

MILL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# REVIEW

SPRING 2023

MILL VALLEY  
SCIENTISTS

PRUNE MUSIC  
STORE

THE COVEY  
SCHOOL

CURTAIN THEATRE  
AT 23





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This issue of *Review* is lovingly dedicated to the memory of our dear friend Chuck Oldenburg, longtime member of MVHS, author, and historian, who passed away on March 29, 2023.



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COVER: A scene from Curtain Theatre's 2014 production of *The Tempest* in Old Mill Park. Actors on Steve Coleman's set, from left: Carole Swann, Phillip Percy Williams, David Naughton, Alison Sacha Ross (behind ship prop), Paul Abbott, and Emily Ludlow. Photo by Russell Johnson.

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**Mill Valley Historical Society**

375 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Mill Valley Historical Society is pleased to present our 2023 *Review* magazine, with its collection of stories about historic cultural institutions in Mill Valley in our more recent past. The descriptions of scientists, a unique private school, a beloved music store, and a tiny but powerful theater company may remind you of an earlier era or they may surprise you. ("I didn't know my town had these.") Only one of the subjects still makes an appearance in Mill Valley every year! For this issue, Abby Wasserman makes her 12th consecutive appearance as the *Review* editor, and as always, brings her considerable professional talent to the project, finding a diverse set of authors to uncover the secrets of their subjects. Behind the stories are the skills provided by our researcher, copy editor, and designer, as well as essential support from the MVHS Board of Directors. Much of the history and accompanying photos come from the Lucretia Little History Room in the Mill Valley Library, a rich source of archives for all of our projects.

This year, MVHS celebrates its 45th year, and the 45th year of *Review*, first conceived as a semi-annual magazine. As the new president of MVHS, I am the latest in a long line of leaders of the Historical Society, whose service to the organization and the community I admire. I especially want to thank our immediate past president, Eric Macris, who was creative in his vision of how MVHS could be more visible in the community and endlessly energetic in activating projects. He was the driver of our focus on programs to attract young families with children and he led us to deeper relationships within all areas of the City of Mill Valley government.

Working with our Board of Directors, I hope to expand that mission to include more relationships with other civic organizations who share our purpose of service to the community. Our Board members are enthusiastic about programs for historic preservation, engagement in the schools, providing and sharing our history with more historic signage about town, the First Wednesday series, oral histories, and our annual "Walk Into History." If you haven't been involved with these programs, now is a great time to start! In fact, we are always looking for volunteers to execute these programs (and others), and we would love to have you join us!

With great expectations for the year ahead,  
Nancy Emerson

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Actors in Curtain Theatre's 2021 production of *Twelfth Night*, directed by Michele Delattre. From left: GreyWolf, Lindsey Abbott, Glenn Havlan, and Steve Beecroft. Photo by Russell Johnson.







BY **ABBY WASSERMAN**

# *The Play's the Thing*

## **CURTAIN THEATRE COMES OF AGE**

**Walking through Old Mill Park** on a summer day in 2000, a little girl and her father came across a group of actors rehearsing on the small stage in the redwoods. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* opened a few days later, and the child returned wearing a costume and sat mesmerized. She couldn't have understood all the words—Shakespeare's language is not the language of today—but the spectacle held her riveted. The comedy is about two Dukes, brothers, one good and one bad. The bad one has exiled his brother to the forest where the action takes place. There's a cross-dressing heroine, a lovesick young couple, a jester, some rustics, faithful retainers, sword fights, lively music, and a dance to cap it off. The child came back for the second performance, and the third, and stayed through them all. Afterwards she went backstage under the trees and met the cast and crew, and that, her father remembers, was as enthralling as the play itself.

### **DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

The idea to stage Shakespeare in Old Mill Park was John Leonard's. What better way to celebrate Mill Valley's Centennial on Memorial Day weekend than with one of the Bard's funniest, most endearing plays? John is a former city council member and mayor. He has been involved in countless community boards and committees, many of them in the arts. "I thought of the play as counterculture, because the plot counterposes a noble court exiled to the forest with wicked rulers in the city," John said recently. "It would be centennial counterculture in a humorous mode, and we would be in a forest." His first thought was to get Steve Coleman to design the set.

