



The English-Speaking Union  
40<sup>th</sup> National Shakespeare Competition

*"We are such stuff as dreams are made on"*

The Tempest

## A Letter From Our Chairman

Dear ESU National Shakespeare Competition Community,

In 2023 the ESU National Shakespeare Competition celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For four decades, this Competition has given high school students the opportunity to discover the magic and power of Shakespeare's words, and to share their passion and talent with the world.

The ESU National Shakespeare Competition is embraced by students, teachers and our members across the country because it embodies so well the ESU's mission to foster goodwill, inspire common bonds, promote civil discourse and unlock opportunities through the power of the English language.

The ESU National Shakespeare Competition provides a unique opportunity for young people to delve into Shakespeare's works and develop their public speaking and performance skills. Thanks to the hard work of our ESU Branch Shakespeare Coordinators, who engage with local schools and help to organize the local competitions, high school students guided by their teachers read, analyze and perform Shakespeare's monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages – at the school, Branch and national levels.

This year, the ESU National Shakespeare Competition finals, held over the weekend of April 22-24, 2023 in New York City, were especially memorable because it was the first time since the Covid pandemic began that the young contestants, their families, teachers, ESU volunteers, Board and staff came together in person.

We witnessed a display of incredible talent as our young performers breathed new life into Shakespeare's words. Each contestant brought their unique interpretation and style to the stage, showcasing their understanding of Shakespeare's language and themes. It was evident that the students had invested countless hours into perfecting their performances, and their hard work paid off in the quality of their presentations.

I want to thank everyone who was part of the Competition this year. From the students who participated and excelled and the teachers who guided and inspired them, to the judges who shared their expertise and the donors who supported us, we are grateful for the contributions of so many who made the ESU 2023 National Competition a success.

I also want to thank our National staff who under the leadership of ESU President and Executive Director Karen Karpowich put the pieces of this wonderful event together.

This yearbook is dedicated to every one of you who gave themselves to make the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ESU National Shakespeare Competition one to remember. You have our heartfelt thanks.



With best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dr. E. Quinn Peeper".

**Dr. E. Quinn Peeper**

Chairman, National Board of Directors, The English-Speaking Union



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## Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill Cup



The historic hallmarked silver Cup was made in London, during 1933, in the reign of King George V by the renowned firm of Richard Comyns.

*"When I started the Shakespeare competition in 1983, I really didn't have any idea as to the number of students from across America whose knowledge and love of Shakespeare would be encouraged by this effort. And now, I am equally amazed that even a global pandemic cannot stop the power and influence of Shakespeare from allowing young adults like yourselves to take his words, interpret them, and then present them to the world."*

Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill,  
addressing the 2021 ESU National  
Shakespeare Competition audience

We thank the generous donors  
to the ESU Centennial National  
Shakespeare Endowment Fund

# 2023 National Shakespeare Competition Finals Judges

**Reese Antoinette**

*Actress and Interdisciplinary Artist*

Reese Antoinette is a Caribbean-American actress and interdisciplinary artist. She is currently a recurring guest star on Apple TV's *Bad Monkey* (Spring 2023), and in *RICKY*, a short film debuting at Sundance Film Festival 2023. Reese has been an advocate for women, immigrants and youth empowerment in New York City for over a decade. She also served as the Graduate Student Senator, and Head of Diversity for NYU Student Government. Reese is a graduate of NYU Tisch MFA in Acting, British American Drama Academy at Oxford University, and Manhattan College BA in Broadcast Journalism with a minor in music. She is the co-founder of The ORIXA Project, An immersive theatrical experience that explores black women narratives throughout time and space in VR and AR technology. She is currently an Artist-in-Residence at Columbia University: Barnard College's Movement Lab.



**James Elliot**

*Actor and Director*

With over three decades of acting and directing under his belt, Jim Elliott has happily worked on 14 of Shakespeare's plays. Some of his more memorable acting roles include Petruchio, Hamlet, Romeo and Cassio. He started his directing career with *As You Like It*, before moving onto critically successful runs of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. In addition to Shakespeare, Jim currently teaches Shakespeare at the Actor's Studio Drama School at Pace University and The Terry Knickerbocker Studio in Brooklyn. He also teaches acting, scene study and film acting at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and speech and presentation at The Cooper Union. Jim was the Producing Director at Urban Empire, during which time he premiered Jonathan Marc Sherman's *Evolution*. He directed the ABC Diversity showcase for two years and directs regularly with the Three Graces Theater Co., including the premiere of Craig Pospisil's *Dissonance* which was just published in the Best Short Plays of 2011 by Applause Books. Jim has produced one feature length and two short films. He is the screenwriter, producer and director of the award-nominated *Helen at Risk* with Didi Conn. Jim received a BA from Williams College and an MFA from UT-Austin.





