

Live chat with Cassidy Cash on William Shakespeare

Welcome to to August's expert live chat with Cassidy Cash on the Bard, William Shakespeare. Thank you so much to Cassidy for being here and for her wonderful talk, I did enjoy it. Straford is home for me so I enjoyed seeing all the photos and getting a bit homesick! Do feel free to ask Cassidy questions on her talk and her work on Shakespeare.

Cassidy, do you want to start off by just telling us how you came to be so interested in Shakespeare?

Lorna Wanstall00:00

Nice to meet you too Cassidy

Cassidy Cash00:00

I have loved Shakespeare's writing since I was young

Cassidy Cash00:01

I read Romeo and Juliet because of my Great Grandmother when I was 9

Found a copy at her house (she only owned 3 books)

Lorna Wanstall00:01

What is your favourite play by Shakespeare

Cassidy Cash00:01

and I read it, loved it, and wanted to learn more about the man who had written it.

Reading was hard for me (still is) and the short, rhyming lines were easier, so I was in love at first read

Cassidy Cash00:01

It only got better once I saw them on stage! 😊

Cassidy Cash00:02

I love Henry V probably most now. Though R&J holds a special place for me always

The Tempest is one I recommend people see at a theater if it's their first play.

Cassidy Cash00:02

Do you like Shakespeare plays? What's your favorite?

Lorna Wanstall00:02

Shakespeare had quite a sence of humour, I seem to recall something my brother told me about shakespeare, my brother is also a great fan of his too.

Claire Ridgway00:02

There's nothing like seeing it performed. I was lucky to live and study near the RSC so lots of trips!

Cassidy Cash00:02

Oh, to go to the RSC!!

Cassidy Cash00:03

Have you been to the Globe?

Lorna Wanstall00:03

Midsummer nights dream is my fave, it so funny

Claire Ridgway00:03

I've been to the Globe but haven't seen a play there yet.

Cassidy Cash00:03

Shakespeare has a razor wit, for sure. Midsummer is full of great lines.

Claire Ridgway00:04

Hmmm.... I have a soft spot for Macbeth and Hamlet because I studied them at school.

Cassidy Cash00:04

It's hard not to like Macbeth--it's so full of magic and thunder.

Claire Ridgway00:04

I love watching the videos of Shakespeare in OP, his puns actually make sense then!

Cassidy Cash 00:05

They do make more sense that way, but it can be hard to understand.

Cassidy Cash 00:05

Amazing how far English has come in these many years.

Cassidy Cash00:06

I can't believe you are from Stratford! I loved it there.

Claire Ridgway00:06

When I have time (ha!), I'd love to study the development of the English language. Fascinating!

Cassidy Cash00:06

I think that might be a rabbit hole from which you might never return 😊 Might be best to take short trips.

Claire Ridgway00:06

Yes, I grew up just 12 miles away so it was where we went shopping and where I went out with friends.

Lorna Wanstall00:06

If I have remembered it rightly, William and a guy called Richard fancied the same girl. One night William was able to beat richard to the mark and ended up in bed with the girl. Richard went around

to the girl's house, hoping for a bit of fun at which point William stuck his head out of the window and said something like "William came before Richard so Puddle off."

Cassidy Cash00:07

Yes, that's a famous scene. It's called the Bed Trick

Cassidy Cash00:07

He uses it in his plays a lot, but it's a legend as to whether it happened in real life. Seems like a Shakespeare thing to do, though 🤔

Claire Ridgway00:08

I really don't get the whole Shakespeare authorship controversy... It's so very weird.

Cassidy Cash00:08

Measure for Measure and Alls Well That Ends Well

Yes, people get very emotional about it.

Lorna Wanstall00:08

Where exactly is Shakespeare buried

Cassidy Cash00:09

Shakespeare is buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford Upon Avon

Cassidy Cash00:09

Interestingly, historians think he probably didn't have a coffin, but was buried in a shroud

Lorna Wanstall00:09

I also like the two gentlemen of Verona as well

Cassidy Cash00:09

but he has a beautiful monument there.

