

Feast of Crispian: Shakespeare with Veterans presents:

# *Othello – Deployed*

*Adapted from William Shakespeare's play*

**Director**

Bill Watson

**The Designers**

Christopher Guse (Sound) · Steven Roy White (Set)  
Mike Van Dreser (Lights)

**Feast of Crispian**

Nancy Smith-Watson · William Watson · Jim Tasse  
-Founders-

Jordan Watson

-Prompter and Graphic Designer-

Therese Philipp

-Production Stage Manager-

Megan Watson

Assistant Stage Manager

Ana McHenry

Props Coordinator

***In association with the***

***UWM Peck School of the Arts, Department of Theatre***

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For more information, go to:

[www.feastofcrispian.org](http://www.feastofcrispian.org)

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Ask a veteran what they liked best about time in the military, most likely, they'll say the comradery of their unit. *Band of Brothers*, *I've got your 6*, *Leave no man behind* are words at the heart of military culture. In combat, a veteran will tell you, closer, more intimate bonds are forged than any other relationship in their lives. Othello is most often framed as Shakespeare's great domestic tragedy. A matter of the heart, run off the rails by the "green-eyed monster", jealousy. But nearly all the men in this play are soldiers, encamped in the Forward Operating Base of the island of Cyprus. Viewed through the lens of the veterans on stage before you tonight, the stories of military life resonate. Iago has served with Othello for years, saved his life in battle. Suggesting that Desdemona is cheating on Othello with his own junior officer, Othello believes his battle buddy. He doesn't confront his wife, or Cassio until it's too late. Iago has always had *his 6*. Iago watches his battle-hardened commander go soft, his "soul is so enfeathered with her love", and sees an unqualified commander promoted instead of himself. He's violently angry and orchestrates Othello's destruction. Cassio is busted in rank for being drunk on duty. The veterans we work with tell these stories: the pressure of service, the struggle with alcohol, the need to believe in the members of your unit above all else - and the story of the outsider; a black man in a white world, an enlisted grunt in a world of elite officers, a military spouse, a civilian woman on a military base. These veterans have been finding their stories in this play and have opened new layers of meaning in one of the most heart-breaking stories in our culture.

## OTHELLO – DEPLOYED (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Iago.....	Bob Balderson, Tim Schleis, Bill Martin
Roderigo.....	Jim Tasse
Brabantio/Lodovico.....	Michael Pikuleff
Othello.....	Mike Keppert, Mustafa Beyah
Duke of Venice.....	Jeff Peterson
Desdemona.....	Carissa DePietro
Montano.....	Samuel Rogers
Cassio.....	Ronnie GQ Graham
Emilia.....	June Prestin

### Special thanks to Onlight!

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Carissa DiPietro** (Desdemona) served in the Army from 1999-2003 and was stationed at Fort Bragg, NC with the 330th Transportation Battalion. Carissa has a supportive husband and 5 wonderful children. She loves everything Disney and her biggest dream is to own an RV and begin her traveling adventures.

**James Tasse** (Roderigo) (HM2, USN 1971-1975) is an actor, director and Senior Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has performed with many local theatre companies including Milwaukee Rep, Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Shakespeare, Next Act and In Tandem. He has served as the Associate Artistic Director for the Milwaukee

Chamber and received his training with the Professional Theatre Training Program at UW-M.

**Bill Martin** (Iago #3) was a member of the USAF from 1982 to 1990. He was a medic at Travis AFB in California, Clark AB, RP and Ramstein, Germany. He performed in several community theatrical productions during this time and was in Feast of Crispian's inaugural production of Julius Caesar.

**Tim Schleis** (Iago #2) U.S. Army 78 – 02 Armor Company Platoon / 1<sup>ST</sup>SGT. Married to my fantastic wife, 3 grown children and 8 grandchildren. This is my first performance and I feel honored to be sharing the stage with my fellow veterans and my wife. Thank you Bill, Jim, Nancy, Therese and Jordan.

**Jeff Peterson** (Duke) served in the USN, 1972 – 1979 aboard the USS Camden AOE-2 and the USS Ramsey FFG-2 off the Pacific coast, crossed the equator into the South China Sea. He visited 11 countries and many islands. A talented mural and portrait artist, he is also a veteran member of Feast of Crispian.

**Samuel Rogers** (Montano) is an eight year Army Veteran, and a Civil Servant with three combat tours in Afghanistan. He is the Veteran Advocacy Senator on the UWM Student Association, and serves on a number of school committees

**June Prestin** (Emilia) wife of a retired Army Vet, mother of 3, Grandmother to 8. Office Manager for local non-profit that supports single female head of households. Brain aneurysm and cancer, patient and family advocate. Survivor of Subarachnoid Hemorrhage. Member of FoC with her husband.

