

## Television Executive Peggy O'Brien to Discuss Shakespeare in Today's Schools

*One of America's Most Popular Educators To Share her Views On What Is, and Is Not, Happening in the Nation's Classrooms*

In a special back-to-school edition of *SPEAKING OF SHAKESPEARE*, we'll launch our 1999-2000 season with a wide-ranging examination of what students in the U.S. and elsewhere are encountering these days when they're introduced to the playwright a recent BBC survey identified as Britain's "Man of the Millennium." We'll be honored to have as our guest a sprightly, charismatic figure who, in the phrasing of *English Journal*, has "changed everything about the way Shakespeare is taught in this country."

As Vice President for Education at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PEGGY O'BRIEN oversees CPB's efforts to provide instructional services to its constituency. Among other things, she directs the corporation's Ready-to-Learn initiative and supervises the publication of its Teachers' Digest. In the meantime she continues many of the initiatives that highlighted her spectacular tenure as director of education at the Folger Shakespeare Library. With support from NEH, Dr. O'Brien founded a Teaching Shakespeare Institute that permits secondary-school faculty members to study with the world's finest scholars at the university level. Dr. O'Brien is the author of *Shakespeare Set Free*, a three-volume collection from Simon & Schuster, and her consulting assignments have taken her to such varied sites as the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, and the Prince of Wales Shakespeare School in Stratford-upon-Avon.

After a half-hour reception, the proceedings will commence at 6:30 p.m. with a conversation between Dr. O'Brien and Shakespeare Guild president JOHN F. ANDREWS. They'll chat for 45 minutes or so, and then you'll have a chance to ask Dr. O'Brien to expand upon the many issues she's addressed. Afterwards you'll be welcome to dine at the National Press Club's superb Fourth Estate restaurant, which will validate your ticket for free parking in the PMI Garage at 1325 G Street NW; to reserve, phone (202) 662-6738.

For details about future Guild attractions, among them actors FLOYD KING and TED VAN GRIETHUYSEN (currently starring in *King Lear* at The Shakespeare Theatre) on October 18th, corporate leaders KENNETH ADELMAN and NORMAN AUGUSTINE (co-authors of *Shakespeare in Charge*) on November 15th, and playwright KEN LUDWIG (best known for such hits as *Crazy for You* and *Moon over Buffalo*) on December 6th, see the pages that follow.

## Speaking of Shakespeare

Dialogues about the playwright and his place in our lives today

Presented by The Shakespeare Guild in league with The British Council, The English-Speaking Union, and The National Press Club, and with generous support from the Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation



Tuesday, September 28th  
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
The National Press Club  
529 14th Street NW, 13th Floor  
Two Blocks from Metro Center

For members of The English-Speaking Union and The Shakespeare Guild, the price for *Speaking of Shakespeare* events is \$25. For non-members who do not belong to The National Press Club, the price is \$35. If you wish to enroll in The Shakespeare Guild or guarantee space(s) for one or more of our upcoming programs, you may do so by completing this form and either faxing it to (202) 483-7824 or mailing it to 2141 Wyoming Avenue NW, Suite 41, Washington, D.C. 20008-3916. To request further information, or to place orders by telephone, simply call (202) 483-8646.

I wish to join the Guild, or renew my membership for the 1999-2000 season, as a  Subscriber (\$50),  Contributor (\$125),  Donor (\$250),  Benefactor (\$500), or  Patron (\$1,000). I wish to reserve  space(s), at  the \$25 member price,  the \$35 non-member price, for  September 28th,  October 18th,  November 15th,  December 6th. I wish to reserve  space(s) for all four events at the member rate of  \$75, the non-member rate of  \$125. My check for \$  is enclosed.

Please charge \$  to my  Visa  MC  \_\_\_\_\_ (exp.  / ).

Name  Address

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# Dame Judi Dench Wins The 1999 Gielgud Trophy

During a delightful ceremony that took place at 8:00 p.m. on Monday night, May 17, in Broadway's legendary **ETHEL BARRYMORE THEATRE**, **DAME JUDI DENCH** claimed her special niche in a pantheon that also includes such theatrical legends as Sir **IAN MCKELLEN** (1996), Sir **DEREK JACOBI** (1997), and Miss **ZOE CALDWELL** (1998).

In years past The Shakespeare Guild had always bestowed its annual **GIELGUD AWARD** as the centerpiece of a lavish spring benefit for the **FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY** in Washington. This year, thanks to the generosity of **THE SHUBERT ORGANIZATION** and the producers of *Amy's View*, the Guild enjoyed a sparkling Broadway debut as its festivities moved to the venerable **BARRYMORE THEATRE**. In that stately interior an evocative David Hare drama was providing its female lead an eloquent vehicle for the 1999 Tony Award, a laurel Dame Judi collected, a few weeks later, in June.

Following a witty Elizabethan prelude by **NEW YORK'S ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC**, television journalist **ROBERT MACNEIL**, who had also hosted the 1996 and 1998 presentations of *The Golden Quill*, greeted an enthusiastic audience with reminders of the luminaries who had been honored with the first three Gielgud Awards. He noted how appropriate it was to be occupying a venue that memorialized our nation's foremost acting family, and then he yielded the podium to "the Barrymore of our own day."

After a series of charming reflections about his hypothesis that Gielgud must



have been a contemporary of the poet himself – "Hell, they had the same acting teacher!" – **CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER** offered facetious condolences to "dear Judi" for the "terrible year" she was having in a career that was unlikely to garner more than three major accolades in a four-month period. He concluded, as did two later speakers, with a Shakespearean love-sonnet.

