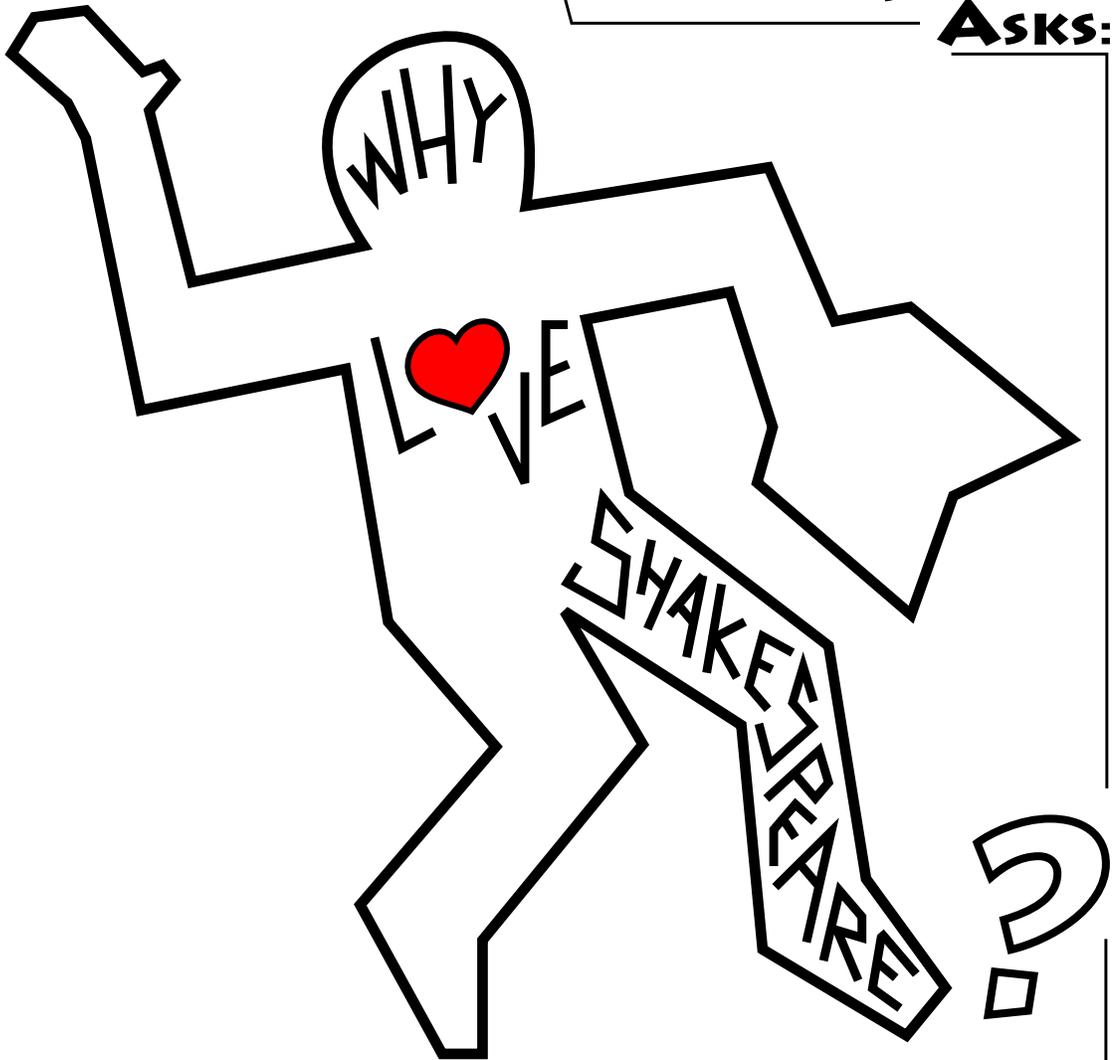


WILLIAM S. ASKS:



SHOW PACK

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Why Love Shakespeare?

www.iloveshakespeare.com

WHY LOVE SHAKESPEARE?

