Merely Players Presents

THE TEMPEST

by William Shakespeare

October 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 2023

CAST

Prospero, the former duke of Milan Paul E. Laakso

Miranda, Prospero's daughter

Mohriah James+

Ariel, a spirit Conor Sheehan+

Caliban, an inhabitant of the island

Matt Bodo+

Gonzalo, a wise counselor Brian Devine+

Antonio, Prospero's usurping brother Geoff Johnson+

Alonsa, Queen of Naples Deborah Heath+

Ferdinand, her son Joey Panelli+

Sebastian, her brother Charlie Grice+

Trinculo, her court jester Felicia Lansbury Meyer

Stephano, her butler Joey Panelli+

Francisco, a lord Andy Rude

Iris/Spirit/Mariner/Wolf/Dance Soloist Cassandra Yuponco Owen+

Ceres/Spirit/Wolf/Shipmaster Katie Dittelberger+

Juno/Spirit/Wolf/Boatswain Jessica McCallum+

Sprite/Mariner/Wolf Abby Kubicek+

Sprite/Mariner Lainey Kopf

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Mona Wood-Patterson+

Technical Director/

Scenic and Puppet Designer Charles Ford+

Movement Coach/Choreographer Zachary Chiero+

Costume Designer JoAnn Nevils+

Stage Manager Katy Schneider+

Sound Design Mona Wood-Patterson+

Clark Adomaitis Charles Ford

This production's original tunes feature lyrics by William Shakespeare with music by Conor Sheehan and Clark Adomaitis.

CREW

Assistant Stage Manager/Props Manager Milli Grice+

Sound Technician Clark Adomaitis

Light Design/Technician Charles Ford+

Wardrobe Lead/Company Manager Mary Lynn Clark+

Costume Crew Grace Morledge

Cristina Jantz

Projection Technician Jamie Pickering+

Scenic Art Leads Maureen May+

Mary-Catherine McAlvany+

Charles Ford+

Onbook/Box Office Manager Diane Panelli+

Makeup Artist Lainey Kopf

Ticket Manager Greta Richter+

Photographer Kara Cavalca+

PlotChat Mona Wood-Patterson+

Master Carpenter Charles Ford+

Set/Props Construction/Scenic Painting

Michael Lee+ Jenny Mason+
Natalie Cohn+ Zachary Chiero+
Matt Bodo+ Mary Lynn Clark+
Genevieve Thompson Mona Wood-Patterson+

Heather Howe+ Paul Laakso

Poster Distribution Mary Lynn Clark+

Parking Lot Guides/Concessions

Hallie Denman
Marc Arbeeny+
Carrie Denman
Joe Hutchinson

Grace Dendy+ Sharina Ramsey-Adams

Annie Pare Nora Stafford Gabe Clark Joel Ryan

Deb Schultz Melissa Mossinghoff Kasey Jo Hall Sarah Hierholzer

+ Merely Players Artistic Company

There will be one fifteen-minute intermission.

Please silence your cell phones; they don't work that well down here anyway.

To enhance your theatre experience, we invite you to join us for a pre-show PLOT CHAT 45 minutes before each performance.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. We know that, for many of you, taking performance photos or video of your loved ones is a huge temptation. Please respect this rule of theatre etiquette and resist! Phone use during a show is distracting to actors and audience members, violates our contract, and is disrespectful of our creative property. Live theatre is meant to be temporal – let it be just that. Thank you!

We welcome you to take photos/video in the theatre before and after, **but not during**, the performance. If you post photos of the stage, please be sure to credit and tag Merely Players. @merely players durango

WHO'S WHO

Matt Bodo (*Caliban*) is a 3rd generation native of Durango. A "Shakespearean Skaterat," his passions bounce between snowboarding and the Bard. Classically trained with a BFA in Acting from CU Boulder and a veteran of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Matt honed his theatre, writing, and stand-up comedy skills in New York City where he founded a theatre company, co-wrote/performed/produced an original play, wrote for television, and mic-dropped sets in clubs throughout Manhattan. Merely Players' audiences will remember him as Duke Frederick and Silvius in last fall's *As You Like It*, and locals might recognize him as a contributing writer for Durango Magazine and as Ebenezer Scrooge in Durango Theatreworks' holiday radio-play of *A Christmas Carol. Cat will mew and dog will have his day*.