Steve Coleman is a Mill Valley local, born in Switzerland but raised here. He's the resident designer at 142 Throckmorton

Theatre, responsible for its ornate music box-like interior and the small performance rooms in front. Known for his inventiveness and whimsy, his gifts are limitless and the presence of his sets sheer brilliance. Recipient of a Milley Award in 2002, Steve has designed sets over the course of his career for Marin Theatre Company and other Bay Area theaters, and before turning to set design he was an actor in San Francisco. Steve knows his stuff and his feeling for our hometown park verges on the worshipful. He had participated in pop-up readings of Shakespeare in the park before: "There would be a birthday party or celebration, and we'd go over to the park and read and have some wine. We would go at dusk, take paper lanterns with candles in them. It was a fun little adventure. The park's amphitheater was very lightly used in those days—during the Fall Arts Festival for music, never for theater. I agreed to design a set if John could put the rest of it together."

They went to see Ann Brebner, who with her husband John Brebner produced Shakespeare outdoors at the Marin Art and Garden Center from 1961 to 1967—this developed into the Marin Shakespeare Festival that now performs on the Dominican University campus.

"We asked, 'How do you go about doing this?'" John recalled, "and dear old Ann, never one to mince words, said, 'There's no way you can do this.' I felt that I had clearly let the idea get ahead of the practicalities of producing a play, and knew we had unaddressed needs, obviously a director who could magic-up a cast, because we were already approaching Memorial Day. Steve suggested getting in touch with Abby Wasserman, who has a theater background, and she suggested her oldest friend Mikel Clifford, who was fortunately available at that point."

"Abby phoned me and described John's vision," Mikel said. "I was enchanted. I was raised in Mill Valley but by 1999 lived in Berkeley. I'd acted in *As You Like It* several times with Berkeley productions and once in Minneapolis. Playing Shakespeare outdoors in Mill Valley's comfortable redwoods was very close to heaven for this Shakespeare nut."

Simone Koga and Jeff Garrett in Curtain Theatre's 2010 production of *As You Like It*, directed by Michele Delattre. Photo by Russell Johnson.

Mikel Schwartzkopf Clifford, a graduate of Tam High, class of 1957, lives and breathes theater. As a young girl she staged fairy tales like *Hansel and Gretel* and *Beauty and the Beast* with chums on neighbors' front porches. Her first official acting role was Princess Maybloom in a production of *Prince Fairyfoot* (Abby played Robin Goodfellow) mounted on the Park School stage by Joan Washington. Mikel earned her BA in art and history from UCLA and her master's degree in theater at San Francisco State. In the 1960s Mikel and Michael Leibert cofounded Berkeley Repertory Company and produced and acted in plays for the Rep's early years. In the early '70s Mikel almost single-handedly created the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, which performed plays including weighty ones like *Pericles* and *Timon of Athens* at John Hinkel Park. The endeavor eventually moved from the chilly north Berkeley park to the warmer climes of Orinda and became Cal Shakes—California Shakespeare Theatre. By that time Mikel was working on a doctorate at Stanford. Eager for a new project, she signed on to direct *As You Like It* and stayed to direct Curtain Theatre's next five productions.

## FORMING A COMPANY

The nonprofit company needed a name, which Mikel provided from research into theaters during Shakespeare's time. The Curtain—so-named because it was built against a curtain wall—was a theater in London's northern outskirts, producing plays between 1577 and 1624. "I like the notion of the fourth wall between actor and audience, which in proscenium theaters traditionally manifests as a physical curtain," Mikel said. "Interesting to note that in all of the outdoor playing areas I ever employed, none had a curtain! In Shakespeare's time, sets were minimal. Theater companies were migrant workers, traveling from one place to another. Sets needed to be easily and quickly portable."

Curtain Theatre began with a nucleus of four—John, Steve, Abby, and Mikel—and rapidly grew into a company. Mikel, who loves nothing better than to do a play with friends, invited Michele Delattre and her husband Don Clark to participate. Michele was performing with Shakespeare at Stinson, but not long after, that company went under. John Leonard surmises



Core company members in Old Mill Park, 2000-2001. Clockwise from top left: Chloe Bronzan and Bruce Bronzan; Steve Coleman; Michele Delattre; Abby Wasserman and John Leonard; and director Mikel Clifford and her daughter Maeve. Courtesy of Chloe Bronzan and Abby Wasserman.



Cast and crew of *The Taming of the Shrew*, 2015, directed by Carl Jordan. Courtesy of Curtain Theatre.



that was largely because they performed in the summer when tourists crowd Stinson Beach and parking is hard to find.