### Diana Green

*Performing Artist, Writer, and Money Coach*



Diana Green was the Founder of The Children's Shakespeare Theatre and its Artistic Director for the company's first 21 years. She directed over 80 full-length productions and was also the fight choreographer and costume designer for the company. During her tenure, the company served hundreds of young actors from Rockland, Westchester and Bergen counties. In 2016, CST was chosen to represent the entire USA at the World Festival of Children's Theatre. Currently Diana co-hosts an irreverent podcast about Shakespeare called *FckShakespeare* wherein they uncover all the naughty bits going scene by scene through the plays. In the fall she will be attending the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon to get her Masters in Shakespeare & Creativity.

### Melinda Hall

*Director, Actor, Producer*



Melinda Hall (she/her) is an artist who expresses herself as a writer, director, actor, photographer and videographer. She has written and directed for stage, video and film. Ms. Hall created and produces the Annual Shakespeare's Birthday Sonnet Slam which is in its 13th year and is a grantee of the LMCC Creative Engagement Award. In 2022, Ms. Hall directed for *The Parsnip Ship* at the O'Donnell in Brooklyn, and before that, staged readings for the Dramatist Guild Foundation and a variety of short films and videos. She has been an acting coach and teacher for NYFA, Stella Adler Conservatory, L.A. and for private clients for over 15 years. She is a member of SAG-AFTRA (where she has been the Shakespeare moderator at their NYC Conservatory for over 10 years), AEA and The Dramatist Guild. Melinda currently teaches a weekly Deep Dive Shakespeare course online for professional actors. She is a Reader at the Folger Shakespeare Library and a passionate autodidact. @snappynyc

### Dana Ivey

*Actor*



Dana has worked in the U.S. and Canada since 1965. She has received five Tony nominations: for *Heartbreak House* and *Sunday in the Park* in the same year and for *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *The Rivals*, and *Butley*. She received an Obie Award for creating the role of Daisy in *Driving Miss Daisy*, for Mrs. Warren's *Profession* and for Quatermaine's *Terms*. On Broadway she also appeared in *Present Laughter*, *Waiting in the Wings*, *Pack of Lies*, *Henry IV*, *Sex and Longing*, *The Rivals*, *Heartbreak House*, *Major Barbara*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She played Gertrude to Kevin Kline's *Hamlet* and was Big Mama at the Kennedy Center in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. She most recently played Mrs. Candor in *School for Scandal* for the Red Bull Theatre. In 2008 she was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame and received an honorary doctorate from Rollins College. Among her films are *Addams Family*, *Legally Blonde 2*, *Rush Hour 3*, *Ghost Town*, *Sabrina*, *Two Weeks Notice*, *The Color Purple*, and *The Help*.



# 2023 National Shakespeare Competition Finals Judges

Dr. Catherine Loomis  
Professor and Author

Dr. Catherine Loomis holds a PhD in Renaissance Literature from the University of Rochester, and an MA in Shakespeare and Performance from the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon. From 1997 until 2017 she taught Shakespeare and other literature courses at the University of New Orleans, leaving as a tenured full professor. She has also taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Dr. Loomis is the author of *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Volume* (2002), a collection of the documents we use to construct Shakespeare's biography, and of *The Death of Elizabeth I: Remembering and Reconstructing the Virgin Queen* (2010), a study of the literary response to the death of Queen Elizabeth I. With Dr. Sid Ray, she is the co-editor of *Shaping Shakespeare for Performance: The Bear Stage* (2015), a collection of essays on the staging practices used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Dr. Loomis has published numerous scholarly essays on Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I, and serves as president of the Queen Elizabeth I Society, a group of scholars dedicated to the study of Elizabethan history, art history, and literature.



Sara Topham  
Actor

Sara Topham is currently appearing in *Leopoldstadt* on Broadway. Previous Broadway credits include: Cecily in *Travesties*, Gwendolyn in *The Importance Of Being Earnest* (both for Roundabout). Off-Broadway: *The Changeling* (Beatrice-Joanna). *London: Intimate Apparel* (Mrs. Van Buren), *Love Me Do* (Dorothy). 14 seasons at The Stratford Festival - roles including: Elizabeth/Robyn (*Serving Elizabeth*), Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*), Ruth (*Blithe Spirit*), Olivia (*Twelfth Night*), Célimène (*The Misanthrope*), Wendy (*Peter Pan*), Madame de Tourvel (*Dangerous Liaisons*), Laurencia (*Fuente Ovejuna*), Rosalind (*As You Like It*). Other roles: Joan in *Saint Joan* and Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman* (The Shaw Festival, Canada), Beatrice and Olivia at The Old Globe, Titania and Ariel at Shakespeare Theatre (DC).





