



**Fully improvised plays using the language
and themes of William Shakespeare**



“STAGGERINGLY BRILLIANT”

-Time Out Chicago

**“Mind-blowing... It was one of the funniest,
most amazing things I’ve ever seen.”** -The Charleston City Paper

“The way they work together is amazing. Every show had a standing ovation. It was one of those things where I’m crying laughing: just, how did they do it?”

– Lisa Leingang, Producer, Bumbershoot Festival/
Senior VP of Development at Comedy Central



“A smash hit at our 2009 Festival”

– Robbie Praw, Programmer, Montreal Just For Laughs



**WINNERS OF THE 2009
NEW YORK NIGHTLIFE AWARD
“Best Comedic Performance by a Group”**



“The Improvised Shakespeare troupe, exactly what it sounds like, is a tremendous hit in its hometown, Chicago, and it made a big impression at the recent Montreal comedy festival with their on-the-spot soliloquies and perfect pentameter... Go laugh your iams off..” – New York Times

CRITIC’S PICK!

-Chicago Public Radio

“The chemistry among the performers was amazing, and their play came together seamlessly. By the time they started to speak in rhyming couplets, the crowd was totally sold... Don’t miss them. Seriously.” – Time Out New York



“Set aside your preconceptions about Shakespearean theater. It's not all pretentious, puffy-garbed players trained to speak foreign English at the Raised Hand School of Acting. IO Chicago's rollicking hit show "Improvvised Shakespeare" is smart and knowing enough to delight Elizabethan drama fans and charming enough to win over the most avowed Anglophobes.” – Centerstage Chicago

“There’s really nothing quite like it in the city of Chicago. Smart, sophisticated, downright hilarious.”

- Time Out Chicago



“Anyone who still needs convincing that improv can produce an independent piece of capital-A Art would do well to see The Improvised Shakespeare Company... Neither laughter nor amazement is short in supply” – Decider/ The Onion

“...the show channels Monty Python as often as the Bard, and frequently with sly-witted results.”

-The Chicago Tribune

“Their experience doing Shakespeare flowers in the language: they relish iambic dialogue, execute perfectly timed asides, occasionally utter rhyming couplets, and drop parodic phrases, and well-placed anachronisms. Even the ending echoed the real plays: story lines resolved tidily—and uproariously.” -The Chicago Reader



"Improvise Shakespeare... Quite possibly the most handsome, winning, smartest, wittiest, silly, talented, ambitious, intelligent troupe in Chicago. They completely improvise a Shakespearean play complete with references, archetypes, allusions, and even iambic pentameter. They can do high brow, low brow, fast, slow, topical, and historical AND have it all be funny."

- Chicago Comedy Examiner



Show Description:

Based on one audience suggestion (a title for a play that has yet to be written) *The Improvised Shakespeare Co.* creates a fully improvised play in Elizabethan style. Each of the players has brushed up on his “thee’s” and “thou’s” to bring you an evening of off-the-cuff comedy using the language and themes of William Shakespeare. Any hour could be filled with power struggles, star-crossed lovers, sprites, kings, queens, princesses, sword-play, rhyming couplets, asides, insults, persons in disguise and all that we’ve come to expect from the pen of the Great Bard. The night could reveal a tragedy, comedy, or history. Nothing is planned-out, rehearsed, or written. Each play is completely improvised, so each play is entirely new!

Show History:

In 2005, Blaine Swen founded *The Improvised Shakespeare Co.* in Chicago. After a successful fall run on the Donny’s Skybox stage at The Second City the show was taken, at the request of Charna Halpern, to IO Chicago. It has consistently played to sold out houses for the last 3 years

Now, *The Improvised Shakespeare Co.* has found itself on the road, including a trip to the Piccolo Spoleto Fringe Festival in Charleston SC (where *The ISC* was reviewed as one of the top shows in the festival!) The group also frequents New York City performing limited engagements at the Barrow Street Theatre. In July, 2009, *The Improvised Shakespeare Co.* premiered in Canada at the prestigious Just For Laughs Festival (also reviewed as one of the top shows to see), playing to standing room only houses and they were also part of the Just For Laughs TV broadcast playing in front of an audience of 2500 people. In September ’09, *The Improvised Shakespeare Co.* played to standing room only houses at Seattle’s Bumbershoot Festival.

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