Cassidy Cash00:09

I have not yet seen Two Gentlemen of Verona performed on stage! I hope to do that soon

Claire Ridgway00:10

Yes, it's well worth a visit.

Lorna Wanstall00:10

I have heard a rumour that he was buried at low tide in the Thames, don't think that's likely though

Cassidy Cash00:10

If you do go, check the monument to see what he is holding in his hand

Cassidy Cash00:10

No, that rumor is false.

I've been lots of times but can't remember what he's holding. His monument was done on the orders of his wife, wasn't it?

Lorna Wanstall00:11

I thought it would be, someone made it up no doubt to add romance or some such fiddle faddle

Cassidy Cash00:11

They don't actually know what he was holding originally. It's a quill pen today, but it could have been anything. It was robbed over the years.

Claire Ridgway00:11

Ah ok. I love the verse on his monument!

Cassidy Cash00:11

They say his daughter, Susanna commissioned the monument. I had not heard it was his wife, but could have been.

Cassidy Cash00:12

Lorna--there are tons of Shakespeare fiddle faddle to go around

Lorna Wanstall00:12

Did you know that more of Shakespeares plays were performed in James 1st 6th of scotland reign than in Elizabeths

Claire Ridgway00:13

Yes, James acted as patron, didn't he?

Cassidy Cash00:13

I have not done the math on that one. Believable, though.

Claire Ridgway00:13

Shakespeare was a Straford boy come good! 🤔

Cassidy Cash00:13

James ordered more plays more frequently than Elizabeth, so I think that one is feasible.

Lorna Wanstall00:13

Shakespeare was certainly very astute.

Cassidy Cash00:13

James created the King's Men out of The Lord Chamberlain's Men when he was crowned in 1603

Claire Ridgway00:14

We'll have to work it out!

Cassidy Cash00:14

It's a great question! I am going to go add that up now and find out!

Claire Ridgway00:14

I loved that story about Shakespeare possibly playing Lady Macbeth!

Cassidy Cash00:15

He read alot, it seems. Plagiarism wasn't a thing then, and it was actually a compliment to steal another writer's words

Cassidy Cash00:15

Shakespeare was great at putting his spin on a good story, and recognizing what stories would sell

Claire Ridgway00:15

I was very very lucky (showing off now!) to see Jonathan Pryce as Macbeth and Sinead Cusack as Lady Macbeth - brilliant!

Lorna Wanstall00:15

The Scottish play I believe was based on a prophecy given to James 1st.

Cassidy Cash00:15

@Claire haha! Wow!! That is incredible.

Cassidy Cash00:16

@Lorna The Scottish Play and Macbeth are the same, and James I did write a large manifesto type document revealing his massive fear of witches

Cassidy Cash00:16

Several things in that play are aimed at James I

Cassidy Cash00:16

Scottish, after all

Cassidy Cash00:17

Did you know he had a playing company in Scotland employing English players before he was King in England?

Cassidy Cash00:18

As Tudor historians, tell me what you think about Shakespeare's portrayal of the War of the Roses. Do you accept his version?

Lorna Wanstall00:19

Is it true that Elizabeth ordered Shakespeare to perform Richard 3rd as a warning to everyone on what would happen to them if they involved themselves in the plot Robert devereux had made

Claire Ridgway00:19

Well, I think he had to be careful in that he was writing in the reign of Elizabeth, a Tudor...

Cassidy Cash00:19

You are referencing the Essex Rebellion, I believe, and that was Richard II the day before Devereux was executed for treason

Cassidy Cash00:20

Devereux had sought to incite rebellion by hiring Shakespeare to perform Richard II with the abdication scene included

Claire Ridgway00:20

I wouldn't go as far as calling them complete propaganda, but he was writing for a Tudor audience

Lorna Wanstall00:20

Thank you Cassidy.

Cassidy Cash00:20

the day before he marched into London to overthrow the government.