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SHAKESPEARE

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#### MIDSUMMER IN OXFORD PROGRAM

Actors 18+

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- ◇ Uncommon Denominator: Nina Katchadourian at the Morgan



Portrait of a Woman with Pearls, 2013. The Morgan Library & Museum, Gift of Blake and Courtney Johnson, Los Angeles, CA, 2021.114. Photography by George Condo Studio. © George Condo, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

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# 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition

## Branch Champions

Student	ESU Branch	Teacher	School
Logan Yates	Atlanta	Tracey Buot	St. Pius X Catholic High School
Kelsey Barnes	Austin	Charles Hobby	Round Rock High School
<b>Crystaliz Frometa</b>	<b>Boston</b>	<b>Juliet Bailey</b>	<b>The Rivers School</b>
<b>Casey Kerr</b>	<b>Central Florida</b>	<b>Gail Chase</b>	<b>Lake Nona High School</b>
Ashley Sheffe	Central Pennsylvania	Doug Hewlett	Carlisle High School
Violet Craghead-Way	Charlottesville	David Becker	Charlottesville High School
Tyler Riederer	Chicago	Wes Schultz	Brookfield Academy
Vivian Megenhardt	Cleveland	Scott Sumerak	Shaker Heights High School
Gracie Tyson	Colonial NC	Kristine Boccia	J.H. Rose High School
Ben Feldman	Denver	Shawn Hann	Denver School of the Arts
Nico Mir	Desert (Palm Springs)	Christian Kiley	Etiwanda High School
<b>CJ Clemons</b>	<b>E-Branch</b>	<b>Carol Spears</b>	<b>South Broward High School</b>
Ell Zirolli	Greenwich	Amy Mahoney	Hall High School
<b>Elena Hollenbeak</b>	<b>Hawaii</b>	<b>Lyn Ackerman</b>	<b>St. Andrew's Schools - The Priory</b>
Pierre Beatrix Madlangbayan	Kansas City	Alice / Robyn Hilt	Garden City High School
<b>Sarai Aboagye</b>	<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>Claire LaNicca</b>	<b>Campbell County High School</b>
Aidan Casey	Lexington	Cecille Deason	Turner Ashby High School
Stella Cockrum	Los Angeles	William Goldyn	Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts
Abigail Petit	Memphis	Heather Wall	Shanan Homeschool Co-op
Theo Ciperski	Miami	Jessica Fox	Gulliver Prep
Syed Shah-Batiz	Tuscon	Shannon Kerstetter	Mountain View High School
<b>Claire Liotta</b>	<b>Monmouth County</b>	<b>Smita Ganatra</b>	<b>Glen Ridge High School</b>
Tucker Claremont	Naples	Amy Carvelli	Community School of Naples
Jacob West	New Orleans	Gary Mendoza	Covington High School
<b>Nicole Beverly Chien</b>	<b>New York City</b>	<b>John Anderson</b>	<b>The Rudolph Steiner School</b>
Jackson McCormick	Oklahoma & W. Arkansas (Tulsa)	Rebekah Peddy	Cascia Hall
Zoe Cano	Palm Beach	Gretchen Porro	G-Star School of the Arts
Lucy Shea	Philadelphia	Tom MacFarlane	Friends' Central School
Clara Newton	Phoenix	Shira Schwartz	Basha High School
TJ Lake	Portland	Danielle Potter	McMinnville High School
Leah Waessa	Princeton	Scott Patteson	Livingston High School
Ali Patalano	Research Triangle, NC	Laura Levine	Apex High School
Elisa DaRosa	Rhode Island	Deloris Grant	Central Falls High School
<b>Ayush Gupta</b>	<b>San Diego</b>	<b>Heidi Handelsman</b>	<b>Pacific Ridge High School</b>
<b>Victoria Salazar</b>	<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>Michele Sanner</b>	<b>Novato High School</b>
Faithlyn Volitis	Sandhills, NC	Chase Coston	Union Pines
Leah Horan	Savannah	Jonathan Cook	Savannah Arts Academy
Milo Mechem-Miller	Seattle	Daniela Melgar	Mercer Island High School
Anka Chiorini	Syracuse	Joseph DeChick	Jamesville-DeWitt High School
<b>Kiera Kuehnle</b>	<b>Tucson</b>	<b>Amy Byroad</b>	<b>Catalina Foothills High School</b>
Ele Rocha	Washington, DC	Donavan Arizmendi	The Madeira School

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Sarai Aboagye

*Kentucky*

*Campbell County High School*

*Student of Claire LaNicca*

*Monologue: 54*

*Sonnet: 28*



Performing Shakespeare, and getting to learn and understand my sonnet and monologue has really changed the way I approach not only Shakespeare, but literature as a whole. I also learned to be patient when dissecting performance pieces.

