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'50 Shades of Shakespeare' four actors eight plays one show Hollywood Fringe

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"50 Shades of Shakespeare" performance photos from the Hollywood Fringe performance at the Three Clubs. Actors Noah James, Jordan Mann, Kelly Nienaltowski, and Eddie Vona
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Los Angeles New Court Theatre presents this year at the Three Clubs bar for the Hollywood Fringe "50 Shades of [Shakespeare](#)," an improv game with a twist. Two men and two women take scenes from eight different Shakespeare plays and give the audience the opportunity to randomly pick who plays what parts. Directed by Jess Shoemaker, this interesting work can be played in any small space with limited set dressing but is geared toward the mature audience. It is something akin to a pick the ending book where the reader gets to chose the choices of the characters.

The setting of this play is a bar, with two black fabric banners hung on a wall. each banner has the name of 11 different scenes with the characters listed for each scene. On stools are stacks of plates with the names of the four actors. At the start one of the team members enters the audience and asks

members to select who gets to play what character. Within less than five minutes the black banners bear the names of the actors to play in the different scenes and the show begins.

The casting for the scenes are open. Men can play women and women men. A nice change, considering the original Bard players were all male. On the night this author attended a performance per chance every Romeo and Juliet scene was played by the two men with Noah James playing Juliet and Eddie Vona playing Romeo The same night Jordan Mann played MacBeth and Kelly Nienaltowski played [Othello](#). In addition for one scene from "Midsummer Night's Dream" one of the cast selections is from the audience. As can be seen in the photos, for the night of June 20, that selection was Ashley Partington.

One of the most compelling scenes of the night "Future Instant" involve Juliet and Lady Macbeth, played by Eddie Vona and Noah James, simultaneously delivering lines from their respective plays that weave together somewhat seamlessly. Overall the writing of this piece is brilliant and the comedy high. Even in the most dramatic scenes of the bard, one is entertained.

This group of four actors plays scenes and monologues and bits from "Romeo and Juliet," Macbeth," "Taming of the Shrew," "Measure for Measure," "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Hamlet," "Othello," and the "Tempest." Samples of eight Shakespeare plays in forty five minutes. However one need not be familiar with all eight plays to enjoy the evening.

Overall this piece creates opportunity for many to be exposed to Shakespeare. Often the public and educators want the young to be exposed to the classics The show closed this week, however this piece gives an opportunity for people in the adult set to be educated on the classics in a way that is entertaining and also interactive. One hopes "50 Shakes of Shakespeare" will have a life beyond the Hollywood Fringe. One also wonders at the prospects of versions of this show for younger audiences.

For more information about shows at the Hollywood Fringe see [their website](#). For more information about the [Los Angeles New Court Theater](#) see their website.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- [Shakespeare four hundred plays at the Hollywood Fringe](#)
- [UCLA stages Twelfth Night in a dance hall at Hollywood Fringe](#)
- ['The Bard Gets Hard' new Rogue Shakespeare at the Hollywood Fringe](#)
- ["Shrew'd" one woman's view of Shakespeare's "Taming of" at the Hollywood Fringe](#)
- [Gangster "Hamlet" at the Hollywood Fringe](#)



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