Roland Hui00:20

I enjoyed your 3 mins Romeo and Juliet animation!

Claire Ridgway00:20

Hi Roland!

Cassidy Cash00:21

But it didn't work. No one came out. He was immediately arrested, and Shakespeare's company had to defend themselves at court

Cassidy Cash00:21

Hello Roland!

Cassidy Cash00:21

I'm so glad you enjoyed the animated play! I have a new one out now, Othello in 3 Minutes, too!

Lorna Wanstall00:21

As it goes I am reading Elizabeth Rivals at the moment all about Lettice Knollys, and we all about the rivalry there.

Roland Hui00:22

I see Kenneth Branagh liked it too! Do you know how it got his attention?

Lorna Wanstall00:22

Hello Roland, good to see you again

Roland Hui00:22

Hello Lorna!

Cassidy Cash00:22

He did! He gave the award for that at the Shakespeare Film Festival last year. He is a patron of that festival.

Cassidy Cash00:23

Now, I'm the one showing off, but he watched my film and wrote me a letter about it 😊

Claire Ridgway00:23

Brilliant! Congrats!

Cassidy Cash00:23

I'm still grinning about it! 😊

Cassidy Cash00:23

Thank you 😊

Lorna Wanstall00:23

How old was Shakespeare when he died and what was it that killed him

Claire Ridgway00:23

I bet!

Roland Hui00:23

Do we know if Shakespeare ever performed (or was in the presence of) before Elizabeth I?

Cassidy Cash00:23

What exactly killed him is a matter of speculation. He died when he was 52

Cassidy Cash00:24

Yes, we know he did because he is listed as an actor in a few performances.

Roland Hui00:24

Which plays?

Lorna Wanstall00:24

Well 52 was a good age for the times.

Cassidy Cash00:25

I know he was in Ben Jonson's play, Sejanus.

Cassidy Cash00:25

His sister lived to be in her 70s, so apparently there was a wide range, but yes I think 52 was considered "ample"

Claire Ridgway00:26

He did a lot in his 52 years!

Cassidy Cash00:26

They think he died of pneumonia. Legend goes that he died after a night of partying and drinking with Ben Jonson.

Lorna Wanstall00:26

So he was a bit of a party animal then?

Cassidy Cash00:26

Roland, here's an article from Shakespeare Documented that answers your question more fully. <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/playwright-actor-shareholder>

Cassidy Cash00:27

You know, I can't tell. I mean, he was at a pub, but as I understand it, that's where anyone got their daily meals

Cassidy Cash00:27

wasn't necessarily carrying on.

Lorna Wanstall00:27

do you think he knew anything about the death of Kit Marlow.

Lorna Wanstall00:27

Kit Marlow..

Cassidy Cash00:27

I'm sure he was smart enough to stay well away from that! haha

Cassidy Cash00:28

Francis Walsingham's servant (or employee?) murdered Marlow I believe.

Cassidy Cash00:28

Francis Walsingham's servant (or employee?) murdered Marlow I believe.

Claire Ridgway00:29

Maybe...

Lorna Wanstall00:29

True but again another rumour speaks of that some of the poem attributed to Shakespeare were actually written by Kit.. Again I think it a romantic tale.

Cassidy Cash00:29

I know Ben Jonson went to jail for saying "lewd things" in a play one time. I always thought it remarkable Shakespeare was never arrested

Roland Hui00:29

It's still so interesting that males performed female roles back then. Imagine Anne Bullen (in 'Henry VIII' 🤔) performed by a male actor! When was it acceptable for ladies to be on stage?

Lorna Wanstall00:29

I believe Marlow was stabbed in the eye..

Cassidy Cash00:30

Not until the 19th century. Though, Moll Cutpurse was a woman who acted on stage in the 16th century

Cassidy Cash00:30

She wasn't reputable.

Roland Hui00:30

Hmm, that funny face was supposed to be closed bracket. Sorry.