### Kelsey Barnes

*Austin*

*Round Rock High School*

*Student of Charles Hobby*

*Monologue: 82*

*Sonnet: 43*



I encourage thespians to participate in the ESU competition. Even if you think you are not interested in Shakespeare, once you dive into the role you gain a great admiration for the genius of Shakespeare and the richness of his characters.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Zoe Cano

*Palm Beach*

*G-Star School of the Arts*

*Student of Gretchen Porro*

*Monologue: 74*

*Sonnet: 92*

My favorite character is Lady Macbeth. The Bard loved his resilient and strong female leads, and I adore the Scottish Queen as much as him. She was eternally devoted to Macbeth's power climb, and was so calm in the face of the turmoil in the story. I love that unlike some "wife" roles written by other playwrights, Lady Macbeth is an actual person. She has substance, she has fears and wants outside of her husband. She has lived a life and knows all ranges of emotion. This complexity in the women he writes is one of the reasons I love Shakespeare. He was so ahead of his time in understanding and realizing the titans women are.



### Aidan Casey

*Lexington*

*Turner Ashby High School*

*Student of Cecille Deason*

*Monologue: 153*

*Sonnet: 130*

My favorite Shakespeare line is the opening to *Romeo and Juliet*. I like it for the same reason I like "twas a dark and stormy night." I think it works amazingly to set the expectations and tone for the following story.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

Third Place  
Winner

### Nicole Chien

New York City

The Rudolph Steiner School

Student of John Anderson

Monologue: 70

Sonnet: 130



I've always loved theater, but in all honesty this is my very first deep dive into Shakespeare! I've studied some of his work such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* for school. However, I never realized the work that truly went into understanding the text. But I do have a newly found appreciation for it and appreciation for the actors that have to learn how to read it. Especially how to perform it. I also really like the wordplay.

### Anka Chiorini

Syracuse

Jamesville-DeWitt High School

Student of Joseph DeChick

Monologue: 192

Sonnet: 43



I've really grown to love Shakespearean language over the past few years. I've learned a lot about how to read it and deliver it and this year, I feel like I can truly appreciate the language in my monologue and sonnet.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Theo Ciperski

*Miami*

*Gulliver Prep*

*Student of Jessica Fox*

*Monologue: 55*

*Sonnet: 144*

Having already worked on the Hamlet piece for several audition cycles I felt a very strong bond to not only the words of the monologues, but to him as well. Spending a lot of time with this monologue has allowed me to come at it through different choices each time and has allowed to play and discover new possibilities within my craft. In picking my sonnet I wanted to find one not only with opportunity for physicality but also with a compelling narrative to entice the audience- always keeping them engaged. I also loved the double meaning in my sonnet and the nuances that it could bring to my performance.



### Tucker Claremont

*Naples*

*Community School of Naples*

*Student of Amy Carvelli*

*Monologue: 2*

*Sonnet: 71*

This is my second year competing in the Shakespeare competition. Taking the written word from the page and performing the monologues brings the work to life and helps students understand the passages, particularly the underlying humor that is often lost when reading. The ESU competition is an unbelievable opportunity for anyone passionate about literature or theater and should be supported through both departments.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### CJ Clemons

*E-Branch*

*South Broward High School*

*Student of Carol Spears*

*Monologue: 186*

*Sonnet: 12*



No matter how much Shakespeare you know, this competition is an amazing opportunity to grow and learn about so many different things!

### Stella Cockrum

*Los Angeles*

*Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts*

*Student of William Goldyn*

*Monologue: 57*

*Sonnet: 5*



My favorite Shakespeare line is from Sonnet 75 "So are you to my thoughts as food to life, Or as sweet-seasoned showers are to the ground." I adore this line because the love for this person is so deep that they wouldn't be able to survive without them. He compares the subject to something that we as humans need to live, and the earth needs to grow. Shakespeare is suggesting in this line that he would cease to exist or grow without the subject. I just find it such a gorgeous analysis of love.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Violet Craghead-Way

*Charlottesville*

*Charlottesville High School*

*Student of David Becker*

*Monologue: 62*

*Sonnet: 69*

I selected the Ophelia Monologue from *Hamlet* Act 4 Scene 5 because it conveys the complex feeling of grief. Ophelia is struggling with the death of her father and the death of a possible future with Hamlet and she grapples with her pain through madness. The brilliant symbolism of the flowers mentioned in the piece (rosemary for remembrance, fennel for deception, rue for regret, etc.) highlights her relationship with each of the characters in the scene. The song before her death is powerfully tragic, which makes it challenging and exciting to perform.



### Elisa DaRosa

*Rhode Island*

*Central Falls High School*

*Student of Deloris Grant*

*Monologue: 2*

*Sonnet: 152*

I love Shakespeare because of the cadence used with the language written and the emotions that pour out of his plays. Also, the talent he had to be able to write all these plays and sonnets and the ability for his writing to have such an impact over the years and being just an incredible source in the English language and English classrooms.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Ben Feldman

*Denver*

*Denver School of the Arts*

*Student of Shawn Hann*

*Monologue: 87*

*Sonnet: 112*



I was intrigued by Richard as a character. I usually choose comedic characters and wanted to choose something completely different. I also love the action and physicality in the monologue. For the sonnet I wanted to contrast Richard's anger with the sonnet's message of love.

