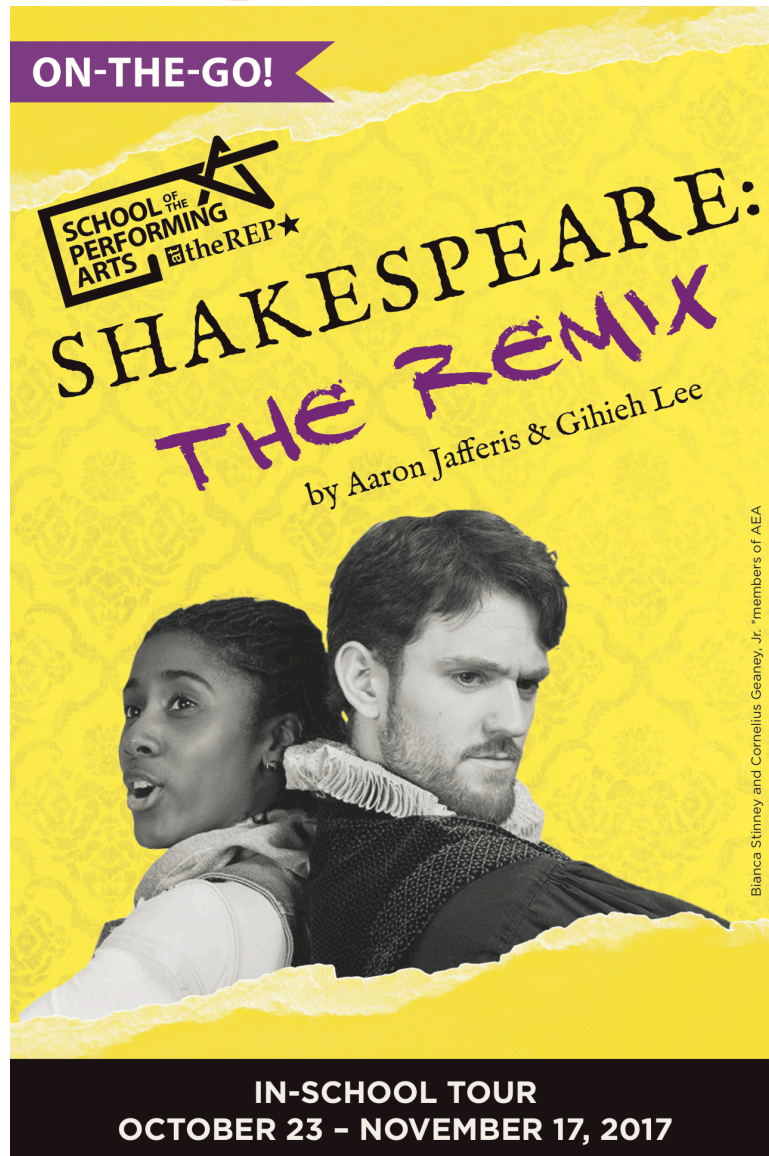


at the REP ★



Directed by Margaret E. Hall

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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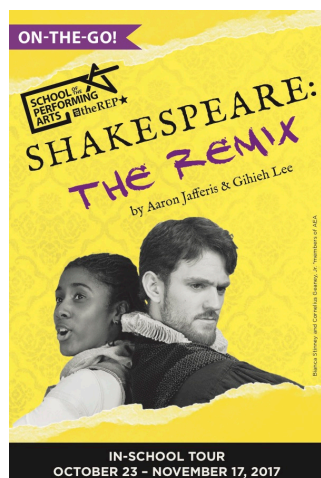
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Table of Contents	Capital Repertory Theatre's 37th Season - 2017-2018
<p>3 A Letter from our Education Department</p> <p>4 About Us</p> <p>5 Attending a Performance</p> <p>6 About the Playwright</p> <p>6 About the Play</p> <p>8 Who's Who in the Production</p> <p>9 Hip Hop's Origins</p> <p>11 Hip Hop: A Brief History</p> <p>13 Shakespeare's Origins</p> <p>15 Elizabethan England</p> <p>16 The Theatre in Shakespeare's Time</p> <p>17 Synopsis' of the Bard's Plays</p> <p>19 From Page to Stage</p> <p>21 The Language: Verse & Lyrics</p> <p>26 Food For Thought</p> <p>28 The Human Voice as a Weapon</p> <p>29 Additional Classroom Activities</p> <p>32 Resources Consulted/For Teachers</p> <p>36 Teacher Evaluation</p> <p>37 theREP's Mission In Action</p> <p><i>*This is an updated version of Capital Repertory Theatre's 2012 study guide for Shakespeare: The Remix; which was adapted from the Theatre Works study guide for the show.</i></p> <p><i>* This guide has been constructed for educational purposes only. theREP does not make any money from it.</i></p>	<p><i>SEX WITH STRANGERS</i> by Laura Eason SEPT 22 – OCT 15, 2017</p> <p><i>Next Act! New Play Summit 6</i> OCT 20-23, 2017</p> <p><i>SHE LOVES ME</i> Book by Joe Masteroff Music by Jerry Bock Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick NOV 24 – DEC 24, 2016</p> <p><i>World Premier!</i> <i>PARIS TIME</i> by Steven Peterson JAN 26 – FEB 18, 2018</p> <p><i>Classics On Stage</i> <i>BLITHE SPIRIT</i> by Noël Coward APR 6 – 29, 2018</p>

theREP's *ON-THE-GO!* IN-SCHOOL TOURS
We come to YOU!