The answers to this question come from the man who memorized all 154 of Shakespeare's Sonnets. These sonnets are mini-emotional laboratories, written for private consumption by personal friends of the Bard, that reveal a world exploring the complete range of human emotions in 14 line verse.

Will Sutton steers a heady light-hearted voyage through the works, exploring Shakespeare's complex views on love, hate, fear, jealousy, angst and happiness that conclude with the Bard's guide to better living: "Know Thyself".

Sixteen years of research, studying, committing sonnets to memory and perfecting the art of sonnet-eering bear fruit when William issues his Sonnet Challenge – give him any sonnet number or a sentence or a word and he will perform your chosen Sonnet for you – or perhaps you think you can perform them better?

This highly entertaining play is as much for those who are passionate about Shakespeare as those 'who couldn't care less' and the fifty minutes fly by without so much as a cough, yawn or snore from the audience ☐☐☐
– Could this really be Shakespeare?

ABOUT WILLIAM SUTTON



First afflicted with Shakes fever over a decade ago, he overcame inertia by memorizing all 154 sonnets penned by Shakespeare. This is quite a feat considering that these sonnets were memorized in an Amsterdam coffeeshop. William went on to study & graduate from The Shakespeare Institute in Stratford upon Avon. He currently tours the globe doing standup comedy but his true passion and goal is to enlighten the world to the words of Shakespeare.

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PRESS

What's Hot'

Edinburgh Festivals

Why Love Shakespeare?

William Sutton adores Shakespeare's sonnets. Here, some of the bard's most enigmatic work is picked over as Sutton calls up some of the 2155 lines of poetry he has memorized. Read Francis Stirk below.

THE SCOTSMAN

The Scotsman, 21 August 2002

To know him is to love him

Why Love Shakespeare? ***** 4/5

WILLIAM Sutton boasts in the Fringe blurb that "all 154 sonnets live in my memory". Certainly his knowledge of Shakespeare's sonnets is excellent. He engages the audience in a game in which they call out a line or even a word from one of the sonnets strewn about the auditorium, from which he deftly names and recites a passage from the sonnet. Sutton's humour and passion are infectious, ensuring this piece is not a smug display of one man's mental powers.

More Master of Ceremony than performer, Sutton's love of the verse is such that he conveys a strong sense of the man. Laid out on the stage in a perfect circle are copies of each sonnet, upon which Sutton traces the pride, pain and jealousy which spurred Shakespeare. Humorous and entertaining, Sutton is an excellent and inspiring teacher, who speaks with great insight and clarity. This piece deserves an audience.



Left: William Sutton's powers of recall are Phenomenal - he has committed everyone of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets to memory - but it's his passion, combined with an infectious humour, that makes his show so remarkable

Frances Stirk

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PRESS

**THE SCOTSMAN**

The Scotsman, 20 August 2002

Festive ingredients

14. Memory

William Sutton has memorized all 154 of Shakespeare's sonnets, which he performs in his fringe show, *Why Love Shakespeare?*

It took me six years to commit the sonnets to memory. I started in 1991 after discovering a sonnet-book while in an Amsterdam Coffeeshop. All I knew was that most famous line 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' I now know all 2,155 lines.

I used a few techniques to aid my memory, the first is plain old practice, practice, practice, I still review thirty sonnets a day to keep them fresh in my memory. The second was a phonetic transcript of the sonnets I made on music paper. This transcript allowed me to learn the tune/rhythm of a sonnet to follow the

string of sounds I made and see their relationship to one another without getting tangled up in the meaning of the words. This is the same way one would recall lyrics to a song when hearing a tune.