### Crystaliz Frometa

*Boston*

*The Rivers School*

*Student of Juliet Bailey*

*Monologue: 140*

*Sonnet: 145*



From this wonderful experience, I will take away a deeper sense of appreciation for Shakespeare's work. While I've always been a fan of Shakespeare, the experience of exploring his writing through the lens of an actor is vastly different from that of a reader. His writing has intense forward momentum and gives actors character traits and performance clues through the use of rhythm, symbolism, and syntax; it's truly amazing. Additionally, regardless of any outcomes, I will leave this competition with a great sense of pride. It takes a lot of patience in order to decipher Shakespeare's language and characters; it was rewarding to improve my understanding of the material, as well as my performance following the tedious hours of analysis and scansion.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Ayush Gupta

*San Diego*

*Pacific Ridge School*

*Student of Heidi Handelsman*

*Monologue: 179*

*Sonnet: 138*

Shakespeare, at first, is daunting. I agree. I was afraid to try Shakespeare at all at first. Yet as you analyze his writing and his characters, as you delve deeper and deeper into the text, you find that he doesn't write in cryptic means. He isn't speaking another language. His characters are just as human as the rest of us, and the real power in the words lies mainly in how you express it. Shakespeare, I feel, is oftentimes loathed by students because he has to be studied in English class. However, his writing is a whole new world if you, instead of reading it, act it out. As Shakespeare, at its core, is meant to be acted.



**First Place  
Winner**

### Elena Hollenbeak

*Hawaii*

*St. Andrew's Schools - The Priory*

*Student of Lyn Ackerman*

*Monologue: 124*

*Sonnet: 14*

The journey I went on as an actor throughout rehearsing for my performances and picking over my part has taught me very valuable lessons about myself and my craft. I have learned the importance of hard work, dedication, and passion in pursuing my dreams. Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are truly timeless, and they have the power to move, inspire, and entertain audiences across generations. This experience has reminded me of the importance of preserving and promoting Shakespeare's legacy, and I feel privileged to have been a part of it.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Leah Horan

Savannah

Savannah Arts Academy

Student of Jonathan Cook

Monologue: 98

Sonnet: 33



My favorite show from William Shakespeare has to be *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*. It is such a fun, comedic play. My school did a performance of it, but included 80s pop music, which sounds crazy, but it worked so well. Easily one of my favorite shows and versions.

Second Place  
Winner

### Casey Kerr

Central Florida

Lake Nona High School

Student of Gail Chase

Monologue: 2

Sonnet: 81



My favorite Shakespeare shows are *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I love all of these shows and I don't have a favorite of the three. I love Shakespeare because there are so many ways to interpret his plays and put your own personal twist on them. I have seen many different interpretations of his shows and I think it's wonderful that no two productions of any show are the same. It really proves that Shakespeare can be for anyone - Shakespeare's shows aren't inaccessible or "too difficult" to understand. Shakespeare is fun and once the actors are able to understand the language, there isn't any audience that cannot be won over.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Kiera Kuehnle

*Tucson*

*Catalina Foothills High School*

*Student of Amy Byroad*

*Monologue: 176*

*Sonnet: 13*

I love Shakespeare because his words describe humanity in a way that nothing else does. From hate, revenge, grief, passion, and love, it is all apart of the human experience which Shakespeare captures in a way that is almost foreign to my generation. But he continuously reminds us of what it means to be human.



### TJ Lake

*Portland*

*McMinnville High School*

*Student of Danielle Potter*

*Monologue: 231*

*Sonnet: 138*

Not only will I take away excellent competition experience, but I will be leaving with a lot learned. This will be due to other competitors and watching their work and ideas of certain pieces.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Claire Liotta



*Monmouth County NJ  
Glen Ridge High School  
Student of Smita Ganatra  
Monologue: 31  
Sonnet: 23*

I chose Rosalind's monologue from "As You Like It" because I knew she would be an incredible character to play. She's strong, witty, bold and a bit of a schemer. I love how she can be a true cynic in one scene, and then be swept up by romance in the next. To contrast this humorous monologue, I chose to recite the more dramatic Sonnet 23. I love its colorful imagery and heartbreakingly romantic message. Both have been such a joy to study and perform.

### Pierre Beatrix Madlangbayan



*Kansas City  
Garden City High School  
Student of Robyn Hilt  
Monologue: 93  
Sonnet: 130*

My favorite Shakespeare role is Lady Macbeth because she is a very empowered, yet ambitious woman. She is my proudest and most difficult character that I have ever played.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Jackson McCormick

Oklahoma & W. Arkansas (Tulsa)

Cascia Hall

Student of Rebekah Peddy

Monologue: 169

Sonnet: 36

The competition is a fun opportunity to display your skills and abilities to others with similar interests. Also, Shakespeare is a wonderful way to enhance one's techniques to manipulate language. Shakespeare was such a master at manipulation language, making his word so tedious to understand. As an actor is can be hard to know what an author wants to portray through a character and to master this skill with Shakespeare is a great and necessary skill.