To book a tour, contact Aaron Marquise at
amarquise@proctors.org | 518-382-3884 x128

Directed by Margaret E. Hall
Public Performance @theREP
on November 4, 2017 at 11am



Adapted by Margaret E. Hall &
Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill
Directed by Margaret E. Hall
Public Performance @theREP
on March 10, 2018 at 11am

FALL 2017



Dear Educator:

Welcome to Capital Repertory Theatre!

We are thrilled that you have scheduled a performance of *Shakespeare: The Remix*, one of this season's On-the-Go! In-School touring productions, and hope you will find this guide to be a useful tool.

You have permission to reproduce materials within this guide for use in your classroom. It is designed to introduce the cultural and historical context of the play as well as provide resources and ideas for integrating the theatre experience with your curriculum.

Productions by theREP are likely to generate questions and opinions among your students. Our hope is that you will join us for a talkback with the cast following the performance where you and your students can share your questions and reactions with the performers.

The arts provide young imaginations with stimulation, points of reference, and intellectual resources for the mind and spirit. Our goal is to make live theatre attendance possible for all students in the Capital Region. Over 18,000 Capital Region students attended student matinees and theREP's On-the-Go! in-school tour performances last season. We hope to continue to grow and serve the needs of the Capital Region education community.

Let us know how you are using theatre in the classroom! Your success stories help us to keep the program funded. We love to receive copies of lesson plans, student work related to our performances and your letters. These are important testimonials to the value of the arts in education.

And finally, please fill **Out the Teacher Evaluation** at the back of this study guide. Completing the evaluation form will help us to continue to provide programs that serve the needs of Capital Region students.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Margaret E. Hall'.

Margaret E. Hall
Assistant Artistic Director
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at the REP ★



ABOUT US

Capital Repertory Theatre (theREP) is a non-profit professional producing theatre. In its 35-year history, theREP has produced more than 5,000 performances for the people of the Capital Region.

A member of LORT (League of Resident Theatres), theREP strives to bring quality work that explores the essence of the human condition through the stories of people, events, and phenomena that shape our contemporary lives. Theatre, at its best, entertains, cajoles and inspires by engaging the heart and mind through its most powerful ally – the imagination.

There are two basic types of theatre companies: producing and presenting. theREP is a producing theatre. The theatre hires a director and designers for the set, costumes, lights, and sound. The Theatre's Artistic Director and the director select appropriate actors for all the roles in the play. Then they all come to Albany, where the play is built and rehearsed.

In addition to the theatre space, theREP has a scene shop where sets are built, a costume shop where costumes are constructed and cared for, offices where the administrative staff works, a rehearsal hall where the shows are rehearsed, and housing facilities for actors. The resident staff of the theatre works with visiting artists to put the production together.

In contrast, presenting theatres host shows that have been designed, built, and rehearsed elsewhere. A theatre company at many different theatres frequently presents shows of this kind regionally, nationally or even internationally over an extended period of time. What you will see at theREP or with our On-The-Go! tours is unique to theREP where it was built. No one from anywhere else will see this production just as you see it!

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE

Being a member of an audience is an important job. Live theatre couldn't exist without you! That job carries with it some responsibilities. Follow these suggestions in order to have the best theatre experience possible!

BRING WITH YOU

- ◆ ideas, imagination, an open mind, observation skills and a sense of wonder.

LEAVE BEHIND

- ◆ cell phones, pagers, pen lights, food and drink and anything else that might distract you, the performers or other members of the audience.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE A PERFORMANCE

- ◆ learn about the show you are going to see, arrive on time, find your seat, visit the restroom.

DURING A PERFORMANCE

PLEASE DO

- ◆ applaud, laugh, pay attention and notice little details, think about questions you would like to have answered by the actors after the show, stay in your seat until intermission and the end of the show.

PLEASE DON'T

- ◆ talk, sleep, eat or drink, distract others, exit the theatre during the performance.

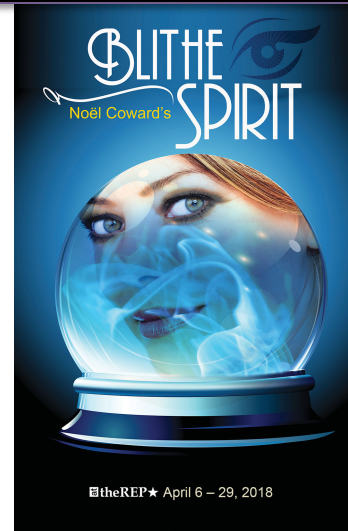
2017-2018 EDUCATION SEASON



NOV 30, DEC 8 & 17
10:30am



FEB 9
10:30 am



APR 12 & 26
10:30am

STUDENT MATINEES | Performance at theREP at 10:30am

PRICE \$12 a student

CHAPERONES For every 15 students, one complimentary adult ticket is provided.

