

## *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits!*

### *General Information 2014*

*Shakespeare's Greatest Hits* (SGH) is open to Christian\* homeschooled students ages 12-18 (with occasional exceptions for younger or older students.) It is an exciting, educational, nine-week course culminating in a performance of selected scenes from two of Shakespeare's best plays, taught by professional actor/storyteller, Christopher Leebrick. Class is limited to 20 students (with occasional exceptions solely at the discretion of the director).

Two plays, selected by Mr. Leebrick, are featured in performance. This year our plays will be the comedy, *The Merchant of Venice*, and the tragedy, *Macbeth*. There are two final performances on the same day: Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 1:00 and at 5:00 PM. Selected scenes are performed from each play, with Mr. Leebrick filling in the narration between scenes. This makes it possible to perform each play in about one hour's time.

The cost is \$175. Students are required to place a \$75 non-refundable\*\* deposit down to hold their spots. However, the class consists of enough hours and instruction to be considered worth one full Carnegie unit toward high-school fine arts requirements ... a great deal! (This is a year's worth of credit for one quarter's worth of a student's time.) At the end of the class, Mr. Leebrick supplies grades for each student, which parents can choose to use on high school transcripts or not.

All students meet two times during the first week (auditions) and three times the final week (including performances). At the end of the first week, students are divided into two groups. Starting the second week, each group meets once a week. Classes are generally four hours long; final dress rehearsal is five hours. Chris is also sometimes willing to stay after class to work with students, if necessary. **As we draw near to the end of the practices, they will often run overtime...occasionally by as much as a full hour or so.** Every effort is made to notify families of this ahead of time, but longer practices in the last few weeks should be expected if Mr. Leebrick decides that these would be helpful.

**Auditions** are held the first week. On these two days, students must be prepared to present a memorized speech or monologue (1-3 minutes in length from one of the two plays being presented.) Beginning students need not be terrified of this; auditions are conducted in a very supportive environment! The second day of auditions consists of impromptu readings from the selected plays. (Note: to do their best, students should be as familiar as possible with both plays prior to auditions). One important thing to keep in mind: please do not use an English accent when speaking your lines! ☺

A one-week break is built into the class schedule: The program therefore extends over a ten-week period, starting January 6, 2014, with 9 weeks of actual practice.

There will be a 10-minute break (approximately) during most classes. Students should

bring a healthy snack and a water bottle. In addition, students should bring a pencil, a notebook, and a full copy of the play in which they are performing.

**First Day Welcome Meeting:** On the first day of auditions, students should attend with a parent for a short meeting during the first hour of class. During this time, you will be able to meet Mr. Leebrick, ask questions, and hear about the class and our expectations. During this meeting, parents will be given an opportunity to sign up for volunteer jobs. Parents are always welcome to attend rehearsals.

**Attendance** at each rehearsal/audition is vital; therefore students with foreseen conflicts should not take this class. (*This is the theater and the show must go on!* ☺ *We have a limited amount of time to pull off some quality performances.*) Also, it is imperative that students arrive on time. If you will be late for any reason, or absent due to an emergency, please call Tammy Schwartz immediately, so that Mr. Leebrick can adjust the rehearsal schedule. (503-984-1017.) Students with unexcused absences or consistent tardiness may lose their part, be “demoted,” or even be dismissed with no refund of tuition.

Note: Because of unknowns in his work as a storyteller/actor (sudden auditions, etc.) it is possible that Chris may need to temporarily alter the rehearsal schedule upon short notice. If such conflicts occur, please know that Chris will do his utmost to make up the time with each and every student at a time that works for them. This is extremely rare.

Students who take the class must be willing and available to be cast in either group. No day preferences are normally considered. Casting will determine which group a student is in (and therefore what day they will be attending rehearsals.)

There can be no guarantee of siblings being placed in the same group (on the same day); although when casting makes it possible, Chris will try to accommodate requests for siblings being in the same group.

There is no guarantee of females playing female roles, since there are very few female Shakespeare roles. In fact, female students should sign up expecting to play a male role. If it works out otherwise, it will be a nice surprise for them!

