

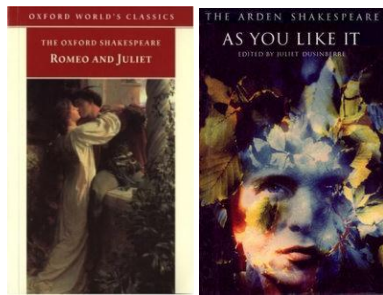
would be a great addition to a young adult collection.

### References

McCreedy, Colin; Del Col, Anthony; Belanger, Andy (2010). *Kill Shakespeare Volume 1*. San Diego: IDW Publishing.

## Why Does Shakespeare Still Matter?

By Amanda Wilk



### Introduction

Unfortunately, for many young adults, learning the plays of Shakespeare can be a torturous experience. Numerous young adults fail to see the relevance of reading centuries old texts, and cannot see how these texts apply to the world today. However, the brilliance of Shakespeare is its ongoing relevance, and today more than ever the words of Shakespeare can be applied to our

society and to the lives of young adults.

Antoni Cimolino, the general director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, has given a number of talks and interviews in which he discusses the ongoing relevance of Shakespeare today – two of which are discussed below. Full video links to each of the talks are also provided, and are wonderful examples of Shakespeare's continuing relevance today.

### Shakespeare on Inspiring Leadership:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2x9SbGJsM&feature=feedu\\_more](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2x9SbGJsM&feature=feedu_more)

In this talk, Antoni Cimolino explores examples of leadership in Shakespeare's works and discusses how they can be applied to modern times (Stratford Festival, 2011). He provides examples of both good and bad leadership, citing characters in many plays including: *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, *Phillip the bastard* and *Prospero* (Stratford Festival, 2011).

Antoni Cimolino argues that leadership is a central theme in many of Shakespeare's plays, and that the theatre

provides us with a way to understand and experience the complexities of life in a safe environment (Stratford Festival, 2011). After viewing a play such as *Macbeth*, where we see a man become completely consumed by his desire for power and willing to sacrifice all principle in its pursuit, we are able to gain an understanding of the idea that power corrupts when it is pursued as an end in itself (Stratford Festival, 2011). Therefore, through experiencing the descent of one man in the safe environment of the theatre we are able to learn more about human nature itself, and how to act in a more humanistic way (Stratford Festival, 2011).

Antoni Cimolino concludes this talk stating that yes, as Shakespeare said: “some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them”, but some also redefine greatness on their own terms (Stratford Festival, 2011). These are characters that have a clear sense of self, and are able to demonstrate moral leadership (Stratford Festival, 2011). Such characters can be seen time and again in the works of Shakespeare.

### **Shakespeare and Modern Culture:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMIEfx3LL10>

Antoni Cimolino first saw Shakespeare performed live on a high school trip to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, where he saw *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (Agenda Steve Paikin, 2010). That trip changed the trajectory of his life. At the performance, he found that he could understand Shakespeare: he laughed at the jokes, and he was laughing along with 2000 other people. In that moment he found a profound connection to humanity (Agenda Steve Paikin, 2010).

What Shakespeare can do is bring to light the connectedness between all humans. Everyone can identify with the reflections of humanity presented in all of Shakespeare’s plays (Agenda Steve Paikin, 2010). Young adults are also able to still connect to Shakespeare because many of his plays are written from the perspective of young people (Agenda Steve Paikin, 2010). *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, and *Twelfth Night* are just some examples of plays with characters that are young adults.

### **Conclusion**

Shakespeare is still relevant because his works show us what it is to be human, and bring forth timeless themes of humanity. Shakespeare is especially relevant for young adults, as many of his works focus on young adult protagonists. These characters are very

similar to young adults today. For example, at their cores, both *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* are stories about young people looking at the world their parents created and wondering how they screwed things up so badly (Agenda Steve Paikin, 2010). With the issues of today ranging from climate change to civil unrest to economic instability, that is something any young adult can empathize with.

### **References**

Agenda Steve Paikin (2010, January 29).

Antoni Cimolino on Shakespeare today [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMIEfx3LL10>

Stratford Festival (2011, March 16). Antoni

Cimolino, Ivey School of Business: Shakespeare and leadership [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2x9SbGJsM>