LOCATION 111 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207

RESERVATIONS Call Group Sales at 518-382-3884 x139

SCHOLARSHIPS Visit www.capitalrep.org for information and applications.

About The Playwright: Aaron Jafferis



Aaron Jafferis has been working as a teaching artist in urban high schools, middle schools, and detention centers for over ten years. He teaches playwriting, poetry, and hip hop theatre through the study and analysis of existing work; and through the creation, critique, performance, and publication of new student work. His students have published chapbooks, staged poetry slams and poetry cafes, opened for internationally-renown performers, and performed their own plays for sold-out houses. Jafferis' workshops emphasize the possibility of using writing as a form of social action. Students explore history, social issues, and current events through the media of theatre and poetry; they then use their own writing and performance to link these issues to their own lives, and to change the way they and their audiences think about these themes. Aaron Jafferis has performed his hip hop poetry at Madison Square Garden, the Kennedy Center, and the National Poetry Slam Championships, where he was the 1997 Open Rap

Slam Champion. His hip hop musical *Kingdom* (music by Ian Williams) won the award for Most Promising New Musical at the 2006 New York Musical Theatre Festival, and has been developed by Bregamos Community Theater. His solo hip hop play *No Lie* has been seen at the Nuyorican Poets Café, H.E.R.E., Passage Theatre, the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, and at high schools and colleges across the country. His hip hop play *Shakespeare: The Remix* (music by Gihieh Lee) was commissioned by Theatre Works (PaloAlto) and performed by Theatre Works, St. Louis Black Rep, Collective Consciousness and Capital Repertory Theatre. He wrote the book and English lyrics for Ruben Flores' Latin American Songbook series at Joe's Pub. He was named one of "50 To Watch" in the July/August 2007 issue of *The Dramatist*. He has received artist residencies from Theatre Works and the MacDowell Colony. He has written poetry for the Urban Bush Women dance troupe and for *The Nation* and *Northeast* magazines. He received his BA in Arts & Social Change from the University of California at Berkeley, studied at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and received his MFA in Musical Theatre Writing from NYU, where he was an Alberto Vilar Global Fellow in the Performing Arts.

About the Play *Shakespeare: The Remix*

A note from the book writer/lyricist to Teachers and Students from the Playwright:

Shayla, a high school student with a quick temper and a smart mind and mouth, is a tribute to various young women I've taught in high school and juvenile detention. Shayla is also like me: she doubts the value of school and Shakespeare until she discovers the real reason for writing – to move people. When conceiving of the play, Gihieh and I looked for the most *basic* connection between hip hop and Shakespeare – something more fundamental than their shared love for wordplay. We decided Shakespeare's job was to move the audience – move them to think, to feel, to applaud, to laugh, just like the goal of a hip hop MC is to Move Crowds. That's why both hip hop artists and the plays of Shakespeare are meant to be heard *live*, not read dead on the page. And that's why I, and Gihieh, and Shayla, and Shakespeare, became writers – to move

people. We wanted to portray Shakespeare not as some perfect, untouchable intellect, but as someone to argue with, play with, use, and ultimately, love. You can't truly love someone you worship. You have to really get to know him. That was the last key to the show for us: finding Shakespeare's own faults and unfulfilled wants. A ghost wouldn't be hanging around for hundreds of years if it didn't want something. We knew Shayla had to be the answer to Shakespeare's problems – the person who proves his continued relevance and the person to whom he passes the torch. Maybe Shayla is the next Shakespeare. Maybe you are. Write.

~Aaron Jafferis



*Bianca Stinney & Cornelius Geaney Jr. in theREP's 2013 Production
Photos by Joseph Schuyler*

The Script

*What does Will Shakespeare have in common with hip hop?
We're both so hot, we'll make your bottom lip drop!*

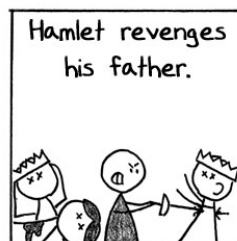
Shakespeare and Shayla are in the midst of a wild and wonderful battle of words, colliding original text from Shakespeare's plays with original rhymes fresh from the mouth of a high school girl. *The Remix* is a theatrical ode to all that is good, relevant and irreverent in Shakespeare and in hip hop.

When Shayla, a hip-hop-loving school girl on the verge of dropping out, meets Shakespeare, a 440-year-old ghost having a mid-death crisis, a pitched battle of wits erupt that pits Shayla's sharp and questioning young mind against Shakespeare's hunger to prove himself relevant. Shayla and Shakespeare jump in and out of scenes from *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Merchant of Venice*. Their debate ranges from the rhythm of beat boxing to the rhythm of iambic pentameter, from the violence of hip hop to the violence of Shakespeare. In the end, Shayla is speaking fluent iambic pentameter and Shakespeare is rhyming over a hip hop beat, but it is the third character – the "ghost" audience of school kids watching and often participating in the show – that is left most wowed and inspired by the power of words. *The Remix* is an unparalleled way to re-introduce Shakespeare (as you've known him) to audiences of all ages.

