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The Book of Will is a Love Letter to Shakespeare *Audiences can expect an unforgettable journey of love, loss and laughter*

(Aug. 24, 2022 - PHOENIX) The classic works of William Shakespeare can be intimidating, but what if they didn't exist today? In the historical drama, *The Book of Will*, a group of dedicated actors and friends of Shakespeare strive to prevent this exact fate. The play is an unforgettable true story of love, loss and laughter that sheds new light on Shakespeare's work. It also highlights the joy audiences are rediscovering about Shakespeare's work today. *The Book of Will* runs at The Phoenix Theatre Company Aug. 31 through Sept. 18, 2022.

The Book of Will follows Henry Condell and John Heminges who are dedicated to preserving the work and memory of their good friend Will, which is quickly being erased and endangered by plagiaristic playwrights after Shakespeare's death. Shakespeare wrote his plays in pieces, never putting all the parts together until the actors were on stage, for fear of someone stealing his work. In a chaotic rush to collect all the pieces to create a bound book of his plays, the characters in *The Book of Will* join forces and face a wide array of characters and obstacles that threaten Shakespeare's legacy forever.

"*The Book of Will* pays homage to Shakespeare, but it's told through a contemporary voice," said Melissa Rain Anderson+, director. "In the show, Condell and Heminges persevere to save these beautiful pieces of language and – more importantly – honor their friend's work. The

stakes are high and time is running out to compile the works in one place and preserve their place in history. Shakespeare is the grandfather of nearly everything we do today and this play is extraordinarily layered, magical and larger than life.”

Written by Lauren Gunderson, The Phoenix Theatre Company production features Michael Kary* as John Heminges, Grant Goodman* as Henry Condell along with Scott Davidson,* Regina Pugh,* Seth Tucker,* Tony Blosser, Katie Calderone, Jodie Weiss, Bonnie Beus Romney and Dean Mitchell Kelldorf.

“You don’t have to be a lover of Shakespeare to enjoy this show,” added Anderson. “*The Book of Will* is written for the people of today and makes Shakespeare accessible for the masses. The story exemplifies the importance of deep to family and the value of unwavering friendships.”

Select Mask Required Performances

In an effort to provide those who would feel more comfortable in a fully masked environment with an opportunity to attend our productions, we have designated select upcoming performances of *The Book of Will* as "Mask Required:" Sept. 11, 2022, at 7 p.m.

During these performances, masks will be required for all patrons and staff in our lobbies and theatres unless actively eating/drinking. Food and drinks will be allowed in the theatre. We ask that the mask be placed back on between bites or sips. Proof of vaccination and temperature checks will not be required.

ASL/Audio Describe Night

Audio Description and American Sign Language Interpretation are available for each production. ASL/Audio Describe Night for *The Book of Will* is Thursday, Sept. 15 at 7 p.m. Tickets for *The Book of Will* are on sale now. To purchase call (602) 254-2151 or visit www.phoenixtheatre.com.

Content warnings: discussions of death, a brief allusion to suicide, and a brief offensive moment to people who have a stutter (that characters in the play admonish).

+Denotes member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

**Denotes members of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers*

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ABOUT THE PHOENIX THEATRE COMPANY

The Phoenix Theatre Company is the largest professional regional theatre company in the state. As the first arts organization in Arizona and a founding member of the Central Arts District, The

Phoenix Theatre Company is committed to advancing performing arts in the Valley, with nearly 500 performances each year on multiple stages. Located at 1825 N. Central Ave. in Phoenix, The Phoenix Theatre Company's mission is to create exceptional theatrical experiences by using the arts to articulate messages that inspire hope and understanding. For more information, visit www.phoenixtheatre.com.