Brian Devine (*Gonzalo*) is delighted to return to the Underground for his second appearance this year; you may have seen him as Arbuthnot/Ratchett in *Murder on the Orient Express* or across town at the DAC as himself (sort of) in *The Complete History of America [Abridged]*. This is Merely his third entanglement with Shakespeare, having previously appeared in *Macbeth* and the socially distant Studio Series production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Brian wishes to thank his non-tempestuous wife, Melissa, and the entire Durango theatre community - what a town! [*Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle; he throws a thunderbolt.*]

Katie Dittelberger (*Ceres/Spirit/Wolf/Shipmaster*) was just a small town girl, livin' in a lonely world, when her high school English teacher in Vincennes, Indiana brought some much needed culture to her life by taking her (and her class) to see a production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* in the big city of Indianapolis. Since that time, Katie has been entranced by the words of Shakespeare, particularly as brought to life onstage, especially by magical Merely Players' productions. You may recall seeing Katie making friends with a sheep as Phoebe in *As You Like It* last fall. *Parting is such sweet sorrow*, but Katie hopes to see you after the show, and at many more "Merely" productions to come!

Charlie Grice (Sebastian) began his Shakespearean acting in high school. In 1987, Georganne Sugden had to convince a visiting former member of the Royal Shakespeare Company to cast a 6'2", 215lb, dyslexic, high school freshman in the Junior/Senior class production of Richard III. This forged Charlie's lifelong love of Shakespeare, and since then, he has performed in eight different Shakespeare shows. Two dream parts he would love to play are, Falstaff (what?... too Obvious?) and Puck (hear him out on this one). If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: If to be fat be to be hated... then banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

Deborah Heath (*Alonsa*) was fascinated by the wall paintings in her mother's high school English classroom of three scenes from *Macbeth* when she was a child. She, thus, was thrilled to play Witch 3 in the 2020 Merely Players' production of the Scottish Play. The Bard continued to call her when she stage managed *As You Like It* in 2022. To

be back on stage to experience all the blessings of a glad thespian by sharing Shakespeare's words is true joy. Deborah is always amazed how the words written over 400 years ago are still so relevant today. She would like to thank her husband of 38 years, Bern, for his ongoing support, encouragement, and patience. With mirth and laughter, let old wrinkles come.

Mohriah James (Miranda) grew up in Bayfield and, like her character, is an only child. She has fortunately never been shipwrecked on an island, though was stuck on the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disney World for over an hour during a technical malfunction. Mohriah attended Fort Lewis College, where she met her amazing husband, Geoff, and graduated with a B.A. in Theatre. She was last seen with Merely Players in the musical Bright Star. Some of her favorite roles in plays with the company include Sumner in Men On Boats, Celia in As You Like It, and Countess Andrenyi in Murder on the Orient Express. As Celia says, Oh wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that out of all whooping!

Geoff Johnson (*Antonio*) first met Shakespeare in high school where he played Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Iago in *Othello*. He then spent sixteen years hiding from The Bard. He tried to stay inconspicuous by earning college degrees in Theatre and Engineering, marrying his talented wife, Mohriah James, and occasionally hiking Hogsback. Geoff couldn't hide forever and was lured back in to play The Porter in *Macbeth* and both Don John and Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing. O beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.*

Lainey Kopf (*Sprite/Mariner*) has a love for theatre that was sparked by re-enacting the Chronicles of Narnia at summer camp. Since that time, she has been a part of two Shakespeare-based plays and many other plays as well. Lainey has been involved in performing arts since third grade when she picked up the violin, and to this day, performing is the thing that she is most passionate about (despite her cat's protests when she practices her music). She just graduated from high school and can't wait to see what the future holds. *I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me*.