HAMLET (in 3 Panels)



©2014 Mya Gosling



www.goodticklebrain.com

THE PRODUCTION: WHO'S WHO



DIRECTOR: Margaret E. Hall is an International director, Equity stage manager and drama teacher. She currently holds the position of Assistant Artistic Director at Capital Repertory Theatre, where she has the privilege of directing the company's On-The-Go! in-School Touring Productions such as: *Petticoats of Steel*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *They Built America: Workers of the Erie Canal*, *Pure Poe*, *The Remarkable and Perplexing Case of Henry Hudson!*, *Harriet Tells It Like It Is!*, *An Iliad*, and *Shakespeare: The Remix*; as well as the REP's summer youth productions. Margaret made her main stage debut at the REP with last season's production of *An Iliad*. Other directorial credits include: *Circus Olympus*, *Into the Woods Jr.*, *Disney's The Aristocats Kid's*, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, and *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as a staged reading of *A Doll's House* with Theater Voices. Margaret is a proud member of Actors Equity, and holds a BA in Theatre Arts from SUNY New Paltz, and an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Essex in London.



THE ACTORS: (in alphabetical order)

Shayla: Alisha Espinosa*

Alisha is an actor and writer based in NYC. Recent credits include a summer season at Kentucky Shakespeare (*Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard II*, *Julius Caesar*) and a staged reading at the National Black Theatre. Her play *A Crisis Called New York* was produced at the Frigid NYC Festival earlier this year, and she is a finalist for Actors Theatre of Louisville's Hiedeman Award. MFA Acting, UMKC.



Shakespeare: Justin Friello*

Justin is a singer, actor, composer, lyricist, and multi-instrumentalist from Schenectady, NY. He is both a solo performer as well as the leader of the Jack & Jill Orchestra, an ensemble dedicated to large-scale orchestrations of Justin's music. A proud member of Actors' Equity, Justin has appeared in numerous main stage and touring productions for Capital Rep not only as an actor, but also as a musician, composer/lyricist, and musical director. As a composer of classical music, his works have been performed by ensembles across the Northeast. His arrangements were recently featured at Feinstein's/54 Below in Samantha Joy Pearlman's "The Music of Regina Spekter". Justin is a composer/lyricist alum of the BMI Advanced Musical Theatre Workshop in NYC. Visit JustinFriello.bandcamp.com and JustinFriello.com for recordings and more information.

Stage Manager: C.W. Owens*
Costume Designer: Amber Dutton
Set Designer: Brian Prather+
Sound Designer: TBA



**Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers of the United States*



+Denotes a member of United Scenic Artists

Hip Hop's Origins

Showcasing Their Verbal Dexterity and Storytelling Abilities

During the 1970s, the new sound of Hip Hop emerged in parks, clubs, and parties around New York City. It was the new voice of inner city youth who were living in post-civil rights era of voting for all people, regardless of race, integrated schools, and the expansion of African Americans into the middle and upper classes. These artists, in reaction to disco and funk, created fresh sounds using existing records on two or more turn tables. In combination with these sounds, performers



spun poetry to the music, showcasing their verbal dexterity and story telling abilities. But it is the compelling and often confrontational themes of the inner city that continues to create controversy for the art form.



In the decades since its inception the culture, artistry, and the messages of Hip Hop have spread across America and around the world. It continues to define and redefine itself as an art form.

"Hip Hop is inherently political, the language is political. It uses language as a weapon – not a weapon to violate or not a weapon to offend, but a weapon that pushes the envelope that provokes people, makes people think." ~Todd Boyd, author of The New H.N.I.C



Voices of Hip-Hop

To understand the diverse perspective embodied in the Hip Hop movement, we must listen to the voices of the artists themselves.

Talk's Q and A with *Public Enemy's Chuck D*

Chuck D: Hip Hop is basically a term for black creativity. There should be a more permanent museum context for it in New York and there are plans to do that. It being a cultural thing- musical history –I wonder why it isn't taught in schools.

I would always laugh when somebody would come up to me and say, "man, I'm 21; I definitely don't wanna be rapping when I'm 30." I'd say, "What're you gonna do? Open up a cleaners? You're still gonna rap, 'cause it's an art. Would a painter stop painting when he its 50?"