Don and Michele were captivated by the idea of performing Shakespeare in Mill Valley, and 23 years later they have continued their involvement, with Michele acting, directing, producing, and playing the English concertina in the company band. Don is a journalist—formerly on staff at the *Wall Street Journal*—and a musician and singer. He had never acted before, but he was soon to make his stage debut.

Mikel Clifford's first task was to edit the play. Cutting Shakespeare may seem like heresy, but it's often done. "With Shakespeare, there is poetry that must be included, even if it is more convoluted, or flowery or indirect than we in the 21st century might expect," she explained. "If I'm considering the venue, I weigh how well things can be heard, the circumstances of the audience, the weather, and time. If the point of the speech is wit, then you edit for humor. If the point is the transference of information, I edit the extraneous and go to the information. I cut if there is a theme that has gone on for a time that might become tedious for the audience. In Old Mill Park they're sitting on logs and wooden chairs. They don't want to be thinking about their comfort, they want to think about whatever's happening in front of them. That is what should engage them."

Notwithstanding Ann Brebner's warning, *As You Like It* came together in four months. Through open auditions and callbacks, a cast was assembled. John, Abby, and Don took minor roles while Michele was double-cast as the bad brother, Duke Frederick (Fredericka in this production), and Phoebe the Shepherdess, and Chloe Bronzan, just out of college, was cast as the ingenue Celia. "Celia was one of my first big roles in the

Bay Area. It was scary, but Mikel was wonderful. She creates a structure but also lets actors make their own choices—she's collaborative and respects the actor's process. Sometimes it's great to get specific direction, but having worked with directors who micromanage, it was nice to have the space to find stuff and see what came out of our interactions."

When Chloe's father Bruce Bronzan dropped by the park to see her rehearse, he was asked to take the part of Duke Senior, the good brother in the play. For several years Bruce was a member of the California State Assembly and had previous experience acting in amateur productions. He was an important contributor to the company in the early years, playing Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2001 and Prospero in the 2002 production of *The Tempest* opposite Chloe's Miranda. "He was a prince among men, no exaggeration," Mikel Clifford said of Bruce. "He was wonderful, tactful, generous, patient—all the things you want in a human being." Bruce died on his 73rd birthday in 2020. In a nostalgic tribute to her father, in May of this year Chloe will play a female Prospero in *The Tempest* with Falcon's Eye Theater in Placerville. "I am in my father's shoes saying the words to my Miranda that he said to me. My father would like it."

Rounding out that first cast, half of whom came from Berkeley, were Jeanette Harrison, Patrick Jones, Reeve Howard, Robert Lundy-Paine, Duncan Maddux, Kenneth Hayes, Latania Lewis, Linda Sklov, Michele Brake, and Mikel's daughter Maeve, 11, who in a Saltimbique costume walked across the stage at break with a sign saying INTERMISSION.

Performing outdoors held its challenges for the actors. There's no changing room to get into costume, no green room to





From left: Patricia Rudd, Victoria Siegel, and Heather Cherry in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2011, directed by Michele Delattre. Photo by Russell Johnson.

relax, no visual screening beyond what Steve Coleman provided with scenery, greenery, and an occasional hanging tapestry (which could get whipped wildly by the wind). Backstage at Old Mill Park is within view of anyone walking by the creek or along Cascade Drive. The temperature can change suddenly and it can get windy and cold; the company has on occasion brought blankets for the audience to use.

Chloe cited the difficulties of getting into costume and makeup “in the middle of a dusty park with people walking by or hanging out at the picnic tables backstage. One day I forgot to bring my own little mirror and someone told me my makeup was a mess that day. That was the beauty and the challenge of the park. You are at the mercy of things around you and the prep was tough. The place also changed some of the acting choices—you had to be loud, so if you were trying to do something nuanced it was hard. Mikel was always in the back yelling ‘Volume!’ I learned a lot from her about her direction style.”

### LAUNCHING INTO THE LIGHT

Ann Brebner might not have been thinking of finances when she warned off John and Steve, but money did turn out to be an obstacle facing the company during their first 15 years. Nevertheless, the audiences, even the modest ones for *As You Like It*, were enthusiastic and the group was having so much fun that they were determined to keep going after 2000. For that to happen, they needed the permission from the City of Mill Valley to use the park free of charge, both for rehearsals

and performances. John handled these negotiations. He had a feeling, in those early days of forming the theater group, of bringing something to light that deserved to be brought to light and a venue that deserved to be used.