**Bob Balderson** (Iago #1) retired after a 20 year career in the Army, served two tours in Vietnam and received an MFA in Acting from Binghamton University in 1993. He has performed with the MRT, Optimist Theatre, Wisconsin and Texas Shakespeare Festivals and many theaters throughout the country. He is a Purple Heart recipient.

**Mike Keppert** (Othello #1) was a combat engineer in the regular Army from 2003 – 2009. He now volunteers with Adaptive Adventures and is a member of their Dragon Boat team. Mike is an aspiring recreational therapist and has two sons, DeVante and Christian.

**Ronnie GQ Graham** (Cassio) US Navy, served as an AS-3 aboard the USS America CV-66 from 1991 - 1996. He is a graduate from the UWM BFA Acting program where he performed in *Women on The Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Hot L Baltimore*, *The Crucible*, *Giants have us in their books* as well as *FoCs*, *Julius Caesar* and *And Comes Safe Home*. Ronnie enjoys spending time with his four awesome kids.

**Michael Pikuleff** (Brabantio/Lodovico) USN 1960-62: Mediterranean, Caribbean. Mike has enjoyed a career as an English teacher, now teaching part-time at MATC. Favorite roles include Julius Caesar, Willy Loman, Charlie in "The Foreigner," and Elwood P. Dowd. He's valued his participation in FoC's "Julius Caesar" and *And Comes Safe Home*.

**Mustafa Beyah** (Othello #2) is a 12 year Air Force veteran. He served as a Avionics Journeyman in search and rescue squadron and supported the Desert Storm and Desert Shield war. Mustafa participated in the FOC production of Julius Caesar.

**Jordan Watson** (Prompter) earned a BA in Theater from Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA and trained with Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA. She has worked with *Feast of Crispian*, as prompter on their productions of *Julius Caesar*, and *And Comes Safe Home*. Milwaukee acting credits include: CAITHLEEN, in *bloomsday*, at Next Act Theatre, and MANDY, in *Time Stands Still*, at In Tandem Theatre

**Therese Philipp** (Stage Manager) My involvement with *Feast of Crispian* from its beginnings has allowed me to witness the organic growth of this organization. The founders are creating a force of positive change in a world that craves and needs such endeavors. *Othello Deployed* is a unique opportunity to experience these characters through the eyes of veterans, who this evening, take on the uniform of actors. Thank You For Your Support and Interest.

**Megan Watson** (Assistant Stage Manager) has acted at UWM, Milwaukee Rep, First Stage main stage and Young Company. She also recently won First Place at the Utah Shakespeare National High School Shakespeare competition.

**Stephen Roy White** (Set Design) recent credits include scenic/lighting designs for *Arcadia*, *Corktown* and *Translations* at UWM; lighting designs for *And Comes Safe Home* for *Feast of Crispian*; *The Train Driver*, *The Detective's Wife* and *Lobby Hero* at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre; and *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Chapatti* at Peninsula Players Theatre. Up coming productions include *Zombies From The Beyond* with Skylight Music Theatre in February 2018. Steve has been teaching design and production at UW-Milwaukee for over 20 years and serves as a theater consultant.

**Chris Guse's** (Sound Design) recent design projects include sound for *Lend me a Tenor*, *October*, *Before I was Born*, *Collected Stories*, *Heroes*, *Jeeves Intervenes*, *Duet for One*, and sound video for *Master Class* and *The Detective's Wife* with the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre. He designed and created the environment and multimedia content for *The Congo Code* (a 2015 Milwaukee Business Journal Eureka Award winner) and *Trash or Tunes* with Kohl's Wild Theatre. Chris worked with Uprooted/Renaissance Theaterworks creating the sound designs for *Neat* and *Crumbs From the Table of Joy* and the video for Shorewood High School's groundbreaking, 2016 Tommy Award sweeping *American Idiot*. An associate professor at UWM, Chris teaches in the areas of sound design/technology and technical direction and has designed sound, video and/or composed music for over 50 shows, including highlight productions of *Corktown*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Mr. Melancholy* and *From These Green Heights*

**Bill Watson**, an actor, director, and teacher is an Associate Professor of Theatre at UWM. He has worked with Shakespeare and other professional companies from Seattle to Massachusetts and has been seen on Milwaukee stages in productions with Milwaukee's Chamber Theatre, In Tandem and First Stage Children's Theatre among others.

**Nancy Smith-Watson**, Founding member & Project Director of *Feast of Crispian*, is an actor and somatic therapist. Nancy acted professionally in the West until her kids took that job over and now she lives vicariously through them. FoC is the full-time work of her heart.