Sunshine by Coolio

If love was a flower I'd spread the petals about the planet
And plant seeds throughout every city and country
Even in those who do not want me
I try to make some sense of the situation we call life
Some, verbal illustration to help ease this strife
Some, lyrical penetration to try to make things right
In hopes that what I'm saying can saturate your mindframe
And help you with the pain and the strain of the everyday struggle
I don't need it all, I wanna see all y'all bubble
And rise to the top then prove to be hard like a rock
Cos you know it don't stop unless we let it all stop
So when you face to face with adversity, just curse him, C
And look him in the eye, and let him know, that he can't hurt a G
And you willin' ta risk it all
For the things of people that you believe in
So educate yourself in order to assess your achievements
And if I had to explain this realer so you could see it in your mind –
I guess it's kinda like sunshine



CONNECTIONS:

- Why do you think Hip Hop developed when it did?
- Do internet searches on Disco and Funk. What makes Hip Hop different than these musical styles?
- Why do you think Hip Hop isn't being taught in schools?
- What is the artist saying in the song? How is language important and/or useful to Coolio?
- *Sunshine* was featured prominently on American radio. How do you think the public responded?

EXERCISE:

- If you were going to write about the issues facing you in your neighborhood or in your school, what would those issues be? Make a list.
- Using that list, come up with some titles for a song your class could write.
- Have each student create the first two lines of one of the ideas.

Hip Hop: A Brief History

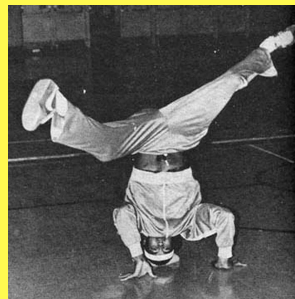
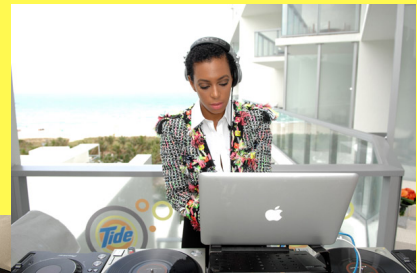
By Mike Merrill

“DJs and MCs and graffiti artists who use walls and subway trains as marquees, we go back to b-boys, breakdancin’, break beats, and it’ll never cease and on that note we say peace.” ~Rakim, on the rich Hip-Hop history of New York City

Hip Hop. I’m sure many have heard the term before, but very few people understand the real meaning. “It’s just another word for rap.” Wrong. Dead wrong. Although the words “Hip Hop” and “rap” have become nearly interchangeable, there is an original, deeper meaning to the word “Hip Hop” (also spelled hip-hop or hip hop). It names an entire culture, a truly American culture that has developed into a way of life for many people worldwide since its genesis in the early 1970’s.

Hip Hop itself consists of five main forms of expression:

- **MCing** – which is the art of writing and performing rhymes, usually over rhythm-heavy music.
- **DJing** – The use of turntables to manipulate records and create new music is known as DJing.
- **Graffiti** – Urban forms of art where words and pictures are drawn with spray-paint on walls, trains and other urban canvases is known as graffiti.
- **Break dancing** – is a specific style of dance that is often very athletic, and almost always done to music created by Hip Hop DJs or MCs.
- **Beat boxing** - or vocal percussion, is the art of creating beats or rhythms using the human mouth.



Rahzel

Aside from these five pieces of Hip Hop cultures, there also exist numerous other characteristics, including a specific style of fashion and a loose set of philosophies. However, these other characteristics are encompassed in and have been molded by the first five aspects of Hip Hop.

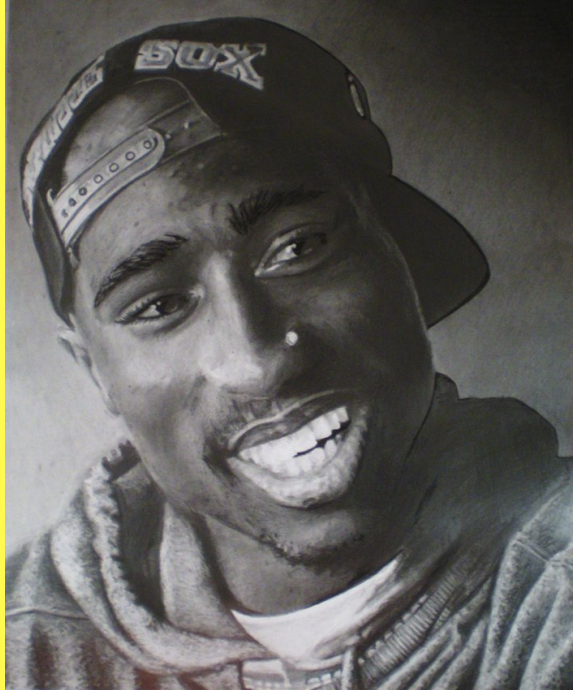
The great thing about Hip Hop culture is that it is all-American. It has its deepest roots in African tradition, but is primarily built upon dance, art, and music that is American. People of all races, nationalities, genders, religions, and ages are part of Hip Hop cultures, despite the fact that inner city black youth began the movement. Hip Hop promotes diversity in America, and around the world, by ignoring cultural boundaries and focusing on the forms of expression at hand. Perhaps the best part of all is that anyone can do it.