“There were all these serendipitous elements, especially that we had Steve. My initial thought was to have one performance, but Mikel insisted we should expand to three, and we gave up the idea of performing on Memorial Day weekend. With a longer timeline we could do a better job of casting and organizing.”

The group settled on Labor Day weekend. Performances would be free to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. “That led eventually to incorporation as a nonprofit as Curtain Theatre,” John said. “We decided we needed that in order to be a proper vehicle, not some scrappy group of people who wanted to do something; it was important to have nonprofit status as a theater group. We had to make the case that this was a cultural benefit to the community at large to be able to present live Shakespeare without charging. Now it’s being carried on. Don and Michele have been steadfast participants throughout.”

The goal of the creative team in the earliest years, Michele said, was the aesthetic of the theater, “jelling, doing the plays as written, trusting the language, not going too far away from that. People were coming to the park with kids and dogs. We put the focus on making the story and language accessible. How can you do this for people who’ve never seen Shakespeare? This is a great place to start and I think we do a really good job. Many people in the company have a lot of experience doing Shakespeare.

They appreciate the chance to relax into the play, see how the story can be made to live with an audience in this intimate amphitheater.

“We have to remember that we’re in a place that is very beautiful and we need to keep a sense of beauty and not let the natural beauty be overshadowed. That extends into the whole take of the play. We don’t do the heavy-duty tragedies out there—it’s just not smart—it would be hard for people to focus on something like *King Lear*. We do the comedies and romances. Those plays are festive and emphasize community coming together, and that fits the park and the audience experience of being in the park together.”

### THE MUSIC MAKERS

Because of Michele and Don, music has been a crucial part of every Curtain Theatre production. Shakespeare included songs in many of his plays, but relatively few are preserved, so new music had to be found.

“Mikel had ideas from previous productions using typically Renaissance-era music,” Michele said, “but after two or three years we were using what Don and I play, which is what is called ‘traditional’—it’s English, French, and Italian dance music, an oral tradition, some of it quite old, some written in the last 50 years, but it’s written in dance patterns and can suggest periods without being specific. Eventually you need someone who is writing music for you; you need transitions between scenes, music to introduce the play, to get people to sit down, and you add songs to move from one action to another. When I was doing some Berkeley productions I saw this fiddle player, Hal Hughes, who is able to back up scenes on his own with music, and he understood how to perform and work with a play.”

“We do almost all original music now because of Hal, who has composed more than 1,000 fiddle tunes,” Don added. “We pick from his preexisting library then I start composing songs

and tunes for each new production. I’m just starting the process for *Romeo and Juliet*, our 2023 production. It’s a challenge to put my melody and words into Shakespeare.”

### CLIMBING OVER OBSTACLES

It’s hard to imagine more than two decades and 25 productions in, but Curtain Theatre’s future hung by a thread for many years. Some of the Cascade and Throckmorton area neighbors were opposed. “They were used to having the amphitheater in the park, but a live audience marching into their theater was uncomfortable for them,” Mikel said. “We had to lobby the neighbors.” By now, Mill Valleyans anticipate the annual nine performances of the Curtain Theatre, and people passing the park during rehearsals often stop to watch and listen. When a petition with 10 signatures circulated against Curtain Theatre performing in the park, a counter-petition for its continuation garnered 1,000 signatures.

Curtain’s creative team always hoped to establish free summer Shakespeare as an ongoing tradition. That goal was sporadically hindered by the City of Mill Valley seeking to rent the park and amphitheater. Mikel recalled in the early years that weddings or conferences would be scheduled during Curtain’s designated times to use the stage. “We sometimes learned of these conflicts at the last minute, being ordered to somehow move chairs out of sight, or told we had to either get rid of the set for an event, or that strangers would be using our set for their wedding.”

“Things changed frequently and suddenly in the early years,” Michele said. “We were flying by the seat of our pants. There was a certain amount of charm in that, but that time was definitely rough-and-ready. Because we started as a play for the Centennial and did only one weekend, for a long time Parks and Rec fought us every year. They would call me in the morning and say, ‘You’ve got to take the set down today,’ and we had no storage. That was partly because we were not being recognized



The band in 2013 for *King Stag* by Carlo Gozzi, one of three non-Shakespeare plays produced by Curtain Theatre, directed by Doyle Ott. Band members from left: Don Clark, Michele Delattre, Alice Montgomery, Hal Hughes, and Miriam Attia. Photo by Russell Johnson.



professionally. Mill Valley was changing and not as interested in having something artsy in the park. The town told Parks and Recreation that they had to support themselves. Weddings in Old Mill Park were their bread and butter.”