### Milo Mechem-Miller

Seattle

Mercer Island High School

Student of Daniela Melgar

Monologue: 52

Sonnet: 130

I was very into Doctor Who as a kid. I was also very into Shakespeare as a kid. Imagine my excitement when I found a recording of *Much Ado About Nothing* starring David Tennant and Catherine Tate! It has been my favorite comedy ever since. It's everything great about Shakespearean comedy: miscommunication, hilariously flawed characters, romance, and arguments that are as witty as they are petty. I love it and Benedick has been a dream role of mine for years.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Vivian Megenhardt

*Cleveland*

*Shaker Heights High School*

*Student of Scott Sumerak*

*Monologue: 74*

*Sonnet: 76*



Shakespeare is timeless. It proves that even people 400 years ago were experiencing emotions and situations we go through today. The stories and characters have stayed relevant for centuries, and there is a reason for that.

### Nico Mir

*Desert (Palm Springs)*

*Etiwanda High School*

*Student of Christian Kiley*

*Monologue: 128*

*Sonnet: 129*



One of my favorite roles from a Shakespeare play has to be Trinculo from *The Tempest*. He is a jester that serves as comedic relief throughout the play. I enjoy his character because it's a very humorous role that can be played with a lot of physicality, especially during the monologue where he discovers Caliban and gets under his gabardine.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Clara Newton

*Phoenix*

*Basha High School*

*Student of Shira Schwartz*

*Monologue: 260*

*Sonnet: 121*

Life will find a way to reward you when you do things you love. I love acting, and my love for theatre has been a part of me for as long as I can remember. I entered this competition because I thought it would be fun, and I didn't know it would lead me to this wonderful opportunity to learn from amazing competitors. It is truly an honor to participate in this competition on the national level!



### Ali Patalano

*Research Triangle NC*

*Apex High School*

*Student of Laura Levine*

*Monologue: 124*

*Sonnet: 138*

Understanding more difficult texts like Shakespeare, prepare readers for pieces and the comprehension of those as well. The competition itself also helps with building communication and leadership abilities as it encourages you to put yourself in front of other people and to receive feedback on the work you've done. The competition is also such a fun opportunity that doesn't hurt to participate in; it only has benefits. This experience has been so much fun, and the preparation process was a really beneficial one that helped me in more ways than one.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Abigail Petit

Memphis

Shanan Homeschool Co-op

Student of Heather Wall

Monologue: 143

Sonnet: 76



"I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?" Benedick, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 4 Scene 1. I LOVE this line because it's not a long profession of love, but simple and honest. I like the interpretation that the "is not that strange" is Benedick deflecting after saying something that has a great potential for embarrassment, but even more so I like to think that he's being very truthful. I think the gradual fall into love that both he and Beatrice experience is really beautiful and the realization of that romance is summed up really well in this line. Benedick also just makes me laugh in this whole scene, which is another reason it's my favorite.

### Tyler Riederer

Chicago

Brookfield Academy

Student of Wes Schultz

Monologue: 109

Sonnet: 23



I've selected Sonnet 23 and Edmund from *King Lear*. I picked Edmund first because I don't often get to play villains in other settings and I appreciated the energy of the scene. I picked the Sonnet later on to complement and contrast the monologue.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Ele Rocha

Washington, DC  
The Madeira School  
Student of Donovan Arizmendi  
Monologue: 260  
Sonnet: 23



There is a line in *Measure for Measure* that I particularly like because it is relevant even today. Isabella has to decide whether or not to speak out against injustice. The line, "To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, Who would believe me?" references to the challenges that women faced then (and today). She hesitates because she is worried no one will believe her. Women have historically been afraid to speak truth to power.

### Victoria Salazar

San Francisco  
Novato High School  
Student of Michele Sanner  
Monologue: 16  
Sonnet: 77



Joining and competing for ESU has taught me so much about having confidence in myself. Yes, I have learned the Shakespeare aspect of it all and learning how to interpret my pieces and such but it has really enhanced my confidence in public speaking and performing. Preparing for a competition like this is really helpful when it comes to holding yourself up and believing in yourself. Especially if you love Shakespeare, this is the perfect opportunity.



## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Syed Shah-Batiz

*Tucson*

*Mountain View High School*

*Student of Shannon Kerstetter*

*Monologue: 87*

*Sonnet: 106*



I've always had a fascination with villains, and Richard the third is one of the most infamous of Shakespeares plays. In monologue 87, this is Richards turning point, where he is finally pushed to become the villain that he says the world forced him to be. The match is finally lit which begins to burn the pyre of his villainy, all beginning with the blood of Henry on his blade. He says "fine, I'll be the bad guy." as for the sonnet, Shakespeare declaring that the best of all the descriptions of beauty in history were but prophecies of his lovers beauty is one of timeless love, and a very stark contrast to the viciousness of the monologue.