Cassidy Cash00:30

But colorful, absolutely. At The Fortune Theater....I believe it was 1611

Cassidy Cash00:30

Fun Fact: Shakespeare lived right down the street from Pilgrims who ended up founding Jamestown in 1607

Cassidy Cash00:31

As I believe I'm the only US person here, I may be the only one who thinks that's neat

Claire Ridgway00:31

Interesting!

Roland Hui00:32

There was a movie ('stage Beauty' 🤔) with Claire Danes that was about a female actor on stage in the time of Charles II

Cassidy Cash00:32

Stage makeup and special effects were a things, too, Roland, to help "suspend disbelief" as Shakespeare called it

Claire Ridgway00:32

Do you think Shakespeare really did manage to attend Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth, or do you think he heard about the entertainment. It was fascinating to hear how he may have used it as inspiration.

Cassidy Cash00:32

To me, the more impressive thing is the portrayal of wild animals on stage. I believe they probably used actual wild animals (at least sometimes)

Cassidy Cash00:33

I think so, yes, but I'm a romantic that way. Kenilworth is closer than London to Stratford and it was a HUGE spectacle.

Roland Hui00:33

Has anyone seen the movie 'Anonymous'? -About the Earl of Oxford being the true author of the plays.

Claire Ridgway00:33

Yes, it wouldn't be far at all by horse.

Cassidy Cash00:34

He included Arion on the Dolphin's back in one of his productions later in London. Seems like a direct correlation to me.

Lorna Wanstall00:34

My favourite shakespeare quote:Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

Claire Ridgway00:34

I saw the trailer and it put me right off, Roland!

Claire Ridgway00:34

Thanks, Cassidy!

Cassidy Cash00:34

I have seen Anonymous. The timing didn't line up on several of the plays.

Claire Ridgway00:35

Wonderful quote, Lorna.

Cassidy Cash00:35

I am not bothered by the authorship question, but there's so much archaeological evidence for William Shakespeare, I don't see any other conclusion

Lorna Wanstall00:36

Yes I actually believe it comes from the Scottish play

Claire Ridgway00:36

I agree, Cassidy, and aren't there several reference to glove making and leather work too, someone who knew the trade.

Cassidy Cash00:36

Now, that's accurate, though. Shakespeare's family were glove makers.

Claire Ridgway00:36

Yes, that's what I mean.

Cassidy Cash00:36

and since we are sharing quotes. My favorite is
What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the
day? Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes
capons and clocks the tongues of bawds and dials the
signs of leaping-houses and the blessed sun himself
a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no
reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand
the time of the day.

Lorna Wanstall00:37

Who was Shakespeare father

Cassidy Cash00:37

The film Anonymous did do it's research and there are many accurate things in it, just some things I disagreed with as well.

Cassidy Cash00:37

John Shakespeare was William's father.

Claire Ridgway00:37

That's one of the things that make me think Shakespeare wrote his works. He would have been so familiar with the trade.

Cassidy Cash00:37

He was a glove maker in Stratford, also an ale-taster, and town alderman. He was in charge of whitewashing the catholic imagery the town guildhall

Roland Hui00:39

The movie plot was silly with the Earl of Oxford being Queen Elizabeth's bastard son. And I think their bastard son (via mother-son incest) in turn was the Earl of Essex Robert Devereux.

Claire Ridgway00:39

Yes, the murals on the walls in the chapel are stunning. I loved hearing the theory when I visited that perhaps John didn't do a good job of covering them up because he didn't want to do it.

Cassidy Cash00:39

There are 12 plays written after 1604 when the Earl of Oxford died, so to me, if it was anyone else, it wasn't him.

Cassidy Cash00:40

I liked the idea that whitewashing them preserved the images.

Claire Ridgway00:40

Yes!

Claire Ridgway00:40

I'm so glad they found those murals.

Cassidy Cash00:40

Elizabeth demonstrates a great affection for Devereux that probably stems from her love of Dudley.

Roland Hui00:41

Why all the theories that S. did not write his plays? Was it because he didn't appear to be educated enough?

