst Theatre); *pool* (no water), *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Saint Joan*, and *The Missionary Position* (Studio Theatre). Brett was the 2015 recipient of Theatre Calgary's Stephen Hair Emerging Actor Award.

**DIANE D'AQUILA** Lear (*King Lear*) / Fabiana (*Twelfth Night*)

Diane D'Aquila is a multiple award-winning (Gemini, Actra, Jefferson, Emery Battis Award) veteran actress and has appeared on stage and screen throughout North America. D'Aquila played Titania in the premiere production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in High Park. Canadian Stage credits include: *Nothing Sacred* and *St. Carmen Of The Main*. Other productions include: *Happy Place, Jitters* (Soulpepper); *Coriolanus* (The Shakespeare Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Globe Theatre); *Her 2* (Nightwood Theatre); *The Seagull* (Segal Centre), and *Elizabeth Rex* (Chicago Shakespeare Festival and premiered at Stratford Festival). D'Aquila can next be seen as Mrs. Quenell in the Netflix mini-series *Alias Grace*.

**PETER FERNANDES** Oswald, Duke of Burgundy (*King Lear*) / Sir Andrew (*Twelfth Night*)

Peter is thrilled to be making his Shakespeare in High Park Debut in *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night*. Selected Credits include: *Passing Strange* (Obsidian/Musical Stage Company); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Citadel Theatre); *Onegin* (Musical Stage Company/National Arts Centre); *Alligator Pie* (Western Canada Tour); *Father Comes Home From The Wars parts 1,2 & 3, The Just, Incident at Vichy, Marat/Sade, The Dybbuk, Spoon River, Tartuffe, Idiot's Delight, The Crucible* (Soulpepper); *Are We There Yet?* (Concrete); *Work Plays* (AWHC); *Evil Dead: The Musical* (Ground Zero, Hit & Myth); *The Last Tree of Rapa Nui* (MTYP); *Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing* (Freewill Shakespeare).

**KRISTIAAN HANSEN** Duke of Cornwall (*King Lear*) / Antonio, Captain (*Twelfth Night*)

Kristiaan Hansen is a Toronto-based actor and recent graduate of York University's BFA program in acting. This is his Canadian Stage debut. York University theatre credits include: *A Streetcar Named Desire, Alkestis, A Party for Boris, A Dream Play, Ophelia: A Retelling of Hamlet*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Kristiaan is looking forward to a wonderful summer at Shakespeare in High Park.

**RICHARD LEE** Duke of Albany (*King Lear*) / Orsino (*Twelfth Night*)

Richard Lee is an award-winning actor, fight director and sound designer. His work has garnered him multiple Dora Mavor Moore nominations out of which he has received three: one for his Sound Design work on *paper SERIES* (Cahoots Theatre Company) and two in performance; *Sultans of the Street & Cinderella: A Ratical Retelling* (both for Young People's Theatre). Canadian Stage credits include: *Chimerica* (co-production with RMT), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (SiHP 2012), *Comedy of Errors* (SiHP 2006). Other theatre highlights include: *Kim's Convenience* (Soulpepper), *Acquiesce* (Factory Theatre), *Macbeth* (Driftwood Theatre). In 2013 he received the infamous Harold Award, which celebrates Toronto theatre mavericks. Upcoming, Richard will be in the Canadian premiere of *The Humans* (Citadel/Canadian Stage).

**MICHAEL MAN** Edgar (*King Lear*) / Valentine (*Twelfth Night*)

Michael Man is a Toronto-based actor and musician. Canadian Stage credits include: *Titus Andronicus*, and *As You Like It*. Other theatre credits include: *The Other Shore* 彼岸 (Gateway Theatre); *The Jungle Book* (Magnus Theatre); *Julius Caesar*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (St. Sudbury Theatre Centre); *Potluck Festival* (fu-GEN Theatre). Selected music: *The Last Five Years* (Music Director, YES Theatre); *Les Misérables* (Pianist, Sudbury Symphony Orchestra); *Goblin Market* (Pianist, Theatre Kingston). Michael is a graduate of Queen's University and George Brown Theatre School.