### Lucy Shea

*Philadelphia*

*Friends' Central School*

*Student of Tom MacFarlane*

*Monologue: 29*

*Sonnet: 71*



I've learned a lot about myself as an actor through the competition this year. I chose a monologue that is more on the comedic side, which really scared me because I don't usually think of myself as a comedic actor. Trusting that I could not only pull it together but feel as invested in the piece as any dramatic monologue was a great lesson.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Ashley Sheffe

Central Pennsylvania  
Carlisle High School  
Student of Doug Hewlett  
Monologue: 91  
Sonnet: 65

I love *As You Like It*, and one of my dream roles is Rosalind. She's my absolute favorite character, and I've always admired her ability to take situations presented and make the best of them all the time.



### Gracie Tyson

Colonial NC  
J.H. Rose High School  
Student of Kristine Boccia  
Monologue: 21  
Sonnet: 153

I chose the Monologue from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. At the time, I was unfamiliar with the play, but as I learned more about the character of Cleopatra I learned that we have much in common. I do try to find a piece of myself in the characters I play and one of the characteristics I share with her is that we both sometimes feel like we're fighting against the wind. She's pushing for social change and she's so incredibly ahead of her time, which is something I understand. It's the feeling of screaming underwater, and people around you hearing a muffled whisper and I think acting in this particular scene was, in essence, so therapeutic.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Faithlyn Volitis

*Sandhills NC*

*Union Pines*

*Student of Chase Coston*

*Monologue: 2*

*Sonnet: 15*



Although Shakespeare sounds intimidating, and hard to understand, there is no better reward than realizing that you have deciphered the meaning and intention of every word.

### Leah Waessa

*Princeton*

*Livingston High School*

*Student of Scott Patteson*

*Monologue: 198*

*Sonnet: 65*



The ESU Shakespeare competition has allowed me to educate myself on Shakespeare and indulge my skills as an actor by researching and learning more about a variety of plays and sonnets. I couldn't recommend it enough to evolve as an actor.

## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Jacob West

*New Orleans*

*Covington High School*

*Student of Gary Mendoza*

*Monologue: 92*

*Sonnet: 145*

"If music be the food of love play on." This is my favorite line because I loved playing Duke Orsino in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. I love the arrogance and confidence the character had, as well as the silliness that came with the part.



### Logan Yates

*Atlanta*

*St. Pius X Catholic High School*

*Student of Tracey Buot*

*Monologue: 108*

*Sonnet: 36*

I love the monologue from *King Lear* as it gives me so much to work with: anger, narcissism, shame, revenge. The sonnet is completely different. The person feels guilty, compassionate, and regretful. It is challenging and fun to quickly move from one character to the other.





## 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition Branch Champions

### Ell Zirolli

Greenwich

Hall High School

Student of Amy Mahoney

Monologue: 1

Sonnet: 17



This experience is something I never thought I'd get to do. It's been an honor and a joy to be in this competition. Finding more people who enjoy Shakespeare like I do is always amazing. I will always keep with me the friends that I have made, the inspiration that I have gotten, and the feelings of pride and joy that come from seeing myself and my fellow competitors perform something that truly speaks to them.

***"And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world will be in love with night."***

**Romeo & Juliet**

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The 2023 ESU National Shakespeare Competition was made possible by major funding from  
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# Congratulations!

At the ESU, it is our mission to create opportunities for the celebration of the English language.

This competition is just such an occasion, and the end result of our Branches and Members investing in their communities. The following ads are part of their ever-expanding efforts to create connections between youth and the best of English-language letters.

Please join us as we celebrate our local champions.



**Congratulations on your  
win at Lincoln Center  
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**Wishing you a bright  
future full of dreams  
that come true!**

**ESU Hawai'i**





The Denver Branch of the English-Speaking Union is proud to be represented by Ben Feldman, student of Shawn Hann at Denver School of the Arts. We congratulate Ben on his stellar performance at the 2023 National Shakespeare Competition, and we send special thanks to Cindy Poinsett, Millicent Ambroggio and Camala Van Anne for their hard work organizing the Denver Branch Competition.



DENVER  
BRANCH



Congratulations and Best Wishes  
To Ell Zirolli, Connecticut Winner  
From President and Members of Greenwich Branch



GREENWICH  
BRANCH





"Give to the world the best you have and the best will come back to you"  
Edward W. Bok

Congratulations on your achievements far and near,  
you are an inspiration to all who have the gift of knowing you!

**ESU**  
**USA**

NAPLES  
BRANCH

# *Congratulations, Casey!*

The Central Florida ESU is incredibly proud to honor our Shakespeare Competition branch winner and second place National winner,

## **Casey Kerr!**

From your hilarious performance as Bottom to your reflective interpretation of Sonnet 81, we were mesmerized. We also applaud Casey's family, Lake Nona High School teachers Gail Chase and Jennifer Gautier, and Anne Hering from Orlando Shakes for paving the way to success through their support and coaching.