Next came **REBECCA EATON**, WGBH/Boston's executive producer for *Mobil Masterpiece Theatre*. Ms. Eaton talked about the pleasure she'd derived from working with Dame Judi during the filming of *Henry V* and *Her Majesty Mrs. Brown*, both of which had been made possible, in part, by Ms. Eaton's efforts. She then introduced two video clips of "Her Majesty" as Queen Victoria, asserting that it was this moving performance that had really earned Dame Judi her March 1999 Oscar as Queen Elizabeth in *Shakespeare in Love*.

Sir **RICHARD EYRE**, former artistic director of Britain's Royal National Theatre and the man who'd staged *Amy's View* and several of David Hare's other plays, spoke of what a privilege it

had been to direct so gifted and disciplined a performer as Judi Dench. His words were soon echoed by Sir **DAVID HARE**, who described Dame Judi as his artistic "lodestar," his symbol of truth and "value," and recalled an instance in which she'd managed, while doing a scene from one of the dramatist's screenplays, to say the word *yes* in a way that clearly and emphatically meant *no*.

Speaking on behalf of his fellow actors in *Amy's View*, **RONALD PICKUP** saluted Dame Judi as the epitome of "Friendship." His comments left no doubt about why she elicits such warm devotion from her colleagues. **TOBY STEPHENS**, the son of Dame Maggie Smith and Sir Robert Stephens, said that, though he'd long admired Dame Judi, he'd never had an opportunity to meet this wonderful lady until a recent trip to see his mother on location for Franco Zeffirelli's movie *Tea with Mussolini*.

Two of the evening's notables, actors **BRIAN BEDFORD** and **HAL HOLBROOK**, offered delightful vignettes from fresh productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*, respectively. In an aside, Mr. Bedford said he hopes that when, three decades hence, he calls to wish Dame Judi a happy 94th birthday, as he had done with Sir John a few months earlier, she too will say that as a consequence of hiring a new agent she's "getting more work."

In what turned out to be the most stirring moment of the evening, actor **KEITH BAXTER**, who'd performed with Gielgud in the Orson Welles cinema *Chimes at Midnight*, read Dame Judi a congratulatory message from the Award's namesake. In what Mr. Baxter labeled a characteristic Gielgudian touch, a backhand compliment, Sir John singled out for special praise a part – Lady Macbeth – in which he'd been sure that such a modest and diminutive lass could never prevail.

As the 1998 laureate, **ZOE CALDWELL** was called upon to bestow this year's trophy on its recipient. Miss Caldwell prefaced her commendations of Dame Judi with a hilarious letter she imagined the present occupant of the British throne might have written, informing a proven theatrical "Majesty" that she was so adept at this kind of role that she might wish to consider an occasional foray to Buckingham Palace to relieve a weary Queen Elizabeth II on her "bad days." Miss Caldwell then read a missive that had come in from her 1998 *Golden Quill* predecessor, Sir **DEREK JACOBI**. He depicted Dame Judi as an extraordinary talent who had been lauded with so many richly deserved prizes that "she could open her own department at Bloomingdale's."



As she cradled the award, to the accompaniment of a rousing ovation that persisted for several minutes, a tearful honoree described herself as "overwhelmed" by such an outpouring of affection.

Press coverage was even more extensive than expected. Announcements or news items about the program appeared in *The Georgetown*, *The New York Post* (both Neal Travis and Liz Smith featured it in their society columns), *The New York Times* (an item in Lawrence van Gelder's "Footlights"), *Parade* ("Walter Scott's Personality Parade"), *The Shakespeare Newsletter* (a four-page cover article by co-editor John Mahon), *The Washington Post* (Jane Horowitz's "Backstage"), *The Washington Times* (a full-page illustrated story by Ann Geracimos), and *Women's Wear Daily* (two gushing reports from the irrepressible "Suzy").

A number of prestigious partners joined the Guild for what proved to be a stellar gathering, among them **THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF SADLER'S WELLS**, **THE BRITISH COUNCIL**, **CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER**, **THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**, **THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB**, **THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**, **THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY**, **THE SHAKESPEARE THEATRE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**, **THE THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**, and **THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE**. In addition the Guild received honorary patronage from **BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND LADY MEYER**, as well as from **MRS. VINCENT ASTOR**, **MR. LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS**, **MRS. KITTY CARLISLE HART**, and **MRS. LEWIS T. PRESTON**.

Key financial assistance came from two major sponsors, **MIRAMAX FILMS**, which had given the world *Shakespeare in Love*, and **THE NAOMI AND NEHEMIAH COHEN FOUNDATION**, whose trustees, guided by **LILLIAN C. SOLOMON**, have provided crucial underwriting for several Guild initiatives. The Guild was also indebted to two members of its **GOLDEN QUILL CIRCLE**, Board member **BARBARA G. HAMMERMAN** and her husband **RAYMOND LAVINE**, who have supported its endeavors from the outset, and who attended with their lovely daughter Amanda.

Once again the Guild had reason to be grateful to **THE MOBIL CORPORATION** and to **WGBH**, which continue to augment their marvelous showcase of dramatic talent for the edification of American viewers. Their help was indispensable to the success of this year's activities.

Finally, the Guild is thankful to the inimitable **GEORGE TRESCHER** and his talented colleagues, and to all the patrons, benefactors, donors, contributors, performers, directors, consultants, suppliers, friends, and loved ones who did so much, in so many diverse ways, to ensure that this pivotal undertaking would result in an occasion for everyone to cherish.