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**Press Release**  
For Immediate Release  
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## **Richmond CenterStage Foundation and Quill Theatre Partner to Host the Seventh Annual *Bardathon***

### **Students from Greater Richmond and Russia to Perform in Area's Only Non-Competitive Theater Festival**

**Richmond, VA** – More than 100 students from 9 different area schools and a Russian theatrical society performed in a collaborative rendition of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* on Thursday, March 24 at the Dominion Arts Center. Richmond CenterStage Foundation has partnered with the Quill Theatre, formerly Henley Street Theatre and Richmond Shakespeare, to host the annual *Bardathon* for seven consecutive years.

Each of the 10 participating groups were assigned one or more scenes from *Twelfth Night*. Preparation began weeks in advance with students memorizing lines and creating props and set pieces, all with the guidance of a faculty sponsor and the support of Quill Theatre staff. On the day of *Bardathon*, the students brought the individual scenes together by collectively acting out the play in its sequential entirety. A final morning of rehearsals at Dominion Arts Center's Genworth BrightLights Education Center led up to the grand performance at noon in the Libby S. Gottwald Playhouse.

Students from Russia performed in *Bardathon* for the past five years, alternating between traveling to the event and participating via live webcast every other year. This year students from St. Petersburg's English Theatrical Society traveled to Richmond to perform alongside students from the City of Richmond and the surrounding counties.

"Education is a top priority for both Richmond CenterStage Foundation and Quill Theatre," said Janet Starke, Richmond CenterStage Foundation Executive Director. "When two unique performing arts organizations work together towards a common goal, we get extraordinary results, and the splendid performance put together by students alongside peers whom they have never met clearly attests to that."

Quill Theatre says that whether they are competing with classmates for the same roles or among other schools at theater competitions, theater students have always been fiercely competitive. But *Bardathon's* collaborative approach brings another aspect of theater to light: its ability to unify.

*Bardathon's* ultimate goal is to bring diverse students together to celebrate the joy of playing some of the richest and most interesting characters ever written in the English language. By performing for one another, students can both learn from and share with each other.

*Bardathon* is sponsored by the Richmond Chapter of the English-Speaking Union. Live-streaming of the event was provided to the general public at [RichmondCenterStage.com](http://RichmondCenterStage.com).

This year's participating student groups included:

Atlee High School (Hanover County)  
Blessed Sacrament Huguenot Catholic School (Powhatan County)  
Deep Run High School (Henrico County)  
English Theatrical Society (St. Petersburg, Russia)  
Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies (Richmond City)  
Matoaca High School (Chesterfield County)  
Mills E. Godwin High School (Henrico County)  
New Kent High School (New Kent County)  
Richmond Community High School (Richmond City)  
Thomas Dale High School (Chesterfield County)

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*Richmond CenterStage is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to provide diverse local and world-class performing arts, transformative arts education experiences for students of all ages, and inspirational venues – all to strengthen the cultural and economic vitality of Greater Richmond.*

*All of Richmond CenterStage's venues are operated by **SMG Richmond**, a global industry leader in venue management with over 230 facilities worldwide – including Soldier Field in Chicago and Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco. In addition, SMG offers food and beverage operations through its concessions, catering and special events division, SAVOR.*

*Quill Theatre was born from the merger of Henley Street Theatre and Richmond Shakespeare. Now in our collective 31st season our mission is to create theatre rooted in the genius of Shakespeare that provokes the mind and speaks to the soul – theatre worth talking about!*

*The English-Speaking Union of the United States is committed to promoting scholarship and the advancement of knowledge through the effective use of English in an expanding global community. It is a non-profit, non-political, educational organization formally organized in 1920. It shares its mission with more than 50 nations with English-Speaking Union organizations.*

*The Richmond Branch also seeks to promote understanding and good will among the people of the world who speak English, supports cultural programs and educational exchanges, and cultivates an appreciation of our common English-speaking heritage.*