**ESU  
USA**

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## *Thank You All*

**for your dedication to the ideals of the ESU:  
changing the world through education,  
scholarship, and understanding.**





Cleveland congratulates our winner Vivian Megenhardt for representing us so well at the National Competition in New York! We are proud of you! And thanks and congratulations to your teacher Scott Sumerak, our TLAB Scholarship winner for 2023. Your commitment to your students is evident in their performances. We couldn't be prouder of you both.



CLEVELAND  
BRANCH

Congratulations to Anka Chiorini for once again representing the Syracuse Branch of the English Speaking Union at the National Competition. This has been an outstanding achievement, and dedication that reflects your continuing admiration of Shakespeare's work. We extend our thanks to Anka's sponsoring teacher, Joseph DeChick at Jamesville DeWitt High School.



Congratulations from ESU Atlanta Branch to Logan Yates for his winning performance as Edmund, the resentful and defiant 'cheated' son in King Lear! All the members of the Branch wish him continued success in the future. Congratulations also to his teacher, Mrs. Tracey Buot, Director of Theater at St Pius X High School. The Atlanta Branch looks forward to having more of her students on our stage in the years to come.







Congratulations, Leah, from the Princeton branch and your LHS family! We're so proud of you!



PRINCETON  
BRANCH



Philadelphia is proud to have Lucy Shea represent us at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Shakespeare Competition.



PHILADELPHIA  
BRANCH



ESU Seattle extends sincere congratulations to Milo Mechem Miller of Mercer Island High School, for winning the 2023 Seattle Branch Shakespeare Competition, and for his fine performance at the National Shakespeare Competition. Our branch also salutes his teacher, Daniela Melgar, for her continued efforts and encouragement in the teaching of Shakespeare.



SEATTLE  
BRANCH



Congratulations, Sarai! We're so proud of you! ESU KY Branch



KENTUCKY  
BRANCH





The Los Angeles Branch of the English-Speaking Union congratulates Stella Cockrum on her outstanding performance in the 2023 National Shakespeare Competition! We are proud of your talent and energy, and we thank you for representing Los Angeles so beautifully. Best wishes for the future!



LOS ANGELES  
BRANCH



Congratulations to T.J. Lake from members of the Portland, Oregon Branch, and we wish you well in your future endeavors.

T.J. is a graduating Senior at McMinnville High School. He is a student of Danielle Potter and Judith Miller, Drama Coach.



PORTLAND  
BRANCH



Congratulations to Ali Patalano and her drama coach Laura Levine for Ali's outstanding performance.

Ali's rendition of the famous monologue "Out, out, damned spot" was captivating. The Research Triangle Branch gives a special shout out to all our members for their support of our annual Shakespeare Competition.



RESEARCH  
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Dear Ashley Sheffe,  
You represented so well the ESU Central Pennsylvania Branch at the ESU 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary National Shakespeare Competition. Congratulations to you and your teacher, Doug Hewlett, for your stellar performance. Thank you both for your dedication, and hard work!  
Cheers

Dr. Karen Blair-Brand, President ESU  
Central Pennsylvania Branch



CENTRAL  
PENNSYLVANIA  
BRANCH



*"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women  
merely players; They have  
their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time  
plays many parts"*

As You Like It

ESU  
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Congratulates


KANSAS CITY  
BRANCH

**Pierre Beatrix Madlangbayan**



**First Place Kansas City Branch Winner  
2023 Shakespeare Competition  
and  
2023 First Place People's Choice Award**

Felicidades Victoria por quedar entre los 10 finalistas en la competencia Nacional de Shakespeare, representaste a San Francisco muy bien y estamos sumamente orgullosos de it! We are super proud of you and the time and dedication you put into your acting paid off. We are so happy you got to share your talent with others. We know this will be an experience you will never forget and we are so grateful you got to enjoy it. We love you!

Love,  
Mama and Papa. 











*"To Thine Own Self Be True"*  
Hamlet



# Learn more about ESU Programs

**The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition** is a performance-based education program in which high school students nationwide read, analyze, and perform Shakespeare's works. Students develop communication skills and an appreciation of the power of language and literature. Since 1983 more than 325,000 students have brought the timeless works of Shakespeare to life and expressed his words with understanding, feeling and clarity. The National Shakespeare Competition has been recognized by the Globe Center, the Children's Theatre Foundation of America and the American Academy of Achievement.

**The English-Speaking Union** celebrates English as a shared language to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural programs for students, teachers, immigrants and members.

**TLab** offers teachers and lifelong learners educational enrichment programs in the United Kingdom at Oxford, the University of Edinburgh and Shakespeare's Globe in London.

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**English in Action** pairs English language learners with trained volunteers to improve their fluency through weekly conversations.

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**Luard Morse Scholarship** sends students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities to study for a semester at a British university of their choosing.

**Secondary School Exchange** sends American and British high school graduates to secondary schools for a gap year abroad.





*"We know what we are, but know not what we may be."*

Hamlet