

# My Own Private Shakespeare

[David Walters](#) Aug 9, 2024



By David Walters

Standing over her while she sleeps, this line is Othello's metaphor for dousing a candle and its parallel in killing Desdemona.

"Put out the light, and then put out the light."

In his one man show *My Own Private Shakespeare* there are similar numerous parallels in the lines of the Bard and the tumultuous life lived by the Shakespearean actor [Justin Hay](#). In these lines he seeks solace, comfort in not being alone, and understanding of the tragedies that have befallen him. His father dies that he hasn't seen in fifteen years leaving

much unsaid. His wife blatantly has a relationship with another man entangling his children in the mess. He finds out that he has a brain tumor that needs multiple operations. One is difficult, two is almost bearable, but all three at once is enough for anyone to sink to, "Out, out, brief candle."

Baring his soul and using the plays Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Richard III, and Caesar, Justin gives us one of the most simple and honest sharings of a life that I have had the pleasure of attending. Even though it's Shakespeare, there's no theatricality. Even though it's Shakespeare, there's no embellishment. And because it's Shakespeare it's the more richer for having gone through it. Over five hundred years ago and there is still so much relevancy to the human experience that we live today. Justin not only finds parallels in the soliloquies, but also in several scenes from those plays, flipping back and forth between characters with alacrity.

A key moment in Justin's early life is flagged as the starting gun of what he was to become and how he looks at his life and the world, through a Shakespearean lens. He recalls his fourteen year old self listening to a vinyl record of Sir Larry doing Othello, not completely understanding the words and what was being said, but realizing that he was being permanently pierced by the recitation and that he would never be the same. He wasn't.

The director, [Mona Zaidi](#), has done a marvelous job keeping the tone and pace reigned in, adding to the simplicity of the time of tragedy and trauma experienced by Mr. Hay.

Justin's play closed on August 4th as it was a small part of [Frigid New York's Little Shakespeare Festival](#). There are many other offerings at the festival to check out.

*My Own Private Shakespeare* by Justin Hay, featuring select scenes by William Shakespeare, directed by Mona Zaidi.

FRIGID New York's mission is to provide both emerging and established artists the opportunity to create and produce original work of varied content, form, and style, and to amplify their diverse voices.