



## Battle of the Bard High School Shakespeare Slam

2015 marks the pilot year of a collaboration between Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Chicago Youth Shakespeare on the **Battle of the Bard (BOTB)**, a slam-style Shakespeare showcase created for student teams from public, private and parochial high schools throughout Chicago and the metropolitan area.

Chicago Shakespeare (CST) and Chicago Youth Shakespeare (CYS) are both committed to teaching and learning Shakespeare through active engagement and through performance. As an area-wide series of events, Battle of the Bard is designed to build community across geographic, demographic and cultural boundaries through performance, team spirit and friendly competition. In the 2015 pilot year of collaboration, CYS and CST are inviting 30 high school teams to participate. Each team includes 4 - 8 students, supervised by a teacher/coach from their school.

### **Through participating in their school BOTB team, students will:**

- discover Shakespeare in a meaningful, personal and rigorous way
- build self-confidence
- discover their ability to persist in mastering challenging work
- further develop their literacy and linguistic skills
- strengthen critical thinking through engaged exploration of language and character analysis
- cultivate meaningful connections with peers through collaboration and teamwork
- develop heightened physical and social-emotional awareness
- develop performance and public speaking skills
- be empowered through opportunities to help expand resources for arts programming at their own school or at a school in the greater Chicago community.

### **Here are the “concrete steps” ahead...**

- Recruit a team of 4-8 students from your school.
- Complete registration form and collect release forms.
- Log into an Educators Informational Webinar (December 8)
- Attend ONE Saturday Team Workshop with your students (February 14 or February 21)
- Participate in ONE Preliminary Bout (April 11 or April 18)
- Ten teams will participate in the Finals at Chicago Shakespeare (May 5 evening)

### Team coaches are responsible for:

- recruiting 4-8 students to participate
- completing all registration materials and collecting release forms for their team members
- advising students on text selection
- organizing and supervising regular meetings
- organizing and/or providing transportation to one Saturday workshop date, and one or two Slam events (one Preliminary Bout, and possibly the Finals!)

### Slam Categories

Battle of the Bard slam categories encourage ensemble performance and focus on exploring Shakespeare's characters in dialogue with one another and with the audience.

#### 1. **The Play's the Thing** (Scene Slam) [time: 3 - 5 minutes | participants: 2 - 8 team members]

Students from each team perform a short scene from any of Shakespeare's plays.

How to begin:

- Choose a scene that students are excited about performing! Find out which Shakespeare plays your team members have seen, read, or studied in class. Which stories / characters / themes were their favorites and why?
- Which team members want to participate in the scene category?
- Get tips on how to make cuts to your scene if necessary so that it doesn't run longer than 5 minutes.

#### 2. **All the King's Men** (Ensemble Slam) [time: 3 - 5 minutes | participants: all members of the team]

Teams devise and present a creative ensemble piece using any Shakespeare text as the starting point. A few examples (among an infinite number of ideas) include:

- a "mash-up" of scenes centered on a theme, or telling the story of a single play
- a creative rendering of a speech or sonnet
  - set to music
  - perform as a rap or Greek Chorus
  - incorporate movement, dance or tableaux

The objective here is on exploring creative ways to communicate the meaning of Shakespeare's text as a collective ensemble—and the possibilities are truly endless.

### Webinar and Online Resources

Monday, December 8, 2015, 7:30-8:30pm (*strongly encouraged, but optional...*)

The webinar will introduce team coaches to the process. This optional (though highly recommended...) one-hour session is designed to introduce BOTB Team Coaches to the program: how to get started and begin to prepare leading up to the Saturday workshop (below)—and plenty of time allotted for your live-chat questions. Participating schools receive language and performance-based curricular resources, aligned with Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and the newly released National Core Arts Standards. All Webinar materials will subsequently be posted online.