Abby Kubicek (*Sprite/Mariner/Wolf*) first learned of Shakespeare at the age of 7 when she saw a production of *Romeo and Juliet* on public television with a little dog named Wishbone as the lead. She has been hooked on both Shakespeare and theatre ever since. You may have most recently seen her in Merely Players' *Murder on the Orient Express* (Mary), or possibly at her day job as a therapist. *We know what we are, but know not what we may be.*

Paul Laakso (*Prospero*): At first, Shakespeare always seemed a bit weird to me. 'Til, on a lark, I caught *Hamlet* in Winnipeg. Or, should I say, *Hamlet* caught me. The lead actors hailed from London's Old Vic Theatre. It was a bolt of lightning that left me forever hooked. Since that transformation, I have been blessed with doing several roles penned by the bard, none sweeter than being cast by Mona in our second Shakespeare adventure together, mixed in with this deeply talented cast. I thank my Mary Jo, again, for putting up with my theatre preoccupation while we "hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image."

Jessica McCallum (Juno/Boatswain/Wolf/Spirit) has loved Shakespeare marvelous much for most of her years on Earth. She teaches at Animas High School, where she engages young people in the profound fun of consuming and producing Shakespeare's works. She has been the executive producer of many Shakespearean shenanigans, including a handful of metatheatrical shadow puppet productions put on by 9th graders that transformed her perception of 21st Century education. Playing Audrey last year in Merely Players' As You Like It kicked off a midlife theatre renaissance, and now she can't stop auditioning for and working on plays. This is her fifth theatrical production in a year, and she hopes to be a playwright in the future. Ay, much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.

Felicia Lansbury Meyer (*Trinculo*) was born and raised in Los Angeles, where she worked as a television actress and directed the award-winning short film *Desert Snow* at the American Film Institute, where she received her MFA in directing. She's been teaching and directing at Fort Lewis College in the Theater Department for 17 years and, though she still yearns for the ocean and salty air, she considers Colorado home. Directing *Romeo and Juliet* at FLC last spring, as well as a recent clown workshop in NYC, totally inspired her. She is thrilled and honored to be able to continue clowning around as Trinculo with Merely Players. *A fool thinks himself to be wise, but a wise man knows himself to be a fool.*

Cassandra Yuponco Owen (Iris/Spirit/Wolf/Mariner/Dance Soloist) returns for her sixth Merely production. From Orange County, CA, trained classically in dance and now a teacher and lifelong student of many world forms of dance, the last time she brought Shakespeare to life was with MP's production of Macbeth as a spirit dancer. Cassandra works at a local conservation corps managing botany and soils survey crews on federal public lands, and brings her mission of growing up heart- and relations-based future conservationists. She is a founder, filmmaker, dancer, and choreographer with Durango-based Wildwood Dance Project. Her current works explore how natural environmental phenomena and the cycling of the seasons are reflective of our internal processes and evolution of our consciousness. All things are ready, if our mind be so.

Joey Panelli (Ferdinand/Stephano) is obnoxiously overjoyed to once again be a part of a Merely Players Elizabethan Era Epic written by the Immortal Bard. Ere this production you may have seen him as Demetrius/Robin Starveling/Moth in A Midsummer Night's Dream (2018), Dogberry/Leonato/Ursula in Much Ado About Nothing (2015), or if you'd like a Merely Players deep cut Orlando in As You Like It: A Pop Musical (2012). Hence his move after graduating he's been in Chicago pursuing comedy, specifically improv. He'd like to thank Diane (the mother of mothers), Mona (his inspiration), Sarah (his true love and life), and importantly Atticus (Mr. Mustard), may he rest in peace. If we do meet again, why, shall we smile.