After directing six productions, Mikel moved to Minneapolis in 2004, and for many years Don Clark and Michele Delattre handled these sticky negotiations. Steve Beecroft, a local actor, director, choreographer, and singer, joined the company in 2009 and has since taken on relations with the city departments. Except for 2020, the first year of the pandemic when the stage in Old Mill Park was dark, people anticipate an annual Mill Valley Shakespeare. Their expectations are raised, and the city appears to be convinced that Curtain Theatre is worthwhile.

### PLAYING DRESS-UP

Costumes have an uncanny ability to sweep actors and audience into different times and places. Some actors don’t assume their character until fully dressed. In rehearsals, actors will wear long skirts, or capes, or swords—the props and equipment they must get used to in order to appear natural onstage. Actors are chameleons in costumes.

Mikel points out that in Shakespeare’s time sets were minimal—actors were constantly traveling—so acting companies “aimed for flagrant theatricality through costumes, often owned by the actor who wore them. He became identified with that part and that costume. Creating, mending, and caring for costumes were essential for that actor to perpetuate characters audiences came to know, love, and demand to see.

“In the early years of Curtain Theatre we rented most of the costumes. At that time Contra Costa Junior College had a wonderful theater department. Their costumes were for rent, and rent them I did. I also rented from Berkeley High—they had a great costumer for years—and from a junior college in Napa. I used some costumes of my own that I’d accumulated over the years.”

Each year, the costumes in Curtain productions grow more and more beautiful, but excellence comes at a cost. “It’s hard to borrow costumes now,” Michele says. “ACT [American Conservatory Theater] doesn’t do costume rental, Hayward has shut down too as a rental shop. This year and last year we rented from Ashland [Shakespeare Festival]. Jody Branham has become our costumer. Jody has a master’s in costume from San Francisco State and she fit right into the Curtain family. Costuming is the hardest job to do, in my opinion. I hope she decides she’s going to stay.”

### PASSING THE HAT

Curtain Theatre has never charged admission; the company prides itself on the fact that anyone can attend, drop in or out, without making reservations, without paying. “Audiences in Old Mill Park seem more free-spirited than people who buy tickets for a play in advance,” Mikel observed, “because in the park, a number of people already in downtown Mill Valley notice that a play is going to happen and decide just then to attend. It’s a different mindset. A play must prove itself for the paying, scheduled audiences—‘I paid my money, now convince me.’

They’re not as lighthearted as those who drop in. Audiences at Curtain productions may drop out easily too—not that they do, as a rule.”

It was Bruce Bronzan, in 2001, who spoke up for passing the hat at the end of the show. John Leonard felt it inappropriate, but he was outnumbered. “Actors have passed the hat since the beginning of theater, particularly with outdoor performances,” Mikel pointed out. “It is a way to give the actors some money.” “I had not understood the economics,” John admitted. “Cast members, many from the East Bay, had to spend money for gas, bridge tolls, so this incurred a cost for them and we wanted to reimburse their costs. They were doing it out of love. And so in our second year I became reconciled to passing the hat.”

At the end of each performance, actors cheerfully pass among the audience with baskets. For the first 15 years the donations were modest but they have become generous. It’s a soft sell; no one feels obligated to donate, but many do. This way the company raises enough to give a small stipend to the actors and have money left over for other costs. More financial help is provided by supporters, and grants from organizations like the Outdoor Art Club give the company a huge boost. This August Mill Valley Market will feature Curtain Theatre as its Nonprofit of the Month. The City of Mill Valley provides the park for free—a generous act—and once the stage set is in place, no one asks to take it down.

Jamin Jollo (left) and GreyWolf in *Two Gentleman of Verona*, 2022. Photo by Russell Johnson.