**ROBERT PERSICHINI** The Fool (*King Lear*) / Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*)

A veteran of the Stratford and Shaw Festivals and most of Canada's major stages, Robert appeared most recently in The Coal Mine Theatre's Production of *Superior Donuts* and Groundling Theatre's original production of *A Winter's Tale*. Previous Canadian Stage credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Weir*, *Communicating Doors* and *Arcadia*. Recent film and television includes the mini-series *Alias Grace* for Netflix.

**AMELIA SARGISSON** Cordelia (*King Lear*) / Viola (*Twelfth Night*)

Amelia Sargisson has performed on stages across Canada, the US and Japan. Select credits include: *The Millennial Malcontent* (Tarragon); *The Watershed & Seeds* (Crow's Theatre/Porte Parole); *If We Were Birds* (Imago/Centaur – META Nomination for Best Actress); *Tender Napaalm* (SummerWorks); *The Incredible Speediness of Jamie Cavanaugh* (Carousel); *Camping Royale* (CORPUS); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare BASH'D); *The Madonna Painter* (Centaur); *down from heaven* (Imago – Cartes Premières Award for Best Actress); *The Art of Catching Pigeons by Torchlight* (SummerWorks – Spotlight Award); and 5 seasons of Shakespeare in the Park in Montreal. Amelia co-wrote *30 People Watching* and recently published *in ReView: an anthology of plays committed to social justice* (CATR 2017 Patrick O'Neill Award nominee).

**NAOMI WRIGHT** Goneril (*King Lear*) / Olivia (*Twelfth Night*)

Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (Arts Club). Select credits include 5 seasons with Bard on the Beach (*Dream*, *Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*); *Elektra*, *Cymbeline* (Stratford Festival); *The Ugly One* (Theatre Smash/Tarragon); *Comedy of Errors*, *Julius Caesar* (Canadian Stage); *Talking Heads* (Precisely Peter); *A Room of One's Own* (Bloomsbury Collective); *39 Steps* (Persephone); *Life Savers* (Ruby Slippers); *Stupidity* (Theatre Conspiracy); *Absurd Person Singular* (Arts Club); *Cat and Mouse/Sheep*, *The Dissociates* (Sea Theatre); *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (Theatre North West). Nominated for 6 Jessie Awards, 2 Dora Awards, and SAT Award.

**HANNAH WAYNE PHILIPS** Regan (*King Lear*) / Maria (*Twelfth Night*)

Hannah Wayne-Phillips is thrilled to be making her Canadian Stage debut in *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night*. Recent theatre credits include *The Merchant of Venice* (Shylock); *The Three Sisters* (Masha), *The Dream Play*, *Richard II* (Henry Bolingbroke), *Call Me God*, and *Alkestis* at York University. Hannah recently graduated with an MFA in Acting from York University. She thanks her friends and family for all the love and support.

### **About Canadian Stage – celebrating 30 seasons**

Founded in 1987, Canadian Stage is one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts companies, sharing new, innovative stage work from Canada and around the world. Led by Artistic & General Director Matthew Jocelyn and Managing Director Su Hutchinson, Canadian Stage produces and presents a new hybrid of multidisciplinary performance that pushes the boundaries of form and style, integrating theatre, dance, music, multimedia and more. Canadian Stage is dedicated to reinforcing the presence of Canadian art and artists within an international cultural dialogue, by acting as a home, incubator and exporter of leading Canadian and global performance. The company stages an annual season at three historic locations: the Bluma Appel Theatre; the Berkeley Street Theatre; and the High Park Amphitheatre, home to Shakespeare in High Park. Offering a range of education, artist training and community outreach programs, Canadian Stage is committed to cultivating tomorrow's artistic innovators and audiences. For more information, visit [www.canadianstage.com](http://www.canadianstage.com).