Tupac Shakur, from *Tupac*:

Resurrection (1971-1996)

“When I auditioned for the Baltimore school for the arts that was one of my good luck times. I spent three years in Baltimore. But at my homeboy’s high school, it’s not like that. They don’t have trips to go see Broadway plays, they don’t read the things we were reading, and they didn’t know what I was talking about when I like, ‘Yo, Shakespeare’s dope.’ They don’t have the same experiences that we had. Then I started thinking, like, damn why is that? Cuz our school that I went to is mostly for the white and rich minorities.

And I started going. ‘Damn, man, I would have been a totally different person had I not been exposed to these things.’ Hell no, I was living in the ghetto. We didn’t have any lights, no electricity. We was about to get evicted.”



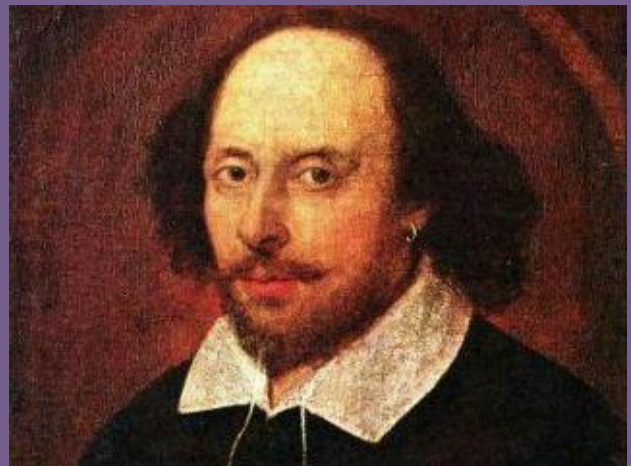
CONNECTIONS:

- How does Hip Hop culture use different kinds of creative talent? How do these talents work together?
- How has Hip Hop changed since its beginnings in the 1970s?
- Compare what you know about Hip Hop with the following statements.
Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - “Hip Hop crosses cultural boundaries.”
 - “Anyone can do Hip Hop.”
 - “Hip Hop that discusses the glorification of wealth, violence, and indulgences tends to be popular with record buyers and radio listeners.”
- Who are your favorite Hip Hop artists? Why do you like them?
What is Tupac saying in the quote about cultural awareness? How can Hip Hop teach people about different cultures or experiences?

Shakespeare's Origins

William Shakespeare, also known as the Bard, is the most written-about author in the history of Western civilization. His theatre company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, was the most successful in London in his day. Shakespeare had plays published and sold in octavo editions, or "penny-copies" to his literate audiences, the first playwright to experience his works published and sold as popular literature in the midst of his career.

For all his fame and celebration, Shakespeare's personal history remains mysterious. There are just two primary sources of information on the Bard's life: his writing, and various legal and church documents that have survived from Elizabethan times. William Shakespeare's legacy is a body of work that may never again be equaled in Western civilization. His words have endured for 400 years, and still have the power to reach across the centuries as powerfully as ever.



William Shakespeare: A Timeline

Researched by theREP's Intern L. Davis

- William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 (at least it is believed that he was born on or near this date) to John Shakespeare & Mary Arden.



of his childhood, but it is believed that Shakespeare attended *King's New School* in Stratford, England.

- On November 28, 1582 William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, in Worcester. When they wed, William was 18 and Anne 26 years old, and pregnant.

- It is generally believed that William was baptized on April 26, 1564 at *Holy Trinity Church* in Stratford upon Avon.

- William was the third of eight children. He had two older sisters (Joan & Judith) and three younger brothers (Gilbert, Richard & Edmund).

- There are little to no records



- On May 26, 1583 their first child, Susanna, was born.
- On February 2, 1585 Anne gave birth to a set of twins, who the couple would name Hamnet & Judith.
- At the tender age of 11, young Hamnet died of unknown causes.
- By 1592 Shakespeare was earning a living as an actor and playwright in London. Though he was living in London his family was still in Stratford upon Avon.



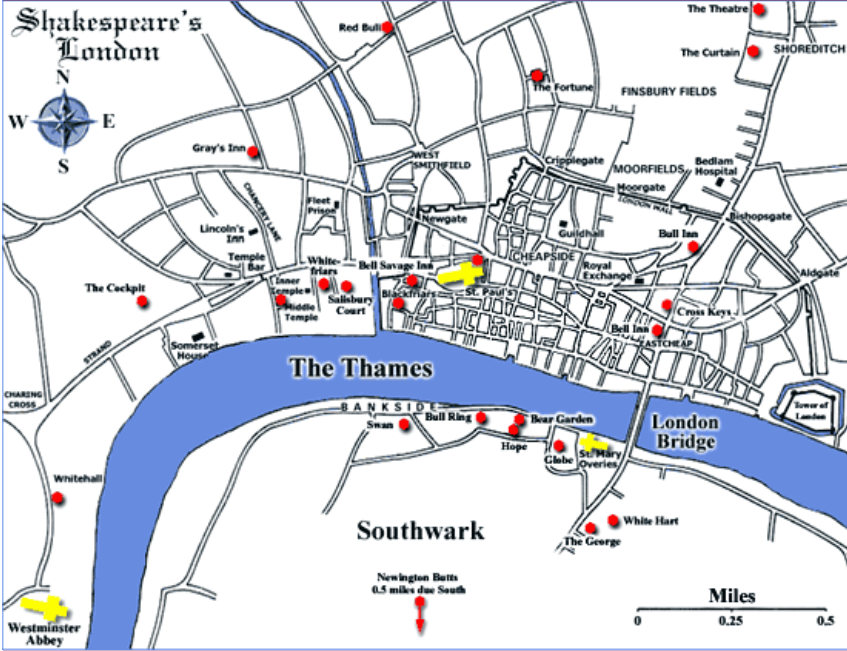
was published in 1593.