Cassidy Cash00:41

Apparently, they have found catholic papers in John Shakespeare's attic which purport he was not Protestant.

Cassidy Cash00:41

also shook up the Shakespeare history world.

Cassidy Cash00:41

I don't know why the idea that he didn't write them persists. No one seems to question Mark Twain this way.

Cassidy Cash00:42

And that would make more sense, really, since he really is a pseudonym

Claire Ridgway00:42

Him being Catholic would explain the poor whitewash job

Cassidy Cash00:42

Indeed.

Lorna Wanstall00:42

How long was he with Anne Hatterway

Lorna Wanstall00:42

hatherway

Cassidy Cash00:42

They were married from the time he was 18 until he died.

Roland Hui00:42

Trailer for Henry V

Cassidy Cash00:43

I have heard of that one! I just love Henry V, though, so I can't decide if I want to see it or not. I probably must, to make a determination

Cassidy Cash00:43

Have you seen it?

Cassidy Cash00:43

Did you see The Hollow Crown version of Shakespeare's history plays?

Roland Hui00:44

It's not out yet I think. But it looks good from the trailer

Lorna Wanstall00:44

I find it very amusing that Shakespeare named his children from characters from his books

Roland Hui00:44

The actress who played Margaret of Anjou was excellent in 'The Hollow Crown'!

Cassidy Cash00:45

I don't think he did...."Susanna" in

Claire Ridgway00:45

I've only seen parts, I need to watch it in full

Cassidy Cash00:45

typed that wrong

Lorna Wanstall00:45

Yes I have got the Hollow crown series.

Lorna Wanstall00:45

I got what you meant Cassidy

Cassidy Cash00:45

Tried to say, there's no "Susanna" in his plays, I believe Hamnet is coincidentally similar to Hamlet, and Judith doesn't appear either.

Lorna Wanstall00:46

I'm doing it now, Laptop is playing up

Roland Hui00:46

My favorite all time S. film is still the 1968' Romeo and Juliet'.

Cassidy Cash00:46

Judith was rather the blacksheep of the family, though. She's the only one not buried with the rest of them at Holy Trinity

Cassidy Cash00:46

OH that R&J is a good one, absolutely. I liked Fassbender's Macbeth

Claire Ridgway00:47

I think I read that the death of Hamnet inspired Hamlet...

Lorna Wanstall00:47

That was probably what I was thinking of Claire, got all discombobulated again LOL

Roland Hui00:47

Oh yes with the French actress as Lady Macbeth. I like the Polanski version.

Claire Ridgway00:48

I love the modern Romeo and Juliet with Leonardo and Clare - Mercutio's speech in that is so well done.

Cassidy Cash00:48

Haven't seen the Polanski version. Love Branagh's Love's Labour's Lost-- they ACT OUT iambic pentameter.

Cassidy Cash00:48

YES! Love DiCaprio always.

Cassidy Cash00:49

What are you most surprised to learn about Shakespeare?

Cassidy Cash00:49

Have you discovered things about his life that you thought were different than you expected?

Claire Ridgway00:49

That he kept coming home - such an arduous journey.

Roland Hui00:49

The more recent Romeo and Juliet movie (written by the 'Downton Abbey' creator) was a bore - utterly forgetful, and he even wrote his own new dialogue!

Cassidy Cash00:49

You know he had a godson at one Inn that was along the way. I like to think he stopped in to and from London

Claire Ridgway00:50

I don't blame him for wanting to get back to beautiful Warwickshire!

Cassidy Cash00:50

William D'avenant

Claire Ridgway00:50

But then I am very biased!

Lorna Wanstall00:50

I think for me that Shakespeare had such a wonderful sense of humour. Guess that's why I like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* so much

Cassidy Cash00:51

It is gorgeous there. I think it shows his commitment to his family. He would go back to sort out issues with his daughters, and conduct business, too

Claire Ridgway00:51

Yes, he seems to have been very close to Suzannah

Cassidy Cash00:51

I love the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! Apparently, the line Puck says about counting the minutes is because 16th century clocks only marked hours and minutes were considered for fairies

Cassidy Cash00:51

Susanna appears to have been the good child.