Learning to speak a second language fluently (Dutch) helped me appreciate the nuance and flow of the bard's writings. A language is a collection of grammatical rules & exceptions that create a thought process that is applied to the words. Anyone who has tried to learn another language knows the frustration of not being able to say exactly what you want to say. I approached Shakespeare's English as being the same language as my native tongue but with some different grammar rules and pronouns. Lastly I also recorded myself reciting sonnets on a minidisk and played the recording repeatedly while reciting the sonnets till I foamed

at the mouth because I still got it wrong.

Shakespeare is fantastic, what a great wordsmith, he was a man not a God. His skill in handling the language along with his insights and portrayal of emotions captured human behavior like none other. His observations echo through time and are as relevant today as when they were penned 400 years ago. The way we humans interact hasn't changed much in that respect. We all find our inner selves mirrored in his words, our doubts, fears, pain and love played out in his verse. I memorized the sonnets because they were written to be recited - the verse springs to life when borne by a human voice, the words when spoken shape the human face to convey the emotions they describe. I love Shakespeare.

Dear SHAKSPEReans,

S H A K S P E R: The Global Shakespeare Discussion List

Early last evening, we attended William Sutton's (that is member of SHAKSPER William Sutton's) stunning one-man show **WHY LOVE SHAKESPEARE?**

William has memorized all of the Sonnets and provides amusing commentary for why he loves Shakespeare. At one point in the show, he challenges the members of the audience to give him a sonnet number to which he responds with the first line or in some cases recites the entire sonnet; next he asks for any line from any sonnet (incidentally he has randomly placed copies of all of the sonnets on the theatre seats so audience members can choose any line, not just any familiar line) to which he responds with the sonnet number or again recites it. Finally, in this part of the show, he asks for ANY word from ANY sonnet to which he responds with the sonnet number or once more recites it.

AMAZING!

If you will be in Edinburgh between now and August 26, please consider William's show - **WHY LOVE SHAKESPEARE**, Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Hardy

S H A K S P E R: The Global Shakespeare Discussion List

Hardy M. Cook, editor@shaksper.net

The **S H A K S P E R** Webpage <<http://www.shaksper.net>>

Why Love Shakespeare?

www.iloveshakespeare.com

REVIEWS

Janey Godley 19 Aug. 2002

Why Love Shakespeare?

Being a Shakespearean virgin so to speak I dreaded my trip to the show 'Why Love Shakespeare?' The reason I am a Shakespearean virgin is because I detest Him!!

Typically being uneducated I fear Shakespeare, I was expecting to suffer some pompous dreary prose and poems stuffed down my uncultured throat. I was dragged to the show under duress!! From the off, William Sutton was surprisingly sharp and knowledgeable about all the sonnets. I had no idea how many there are or why they existed and to be honest – did not care – until – he explained, quoted and delivered a whole new aspect of Shakespeare which made me realize that I can understand and “god forbid” even made me interested in the weird Englishman of words!

His delivery and style made me see that W. Shakespeare is a wordsmith akin of great standup – whose humour and tragedy I can empathize and even appreciate.

I left the show not loathing or loving Shakespeare but looking at the whole sonnets and the man's life in a new perspective. 'Shit' I may even watch "Shakespeare in Love"! Who knows a Scottish comic with a penchant for sonnets? Beats Trainspotting for an addiction.

Janey Godley is a BBC Radio 5 Contributor and a standup comedian currently touring with her one-woman show 'Full Measure of Scotch'.

Shakespeare Institute 18/July/02

Why Love Shakespeare?

Following a chance encounter with a tatty book in an Amsterdam coffee shop, William Sutton has memorized all 154 of Shakespeare's Sonnets ? that is roughly 2155 of the greatest lines of poetry ever written. Not content with that, he has sculpted a fifty-five minute one-man show that is informal, informative, evangelical and highly entertaining.

Sutton takes his audience on a journey through the pain and euphoria of love, through the life of Shakespeare, and through his own relationship with poems that have changed the lives of so many readers over the last four hundred years.

