

Shakespeare's Greatest Hits!
General Information 2016
Website: <http://shakespearesgreatesthits.org/>

Shakespeare's Greatest Hits (SGH), a high-quality drama class, is open to Christian* students ages 12-18 (with occasional exceptions for younger or older students.) It is intended primarily for homeschooled students, but we also accept students from schooled settings. 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 21 students (with occasional exceptions solely at the discretion of the director).

Although SGH is a rigorous program, which demands much of students (and parents), students also consistently report that SGH is one of the most rewarding highlights of their school year. So, while the following information should be taken seriously, please don't allow it to intimidate you. Feel free to ask questions!

Two plays, selected by Mr. Leebrick, are featured in performance. This year our plays will be the comedy, ***The Taming of the Shrew***, and the tragedy, ***Romeo and Juliet***. There are two final performances on the same day: Saturday, March 12, 2016 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.

Class tuition 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 4-5 hours long; final dress rehearsal is 7 hours. **As we draw near to the performance, practices 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.) Students should choose a monologue, which highlights their interest in a particular character. Beginning students need not be terrified of auditions. They 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! 😊

Breaks: A one-week break is built into the class schedule: The program therefore extends over a ten-week period, starting January 4, 2016, with 9 weeks of actual practice.

There will be a 15-minute break (approximately) during rehearsals. While rehearsals are long, there is usually ample time most weeks for students to relax, watch other students work, and practice on their own. 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 (if possible) 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.

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.) If you have a day conflict, you will be placed on a wait-list. If the class does not fill by November 15th, you may be admitted to the class. So, if you are interested, and have a day conflict, you should still fill out your materials and send in a deposit. The deposit will be returned to you should

you not get a place in the program.

There can be no guarantee of siblings being placed in the same group (on the same day); although when casting makes it possible, Mr. Leebrick will try to accommodate requests for siblings being in the same group. We also ask that you not specify a day preference. If you can come on either day, then preferences cannot be considered. If you do get in with a day *exception*, then you must understand that it *may* affect your casting, and you *may* get a less desirable part.

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

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 students 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!

Carpooling: Students and families are responsible for their own transportation, but we will attempt to help you make car-pooling connections.

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 baseball or soccer seasons--and will be discussed in detail around the third or fourth week of rehearsal. SGH families also help with 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 (pre-sale) or \$8.00 each at the door. (We have group sale prices for groups of 10 or more.)

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.) Rehearsal assistants act as chaperones and are often “on book” to help actors with their lines.
- Costume Coordinators – Two dedicated, talented parent volunteers are needed (one for each play). These parents will meet with Mr. Leebrick, and then be responsible for overseeing the coming-together of all costumes for their show. They will also help with the costume parade (taking notes and making suggestions), and with laying out the SGH costumes on the weeks these are brought. NOTE: Costume coordinators are NOT responsible for providing the costumes for any child other than their own. They simply help share Mr. Leebrick’s vision with the cast, and suggest creative ideas to the actors.
- Stage and Sanctuary Prep: If you’re handy at all, I need you! We set the curtains up the Sunday evening before the dress rehearsal (3/6/16), and add significant numbers of chairs to the sanctuary. We need you for about 3-4 hours!
- Stage and Sanctuary Tear-down: After the performances (around 7:00 PM) on Saturday, March 12th, we need parents to stay and carefully tear-down and pack up the curtains, put all the extra chairs back, vacuum, and re-set up the stage for church the next morning. This is very important, as we want to send the students off to the cast party!
- Snack Coordinator: This person coordinates sign-ups for weekly rehearsal snacks. With rehearsals going over dinnertime, we try to have a light meal available for the students to eat quickly. We ask for families to volunteer one to two times to provide this “snack.”
- Performance Technicians (sound and lighting, videographer, photographer)
- Cast Party Supervisor: Helps buy food for cast party, and coordinates additional parents host/hostesses who help with the party. Budget will be provided.
- Cast Party Hosts/Hostesses: Helps set up and serve at cast party.

- Ushers: Take tickets at the door, greet people, help people find seats, and help enforce theater rules. This is usually combined with another job.
- Publicity: Gets information out to local newspapers, radio stations, homeschool groups, etc.
- Cashiers on performance day: Sell tickets to people. This is usually combined with another job.
- Flower Sellers: Set-up and sell flowers for audience members to purchase and send backstage to their favorite actor. Flowers will be provided.
- Make-up: If you have any skill in stage or performance make-up, we could use you.

There are also other small jobs available. More details will be provided during the first few weeks of rehearsals.

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 homeschooled 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 . Mrs. Schwartz regularly checks her email. ☺

Questions or comments about acting, direction, or the play itself should be directed to Mr. Leebrick at 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.