Andy Rude (*Francisco*) is performing for the first time with Merely Players, and it's his first brush with the Bard as well. He is grateful to be a part of this production. When not working as an IT desk jockey, he takes classes from, and occasionally performs with, Lower Left Improv. He also enjoys paddle boarding, hiking, traveling, eating a variety of foods, and sharing dad jokes that generally elicit groans. He has a habit of overusing the

"F" word and is hopeful that a byproduct of this experience will be expanding his vocabulary with Shakespearean curses and expletives. *Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.*

Conor Sheehan (Ariel/Composer) is feeling blessed to a tempestuous extent to play this Shakespearean spirit amidst such an enchanted cast and crew. After first discovering the Bard's brilliance at the ripe old age of 11 playing Sir Andrew/Antonio in *Twelfth Night*, he's reveled in playing Romeo in R+J and Oliver/Amiens in last year's As You Like It. He thanks Mona, Charles, his fellow magic, music and mischief-makers, friends, family, and fabulous souls like you. If music be the food of love, play on.

Clark Adomaitis (Sound Technician/Composer) is the computerized sound musician for The Tempest, adding an experimental and modern flare to the production. During the day, he is a news reporter at KSUT and KSJD and interviews interesting people in the Four Corners region. Clark is one-third of Durango's hottest new boy band, Community Pancake, whose debut album "FOOD OF LOVE" came out in June. One can find him rapping and singing around town at open mics under the alias Dritty Pope. You may recognize Clark from his work as a parking lot attendant at Merely Players' production of Bright Star. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir? No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir!

Zachary Chiero (*Movement Coach/Choreographer*) is excited to be lending his movement and puppetry skills to another Merely Shakespeare production. Zachary was last seen as Touchstone in Merely's groovy production of *As You Like It* (Broadway World award winner for Best Supporting Performer). With other companies, he appeared in *Twelfth Night* as Sir Toby, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as Bottom, and in *Love's Labours Lost* as Berowne. Zachary has recently joined the staff of Merely Players as Associate Director. Up next, he will be directing *Small Mouth Sounds* and workshopping a production with Enchantment Theatre Company in Philadelphia. Love always to Dallas. *Confine? 1'll confine myself no finer than I am.*

Mary Lynn Clark (Company Manager) would like to thank Shakespeare for his genius and for composing some of the most timeless original works that continue to be performed in live theaters around the world today or made into knock-off movies for mass consumption. She thanks Merely Players for making novice Shakespeare fans like herself understand, enjoy and love Shakespeare like they never knew they could. When Mary Lynn is not performing her Company Manager duties, she enjoys walking her rescue dog, watching movies with her son, spending time with her two college daughters whenever she can, and traveling around the world with her amazing husband who spoils her with his thoughtfulness and his cooking. I would not wish any companion in the world but you.

Charles Ford (Technical Director/Scenic and Light Designer) has evolved into a Shakespeare afficionado. Just like Shakespeare, he was born in a rural setting (Arkansas/Stratford), and he moved to the big city, just like Shakespeare, (Los Angeles/London). There the similarity abruptly ends. Charles has a deep and abiding love of Shakespeare's works. After 400 years, the man is still relevant and

inspiring. Charles has designed sets for ten of Shakespeare's plays. *The Tempest's* magic inspired him to create this magical, mystical island. *Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens!*

Milli Grice (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is an FLC theatre alum. This is her third show with Merely Players. Her last brush with the Bard was the Merely production of *Macbeth*. She also appeared in Fort Lewis' production of *The Tempest* in 2016. She is a baker and a visual artist as well. *Hell is empty and all the devils are here!!!* (but in a cute way).