- The early 1590s also show records stating that William was a managing partner in the *Lord Chamberlain's Men*, an acting company in London.
- March 2nd, 1592: Shakespeare's first play, *Henry VI Part I*, was produced. It was performed between 1592-1593, and was first printed in 1594.
- Shakespeare's first piece of work, *Venus and Adonis*, was published in 1593.
- By 1597 William Shakespeare had published 15 of the 37 plays attributed to him.
- 1597 also saw Shakespeare buying a large house called "*The Great House of New Place*."
- By 1599 William and his business partners helped Peter Smith to build the Globe Theatre. The theatre was located on the Southbank of The River Thames.
- In 1613 the Globe Theatre burns down. In 1989, after work on the new Globe had already begun, archaeologists discovered about 10% of the remains of the theatre's original foundations beneath Anchor Terrace. The new Globe, which opened in 1997, stands only 200 yards from the original site.



- On April 23, 1616 William Shakespeare died of unknown causes, in Stratford, England. It was his 52nd birthday.

EIZABETHAN ENGLAND



In his plays, Shakespeare captured the realities and limitations of sixteenth century England. Understanding this society will help us identify with the struggles and triumphs of Shakespeare's characters.

Elizabethan England was governed by the concept of **feudalism** (also known as the class system), in which every citizen was answerable to another, more “worthy” citizen of an upper class. A person’s class was a consequence of his or her birth, and this “natural” order was considered inflexible. People married within

their class and lived as members of this class with rare exception. This class order also called for people further up the social scale to behave in a more “civilized,” intellectual fashion.

Artists and entertainers were considered vagrants, lower class, and not responsible to any particular lord. Perhaps dealing with his own frustrations as an artist in this class position, Shakespeare attempted to upset this “natural” order in his plays, such as having a member of a lower class aspire to a higher position or a women dress as a man for some deviant purpose. This makes for good drama and begins to challenge such a rigid class system, but at the end of the play Shakespeare always restored the hierarchy. This pleased the nobility and promoted good public relations between the theatre and the ruling class.



From Thornbury's *Old and New London*, Cassell & Co, 1881.

Sixteenth century England's class system of natural order extended to religion, appearance, and race. The noble Elizabethans thought of themselves in the highest possible terms. White, Christian, beautiful people were the Elizabethan ideal, and anyone who did not fit this mold was looked on with disdain. Shakespeare's plays are filled with characters expressing their contempt for those outside the norm. However, all of Shakespeare's characters are complex, not stereotypes. As a member of a lower class himself, Shakespeare understood some of what it was like to be on the outside.

(Information taken from the Shakespeare Resource Center: www.bardweb.net)

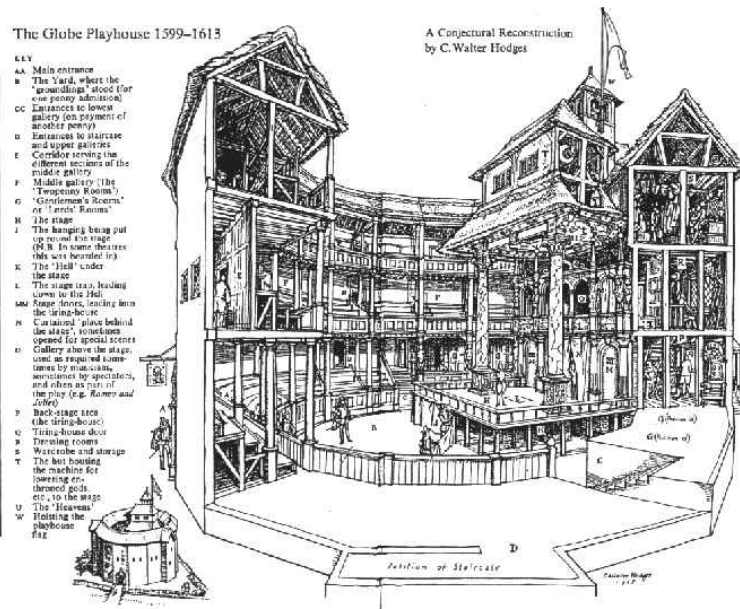
THE THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

Without television, radio, films, or computers, the people of Elizabethan London had a limited choice of entertainment. Those wealthy enough could pay to have musicians, dancers, actors and fencers perform in their homes. The common people most often went to taverns, bear baiting rings, or theatres. For about the price of a bear baiting match, commoners could stand in front or to the side of the theatre stage and watch a production. The people who stood in this area were known as groundlings. For more money, patrons could purchase a seat in the galleries (the theatre walls) or a special box seat. Shakespeare wrote for each segment of this audience, incorporating more base humor with sophisticated commentary. But the groundlings are the audience members who make performances at the Globe so memorable: they mediate between stage and galleries, they have an immediate response to jokes, they are made part of the action - both imaginatively by the actors who see them as an army, a forest or a court, but also by their own verbal and physical participation such as throwing back the apple a character had just thrown into the yard.