A blend of spiritual autobiography, stand-up comedy, feats of memory and bravura sonnet slamming, Why Love Shakespeare? bears dynamic testimony to the transformative powers of love and literature. Why Love Shakespeare? is for anyone who is passionate about Shakespeare; it is also for anyone who thinks they couldn't care less.

Paul Prescott - Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon

REVIEWS

Elaine Peake

My dear sir,

I had the pleasure of viewing your theatrical extravaganza on Tuesday last (I was the one who knew a bit of Sonnet CIV) and was moved to an humble composition of mine own, the which I hope you will graciously accept:

To Mr W.S.

Th'expense of eight quid was no waste nor shame,
Thou wert so erudite, extempore -
We few, we happy few, who dripping came
To find an advocate exemplary.
The what, the why, the wherefore of these rhymes
You laid before us as a feast prepared;
Chapter and verse, the flavour of the times,
Your knowledge and enthusiasm shared.
Myself a humble sonneteer ere this,
Forever striving to perfect the art,
You read the master; even to a kiss,
And read him trippingly, and from the heart.
Pray keep your banner bright and still unfurl'd,
Spreading sheer pleasure in a naughty world.

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WORKSHOPS

Let's face it, most people are intimidated by Shakespeare. They think of him as intellectual, stuffy and boring. My approach to him is through his passion for words. Students need no prior knowledge of Shakespeare except their own ability to speak. The bridge to Shakespeare's verse is made by examining their own language, accent and where and how words are sounded in their mouths. Shakespeare's Sonnets provide a perfect introduction to his verse. They take less than a minute to recite, yet contain all his simplicity and complexity of thought. Master one sonnet and the plays will seem easy by comparison.

The workshop uses a framework of the written and read versus the spoken and heard; the eye and heart versus the ear and mouth; and rules and reason versus chaos and passion. His sonnets are words in a fixed poetic form. Form is dominated by grammar, logic and reason. I suggest that poetry favours sound, feeling and accumulated meaning. This doesn't mean I'm right, but it is a simple method of breaking down and de-mystifying his verse.

Specifically this method focuses on a specific or random sonnet (handed out on photocopies). Usually one or more people reads this aloud and reactions are taken from the group. Then the group breaks into pairs and we dissect the word from its sounds(phonemes). These we divide into vowels and consonants and their manner and place of pronunciation. Games here include a vowel reading of a sonnet, plus pairing off on voiced and voiceless consonants

Then we use these principles to move up to the syllable (morphemes) and on to a look at mono- and poly-syllabic words and their utterance (the students explore these through soundscape and status games resulting in a chaotic cacaphony)! Next we examine phrases and their rhythms (examples drawn from the sonnet already spoken) and how the phrases make up the sentence. Finally the spoken or performed sonnet is an application of all the tools learned so far.

By this point questions of meaning and poetic conventions, such as metaphor and simile, polysemia or multiple meanings, old fashioned or out-of-date words, rime scheme, conceits and arguments usually arise. These are then explored from the reader's understanding and challenged by others agreeing or disagreeing. The students are given the opportunity to present their findings in performance: alone, in pairs, or in a group. By now they are so used to making noises and sounds the fact of performance has become a by-product.

My experience has shown that even the shyest and most reticent students realise they have a voice which can be heard. Then they realise they are Shakespeare's words and through their mouths have given him life.

For more information - please contact us.

Why Love Shakespeare?

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SHOW

INFORMATION

Why love Shakespeare?

One-man show starring William Sutton

Run time - 50 min.
Stage size - 5 m' x 4 m' minimum.
Language - English.
Props - 1 mirror portrait, 154 plastified sonnets.
Lighting - Tech rider available upon request

CONTACT

INFORMATION

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WORKSHOPS

INFORMATION

The workshops are optional and need to be booked in advance.

Workshop Size - max. 28 participants, optimal 14 participants
Duration - 1 - 3 hours
Space - enough space for all to sit and lie comfortably.