Cristina Jantz (Costumes Crew) was cast as Belarius in her alma mater's 2020 production of Shakespeare's Cymbeline, which had to be canceled a few weeks prior to opening night. After an unforeseen 3-year acting hiatus, Cristina is thrilled to return to live theatre. An alumna of Troupe 1096, she has loved acting and the Bard's work for years, and even went so far as to visit the Globe Theatre, see several productions by Actors From The London Stage, and take a Shakespeare-focused class within her 4 years of college. You can come say hi to her at the Durango Public Library, where she works as a circulation clerk. And though she be but little, she is fierce. (This especially applies since she's 5'4" and makes hilarious TikToks.)

Grace Morledge (*Costume Manager*): It was a moonlit night in July when I beheld Banquo's ghost haunting the Shakespeare's Globe stage in London as our troupe of teachers (fortunate to be studying there) performed our scenes from *Macbeth*. At midnight, we had the boards to ourselves: an unforgettable gift. I loved nothing more as an English teacher than sharing Shakespeare with my high school students. Words, words, words – no, Hamlet, that isn't my quote – but words *are* my favorite subject: reading them, writing them, teaching them, sometimes performing them, sharing them with my four-year-old grandson. We must speak and spread only what is true, for *There is no darkness but ignorance*.

JoAnn Nevils (*Costume Designer*) loves working with Merely Players on Shakespeare productions. We have shared psychedelic fabric designs, denims, zippers and more. What will this show bring? Many many thanks to my children, Bucky and Janette, for getting me involved in theatre many many years ago. *There was a star danced, and under that I was born*.

Diane Panelli (*Onbook/Box Office Manager*) is always ready "to play" with Merely Players. She has always loved theatre-- from performing in high school to starting her own production company in college. Then she veered away to go to Culinary school and work in restaurants in New York City for ten years. She moved to Telluride, owned a restaurant, had her son, and then moved to Durango. Diane is now back where she belongs. She loves finding or creating props for each show and then running the box office during the shows. Mostly she is excited to watch her son, Joey, perform Shakespeare again with Merely Players. To all who are close in my heart...I cherish you! *The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance*.

Jamie Pickering (*Projection Technician*) has been a Costume assistant (*Mamma Mia*) – check; a Light Board Operator (too many to mention) – check; Actor (*As You Like It*) –

check; Stage Manager (*Bye Bye Birdie*, DAC) –check. Back to the booth!!! When not lurking on the dark side, Jamie spends her days as a professional vampire at the local veterans' clinic. Weekends are spent trying not to trip over her four cats while waiting excitedly for her weekly Dungeons and Dragons game on Sunday afternoons. *Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile; So ere you find where light in darkness lies, Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes*.

Greta Richter (*Ticket Manager*) was born and raised in Sierra Madre, not far from Hollywood and Burbank. She grew up enjoying musicals and was excited when her children became involved in theatre when they moved to Durango in 1994. Greta loves her work as Merely Players' Ticket Manager, and has been working with Mona and Charles for around 22 years now. She is grateful to God for bringing amazing theatre people into her life. *No Legacy is so Rich as Honesty*.

Katy Schneider (*Stage Manager*) is thrilled to return to the backstage to reprise her dream role as the orchestrator of logistics. She hasn't had the privilege of working on a Shakespeare show in 11 years but has kept busy stage managing other shows including *Matilda* and *Bright Star*. In her free time Katy loves to bake cookies, cheesy bread, and scones. Her happy place is under a tall pine tree with a thermos of tea and her Kindle fully charged. *Better three hours too soon than a minute too late*.

Mona Wood-Patterson (Director) would like to thank Santa Claus for instilling a lifelong passion for the Bard when he gifted her ten-year-old self with The Complete Works of William Shakespeare. Since that time, Mona has taught numerous classes in the literature and acting of Shakespeare and has directed As You Like It (twice), Love's Labour's Lost, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice (twice), A Midsummer Night's Dream (three times), Much Ado About Nothing, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest (twice), and Twelfth Night. There will be more. To thine own self be true.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer our sincere gratitude to those who donated items or helped us with this show. Many hands and kind hearts help us to do our work:

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Mere words cannot describe how honoured we are by your support. We encourage our audience members to solicit these businesses and to tell the individuals that they are grand!