### Team Workshop

- Saturday, February 14, 8:00am-1:00pm (at Oak Park River Forest High School, Oak Park) **OR**
- Saturday, February 21, 8:00am-1:00pm (at Kenwood Academy, Chicago's Hyde Park community)

School teams are required to attend one regional workshop day, designed to engage students and teachers *together*, and to help teams prepare for both BOTB Slam categories. Every participating team (the teacher coach with ideally all, but with a *minimum* of two, student team members) must attend a Team Workshop on one of the above dates. On the registration form online, you will be asked to indicate your availability and preferences, and we will do our best to accommodate them, still keeping the maximum number attending each Saturday Team Workshop to 15 schools per day.

### Preliminary Bout

- Saturday, April 11, 8:00am-1:00pm (Niles North High School, Skokie) **OR**
- Saturday, April 18, 8:00am-1:00pm (Benito Juarez Community Academy, Chicago's Pilsen community).

Each school team will participate in one Preliminary Bout with a total of fifteen school teams. The top five schools from each Preliminary slam will move on to the Battle of the Bard Finals on the Courtyard Theater stage at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. On the registration form, you will be asked to indicate your availability and preferences, and we will do our best to accommodate them, still keeping the maximum number participating in each Preliminary Bout to 15 schools per day.

### Battle of the Bard Finals

Tuesday, May 5, 6:00-9:00pm (Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier)

A total of ten high school teams, five from each region, will participate in the BOTB Finals on the Courtyard Theater stage at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. The winning team will receive \$1,000 to add to their team sponsorship goal! (We invite all of our BOTB participants to be our guests in the audience on May 5 to celebrate their work, too, as they support students from other school teams in their Finals Bout).

### Giving Back | About Team Sponsorship

Battle of the Bard encourages students to give back to their school and to the larger community. School teams will have access to an online platform where students can raise sponsorship dollars through their participation. One-hundred percent of the sponsorship dollars raised by team members goes back to their school to support arts programming and resources—or teams can opt to raise funds in support of an under-resourced Chicago Public school, identified by CPS's Department of Arts Education.

### Registration

Registration materials are due, by mail, no later than Wednesday, December 17, 2014. These include:

- [Registration Form](#), attached.
- [Parent/Guardian Consent](#) and [Publicity Release](#) Forms, attached.
- \$100 school team registration fee (\$100/team)\*

Please send the Registration Form, Parent/Guardian Permission and Release Forms, and your check, made payable to **Chicago Shakespeare Theater**, to:

Education Department  
Chicago Shakespeare Theater  
800 East Grand Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60611

*\*Please note: If the \$100 fee is cost-prohibitive to your school's participation, please indicate on the Registration Form a fee that is feasible and we will do our best to accommodate you.*

### Calendar of Events

Monday, December 8, 2014	CST will host a webinar for teachers with information on each step of the process as well as opportunities for live Q & A.	7:30pm - 8:30pm
Wednesday, December 17, 2014	Mail-in Registrations due	
Saturday, February 14, 2015	Team Workshop Day, Region 1 <i>at Oak Park River Forest High School, Oak Park</i>	8:00am - 1:00pm
Saturday, February 21, 2015	Team Workshop Day, Region 2 <i>at Kenwood Academy, Chicago</i>	8:00am - 1:00pm
Saturday, April 11, 2015	Preliminary Bout, Region 1 <i>at Niles North High School, Skokie</i>	8:00am - 1:00pm
Saturday, April 18, 2015	Preliminary Bout, Region 2 <i>at Benito Juarez Community Academy, Chicago</i>	8:00am - 1:00pm
Tuesday, May 5, 2015	Battle of the Bard FINALS	6:30 - 9:00pm

### Questions? Please be in touch!

☎ Chicago Youth Shakespeare / Manon Spadaro, Executive Director  
773.675.9592 / [manon@chicagoyouthshakespeare.org](mailto:manon@chicagoyouthshakespeare.org)

☎ Chicago Shakespeare Theater / Education Department  
312.595.5676 / [mhalperin@chicagoshakes.com](mailto:mhalperin@chicagoshakes.com)