

**Jim Bulleit's** song is drawn from Macbeth's "She should have died hereafter" soliloquy, reflecting Macbeth's thoughts on hearing of Lady Macbeth's death. This is inarguably one of Shakespeare's most well-known soliloquies, a crowning achievement for any actor taking it on. William Faulkner even borrowed a line from this as the title of his 1929 breakthrough novel— "The Sound and the Fury." For me, this bit of writing ranks alongside "To be or not to be" from *Hamlet* or "Our revels now are ended" from *The Tempest*—masterpieces of communication, timeless expressions of universal thoughts. Jim's tune captures Macbeth's mind so well; there's something about the juicy A chord that he puts under the words "out, out brief candle" that is absolutely perfect!



**Jennifer Clement's** setting of "Take, oh those lips away," from *Measure for Measure* is beautifully haunting. *Measure for Measure* is one of Shakespeare's "problem plays" – a piece that no one is quite sure what to do with. It doesn't fit as neatly in a strict category as so many of his other pieces; it's set in Vienna, for one thing, rare territory for the Bard. This song is also one of the shortest that Shakespeare wrote in any of his plays, a mere few lines from a would-be suitor to a woman with whom he can't quite figure out his relationship. (That sentence is about as complicated as the play). I feel that Jennifer has really captured the melancholia of this lyric. Incidentally, we're doing *Measure for Measure* as next year's "Bootleg Shakespeare" – so maybe we'll get to hear this song again next year!



**Jim Knox's setting of the 15th Sonnet is really something. The sonnet itself refers to a similar sentiment as Jim Bulleit's song—that life is a stage for us to act on, and that the whole thing is all some sort of transitory illusion. Hearing these words framed with Jim's gravitas brings a whole new depth to the words; Jim is more seasoned than the average human, lending authority to the truth of this sonnet. But when Jim brings us to the volta—the sonnet's turn in the last two lines—he does so in a way only paralleled by the likes of Johnny Cash. Listen for that turn—"As he takes from you, I engraft you anew."**



**Andrew Hobbs** has delivered a piece forty years ahead of its time with his re-imagining of Lear's raging at the storm on the heath. Forty years ahead of *his* time, that is. At least, that's about the age I think I'd have to be to bring this kind of emotion to Lear's words; the fact that Andrew has done so is testament to his dedication to his craft. At this point in the play, Lear is near the height of his madness, yet still able to rage against the feeling that his vitality is slipping away. He does so by standing naked in the storm, in effect challenging nature herself to a duel, even if he knows he will eventually lose. I think Andrew has perfectly captured this moment, giving us a taste of how even as Lear is raging at the elements he can't help but enjoy the feeling—listen to the exuberance that Andrew brings to that refrain, "Blow, winds, blow!"