Shakespeare's work was produced at two theatres in London: the outdoor Globe Theatre on the southern bank of the River Thames, and the more expensive indoor Blackfriars Theatre near the city center. (Check out the map at the top of page 15.)

CONNECTIONS:

- Consider this idea of feudalism in Shakespeare's time. Do we still have a class system in place today? What does our societal hierarchy look like?
- Review the quote by Tupac on page 10 and consider the idea of access to the arts and literature. Tupac asserts that students from the school in his home and neighborhood did not have the same access to theatre and Shakespeare as those students at the more privileged school. Do you agree? Was that the same in Shakespeare's time?
- Today, we consider Shakespeare and his language as very lofty and highbrow. Do you think that was the case his day?



A Brief Synopsis for each of the Bard's plays used in *Shakespeare: The Remix*

The Merchant of Venice

Portia, a wealthy and beautiful young woman of Belmont, is courted by a number of suitors, among them is Bassanio. He is short of cash, and he appeals to his friend Antonio (the title character) for help on this score during the courtship. Antonio agrees to lend his friend three thousand ducats for a period of three months, but in order to supply the funds; he himself must borrow a sum from a money-lender, Shylock. Shylock agrees to supply the loan with no interest – but only if Antonio agrees “in merry sport” to a clause that allows Shylock to cut off a pound of Antonio’s flesh in the event of a forfeiture...Antonio can’t pay the debt and must go to court to defend him. Portia (in disguise) goes to court to help resolve the breach of contract. In the end, Shylock cannot extract a pound of flesh without shedding blood and loses the case. For every character, but not Shylock, mercy carries the day.

Macbeth

This play takes place in Scotland. It begins with three witches predicting that Macbeth will become King, among other political achievements. These predictions trouble him because he is not in line for the throne. But some of the witches prophesies start to come true so he becomes very ambitious and begins to believe that he can become king and plots to murder him. When Macbeth hesitates, his wife (Lady Macbeth) insists that they go through with it. After an agony of deliberation he murders Duncan, the king. In the end Lady Macbeth goes crazy from the guilt of the deed. Macbeth is murdered during battle by the slain king’s son, Malcolm, who eventually inherits the throne. The play is dark symphony of fear and miscalculation.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Hermia is ordered to wed Demetrius; she refuses because she is in love with Lysander. So they decide to elope and run off into the forest at night. They share their plan with Hermia’s best friend Helena, who is in love with Demetrius. Meanwhile, in the realm of the fairies, King Oberon, who is having a fight with his queen sends Puck, his aide, to find a flower that has magic powers. When the dust from this flower is sprinkled into the eyes of a person, they will fall in love with the first person they see. Puck messes up and sprinkles the dust in Lysander’s eyes who sees Helena when he awakens and thinks that he loves her instead of Hermia. In the end, after many errors and love spells being cast, as well as further conflicts and confused characters, the world of the lovers is restored, including the world of the fairy king and queen. The play balances light romantic entanglements with brief but profound meditations on the illogical appeals of love and dreams.

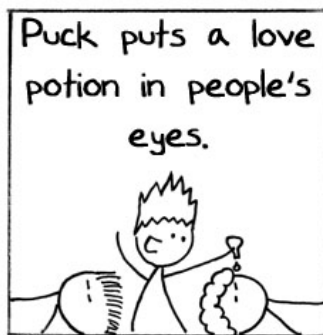
Richard III

Richard is one of Shakespeare’s most interesting characters. He is a deformed hunchback who is greedy for the throne and kills his whole family in order to obtain it. The play is about one man and the havoc he wreaks on England. The play is a pageant of ruthless ambition.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (in 3 Panels)



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MACBETH (in 3 Panels)

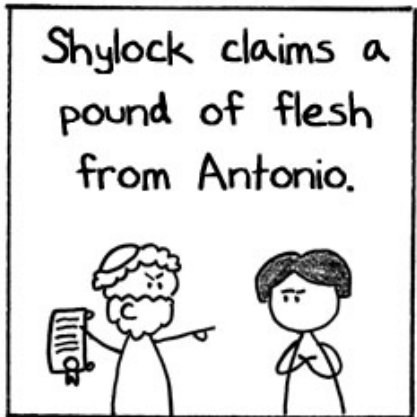


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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (in 3 Panels)



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CONNECTIONS

1. Have students try their hand at making a three-panel cartoon for one of the Bard's plays ... or a song ... or a rap ... or a poem.

“

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(in 3 panels)