**Costumes - Parents are responsible for supplying their children’s rehearsal and performance props and costumes, and for doing so by the appropriate deadlines.** However, there is help available for ideas, and suggestions, and the children are often able to create their costumes through borrowing from others or by visiting the local Goodwill. We are also slowly building a costume collection that belongs to SGH. Don’t let costuming scare you away from a great class!

Students and families are responsible for their own costumes and transportation.

**Program Advertising and Ticket Sales - To help cover the costs of SGH, each student is responsible for selling two advertisements for the play program** (this will not be

difficult -- think of it as selling cookies during Tee-Ball or Soccer seasons -- and will be discussed in detail later in the program.) SGH families also help ticket sales by encouraging attendance from extended family and friends! The show is usually quite entertaining and a great time for young and old!

**Performance Tickets** – There are no complimentary (free) tickets for performances. All family members, including parents and friends, are required to purchase tickets @ \$6.00 each or \$20 for a family ticket.

**Parent Involvement** – SGH requires substantial parent involvement. We put on a great show, and we could not do it without your help. ☺ Parents should expect to help out in at least one of the following areas:

\*Rehearsal & Performance Assistants: Two parents need to be present and willing to help if needed during each rehearsal. We will need at least four parents per play in order to reduce the commitment to alternating weeks. These parents will also assist the actors backstage during performances (two assistants per performance.)

\*Costume Coordinators – Two dedicated/talented parent volunteers are needed (one for each play.) They will meet with Chris and then be responsible for overseeing the coming-together of all costumes for their show. NOTE: They are NOT responsible for providing the costumes for any child other than their own.

\*Stage Preparation & Tear-down: (if you're handy at all, I need you!)

\*Snack Coordinator: This person coordinates sign-ups for weekly rehearsal snacks.

\*Performance Technicians (sound and lighting, videographer, photographer)

\*Cast Party Supervisor: Helps buy food and awards for cast party and helps arrange games. Budget will be provided.

\*Cast Party Hosts/Hostesses: Helps set up and serve at cast party.

\*Performance Ticket Takers (usually combined with another job)

\*Publicity: Gets information out to local newspapers, radio stations, homeschool groups, etc.

\*Cashiers on performance day (usually combined with another job)

\*Flower Sellers: For performance day. (We only have this when there are enough volunteers.)

\*Make-up: If you have any skill in stage or performance make-up, we could use you.

There are also other small jobs available, which will be discussed in more detail on the first day of auditions during the welcome meeting.

**Director's Biography** - Christopher Leebrick is a professional theatre artist (actor, storyteller, and playwright). He graduated with honors from the Drama program at UC-Irvine and also studied theatre at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is the co-founder and former artistic director of the *Lord Leebrick Theatre Company* in Eugene. As an actor, he has portrayed major stage roles ranging from Shakespeare to modern drama and musical comedy. Recent plays include *True West*, *Macbeth*, *The Laramie Project*, *Dracula*, and the long-running comedy *Shear Madness*. Christopher also performs *Dawn of the Messiah* – a one-man performance of the entire Gospel story for interested churches and other venues. As an award-winning storyteller he performs at schools, libraries, festivals and campfires throughout Oregon and beyond. He created *Shakespeare's Greatest Hits!* for home-schooled students in Eugene in 1993, and has directed the Woodburn program since 1999. He currently resides in West Linn with his wife and two children.

### **Questions or Concerns?**

Most questions regarding “Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits” should be directed to SGH Coordinator, Tammy Schwartz (these include logistics, auditions, enrollment, money, program, ads, etc.) at 503-538-8099 or [tammy@whdl.com](mailto:tammy@whdl.com) . Mrs. Schwartz checks her e-mail many, many times a day. ☺

However, questions/comments about acting, direction, or the play itself should be directed to Mr. Leebrick at [cleebriick@earthlink.net](mailto:cleebriick@earthlink.net) . 503-656-9567

If in doubt, please contact Mrs. Schwartz first.

\* While the class will be taught with a Christian worldview, there is no statement of faith to sign or specific religious requirements for enrollment.

\*\*Deposits are only refundable due to a true emergency. What constitutes an emergency will be decided by SGH based on information supplied by the family. Families should consider the deposit to be fully NON-refundable under most circumstances.