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MERELY PLAYERS was founded in 1994 and has been bringing theatre to our community ever since. Our vision is to consistently provide quality theatre in this region, while broadening the range of types of experiences available to local theatergoers through relevant, exciting productions. Merely Players is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and we assure you that any money donated will go toward making quality theatre in Durango both now and in the future.

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An Uplifting Musical Created by Members of Phish

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An Exciting Regional Premiere

Small Mouth Sounds February 9 – 18, 2024

A Razzle-Dazzling Musical

Chicago May 3 - 19, 2024

Tickets for all shows are on sale on our website now.

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Chicago December 11 and 12, 2022

Watch our website or join our mailing list for more details.

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Website: http://www.merelyplayers.org/

Telephone: 970.749.8585

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Thank you for spending your time with us. We would love to know what you thought about the play. Drop us an email at merelydirectors@gmail.com or share with us on Facebook at Merely Players – Durango.

Playwright Ben Jonson declared William Shakespeare "not of an age, but for all time," for he gives life to emotions and thoughts that are inherent to the human condition. In the belief that Shakespeare should not be restricted to the past, our goal is to tell the story in a way that eliminates the distance and formidability often associated with the Bard, infusing his brilliant words with imagination and spontaneity, and transcending fixed time. We embrace theatricality and a sense of play.

Once again, this production is dedicated to the memory of Tom Byrne, who loved Shakespeare and inspired others to do the same.

The STORY

Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, was ousted twelve years ago by an alliance between his evil brother, Antonio, and the queen of Naples, Alonsa. Whilst he studied the secrets of the world, they plotted to have him and his infant daughter, Miranda, cast into the sea on a rotted boat. Fortunately, the good counselor, Gonzalo, provisioned the boat with supplies and Prospero's books of magic.

The boat came to rest on an island, inhabited only by Caliban, the bestial offspring of the great witch, Sycorax; and Ariel, an airy spirit who was imprisoned in a tree for twelve years by Sycorax. Upon arrival, Prospero freed Ariel from the tree in exchange for servitude and befriended Caliban, whom he tried to civilize. After Caliban attacked Miranda, Prospero's enchantment forced Caliban into slavery.

Fate intervenes when Prospero spies his enemies aboard a ship returning to Naples after the wedding of Alonsa's daughter in Tunis. Among those aboard are Alonsa and her son Ferdinand; Antonio; Sebastian, the queen's brother; Stephano, the butler; and Trinculo, the jester. Prospero commands Ariel to cast a spell in which a tempest appears to destroy the ship and brings his enemies ashore. The ship's inhabitants are cast about on different parts of the island. With no way of knowing that everyone is safe, they respectively believe that the others aboard have met their demise.

The magical and the real worlds collide throughout the story. Prospero arranges for Miranda and Ferdinand to meet and fall in love, inflaming their passion by pretending to oppose it. Antonio and Sebastian plot to kill Gonzalo and Alonsa. Trinculo and Stephano meet Caliban and succumb to his suggestion to kill Prospero, as he swears allegiance to Stephano as his new master. Ariel takes on the role of a harpy and tempts the shipmates with a glorious feast, which vanishes before they can eat it. A trio of goddesses even arrives on the scene to celebrate the betrothal of Miranda and Ferdinand.

At the play's end, the enchantment is lifted and justice is restored. The union of Miranda and Ferdinand assures peace between Naples and Milan, Prospero's dukedom is restored, Ariel is freed, and the evildoers are forgiven. The boat has not been destroyed after all, and Prospero assures calm seas and a safe voyage back home. After his flirtation with acting as a god, Prospero resolves to give up magic. Integrating the lessons that he has learned on the island, he, too, will head home at last.