Lorna Wanstall00:52

I also think that he was able to write plays that he knew would captivate people. He had a very unique skill

Cassidy Cash00:52

Judith married a questionable man, who ended up getting excommunicated for adultery.

Claire Ridgway00:52

Poor Judith!

Cassidy Cash00:52

He was able to capture the imagination. I loved that he had that gift, to know what entirely different monarchs would want to see

Lorna Wanstall00:52

I think Susanna was his favourite child

Cassidy Cash00:53

Do you know if they ever found where Judith was buried? I hope they discover it. I was surprised when I didn't find her grave at Holy Trinity Church

Lorna Wanstall00:53

not just monarchs Cassidy the people too

Cassidy Cash00:53

Susanna gave him a lot to be proud of. She entertained...I think it was the Queen of Spain? Queen of somewhere at the Birthplace before she died.

Claire Ridgway00:53

No, I'm not sure about Judith's resting place

Roland Hui00:53

There is a new film about Will (played by Kenneth Branagh, and with Judi Dench). Has anyone seen it?

Cassidy Cash00:54

Yes, I agree! Very popular plays and a talent for appealing to the masses.

Cassidy Cash00:54

It is called All is True

Claire Ridgway00:54

No, I want to see that, Roland

Cassidy Cash00:54

It's out in the UK, but only in select places here in the US, I haven't been able to see it.

Cassidy Cash00:54

All is True is the alternate title for Shakespeare's Henry VIII, considered his last play chronologically, anyway.

Lorna Wanstall00:55

he was able to gauge exactly what the mood was of the people. If they wanted drama Richard 3rd, if they wanted sadness Romeo and Juliet and of course comedy Midsummer

Claire Ridgway00:55

And he could be very rude!

Roland Hui00:55

Oh how interesting about the alternate title!

Cassidy Cash00:55

Oh, my land! Incredibly rude. makes me blush!

Claire Ridgway00:56

Ha!

Lorna Wanstall00:56

Am i right in thinking that Henry 8 wasn't performed until Elizabeth was dead

Cassidy Cash00:56

They filmed parts of the movie in Stratford

Roland Hui00:57

Olivier's 'Richard III' was excellent. It's like a black comedy, as well as a tragedy the way Olivier directed it.

Cassidy Cash00:57

H8 first performed about 1612, so yes, she wouldn't have seen it.

Cassidy Cash00:57

Oh, Olivier will hold a special place for me. An incredible actor

Cassidy Cash00:58

Master at Shakespeare

Lorna Wanstall00:58

Guess it would have been a case of "Off with his head" if she ever tried to perform it during Elizabeth's lifetime.. Mind you at least he could get a part as Poor Yorick

Cassidy Cash00:59

ahahaha. Alas, poor Yorrick!

Claire Ridgway00:59

Thank you so much for doing tha chat this evening and thank you to Roland and Lorna for the excellent comments and questions. Sorry it's been a quiet one this evening. I expect people are still on holiday or still at work. It's been fun though. Thanks Cassidy!

Cassidy Cash00:59

This was a great time! I appreciate you having me, and thank you so much Lorna and Roland for coming and chatting with me 😊

Roland Hui00:59

Thank you Cassidy - good night 😊

Cassidy Cash00:59

Have a good night, everyone!

Claire Ridgway00:59

Good night and happy weekend!

Lorna Wanstall01:00

Yes it has, I hope you will be able to join us again soon Cassidy. Please feel free to pop into our forum and make a comment on any post that tickles your fancy.

Claire Ridgway01:00

Night night!

Cassidy Cash01:00

You're very kind, Lorna! It's been fun getting to talk with you. Good night!

Lorna Wanstall01:02

Time for bed for us as well we will be setting off for home tomorrow. But I will certainly miss our holiday homestead. It's wonderful here. Take care and keep safe everyone Xx