## A BRIGHT FUTURE

In recent years the company has benefited greatly by the participation of Steve Beecroft, who directed *Henry IV Part I* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and is directing this year's *Romeo and Juliet*. Steve happened upon tryouts in 2009 while walking through the park, and ended up with a leading role in the play that year, an original musical by Vicki Siegel, *Hot Night in Ephesus*, one of only three non-Shakespeare plays Curtain has mounted. As a volunteer, Steve coordinates with Parks and Rec, raises money, produces, and personally deposits 500 flyers in mailboxes. Company member Nic Meredith is company treasurer, runs front of house and is "the voice of reason." Michele Delattre is artistic director and Don Clark is music director. Mill Valley web designer Greg Wilker has remastered the company's online presence ([curtaintheatre.org](http://curtaintheatre.org)) and Steve Coleman continues to design the sets. The 2023 set, based on a town square in Verona, where *Romeo and Juliet* takes place, will be built with the help of professional carpenters. The production will be placed in the Renaissance time period.

Steve Beecroft discussed his approach to the play, which will open on August 12. "In most productions they let Romeo and Juliet be the entirety. I want to create the environment in which they live that makes their coming together so remarkable. I'm thinking of a hurricane—they're in the eye, but they're bumping up against it. They're trying to cross barricades. And there are a lot more interrelationships to explore in the play than are usually tried."

When asked what he considered to be the most important fact about Curtain Theatre, John Leonard reflected, "It's that coming from a humble and fortuitous beginning, it managed to establish itself. These folks kept coming over from Berkeley to participate in productions and the community supported them. There's this Berkeley-Mill Valley connection for me personally because of my exposure to Shakespeare at John Hinkel Park, then Mikel and Michele and Don being East Bay-based. A lovely, serendipitous crossover between the two communities."

"We were so lucky that Mikel came first, because her experience was critical to shaping the notion of what Shakespeare was supposed to be like, the value of enunciation, the clarity in terms of choreography of movement. All of these things don't just happen by themselves; they have to be elicited. Michele has similarly been very hands-on when she's directed. I like to have women directors because they get at the experiential arc that is involved in one of Shakespeare's plots, what characters go through. The people in *As You Like It* are not the same at the end of the play as at the beginning."

"The comedies, as opposed to the history plays, feature reconciliation as a theme at the end. Somebody or somebodies are creating a problem and the plot revolves around how that is going to be solved, and the community schism is taken care of in that resolution." John, who has worked in many ways to enhance community in his hometown, may have created his most lasting legacy in Curtain Theatre.

Don Clark largely attributes the success of the company's 23-year staying power to Steve Coleman. "His vision of the



Miko Sloper as Caliban and Julia Todhunter as Sprite in Mikel Clifford's 2002 production of *The Tempest*. Julia, an artist, wrote recently of her experiences with Curtain Theatre: "It felt like magic, and I've always sought to keep that kind of magic a dominant force in my life, in all the ways in which it can take shape." Courtesy of Andrew Todhunter.

park and what it can be are central. He would articulate every year that we were in a park and the play needed to reflect the place and the park, and he made sure the set didn't cover up too many redwoods. The Curtain is outdoors and intimate at the same time. You can get away without having mics, and people can really focus even though there are cars and people within hearing and sight."

Michele Delattre summed up what has made her return year after year to take part in productions: "It's really a magical space. It's this home—over the decades it's become a home for actors who come back year after year. There's an element of adult summer camp. We all have this real love of getting together. The emotional life of these plays is new to the younger actors, but they really start to understand by doing it."

"My favorite thing is to watch the children who come. They sit in the front and you think they're going to last 10 minutes and go off to play in the park—but they're so rapt. We watch how they are drawn into this live story that has sword fights and dancing and great costumes and bigger than life characters. They're sold. I think it will change their lives. It's very moving to watch."

That brings us back to the three-year-old child in 2000 who came to three performances of *As You Like It* dressed in costume. The next year Mikel gave her the part of the Indian Child in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. For her costume, a sari store on University Avenue in Berkeley made a miniature turban to size. The following year she had three small parts in *The Tempest*—a Wave in the shipwreck scene, a Harpy, and a Sprite. Her name is Julia Todhunter. She is 26 years old now, a 2019 graduate of Reed College, and the music of Shakespeare's poetry still rings in her ears.

This article weaves interviews with John Leonard, Mikel Clifford, Steve Coleman, Michele Delattre, Don Clark, Chloe Bronzan, and Steve Beecroft with the author's own recollections. Thanks to Andrew Todhunter, who provided details about his daughter's experience with Curtain Theatre.



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