Conejo Players Theatre’s production of 2018’s The Book of Will by Lauren Gunderson will be the Ventura County premiere. Based on a true story, the friends of Shakespeare realize as they age that the Bard’s works will die with them. They resolve to hunt down all the plays and create the First Folio. Told with great humor and humanity, it touches on themes of friendship, legacy, and the importance of the Arts. The play is a love letter to Shakespeare, and to all of theatre. And while the men may drive the action, it’s the women who anchor it. The language is accessibly contemporary, although the show ends with a celebration of Shakespeare where all will take part recreating his amazing characters.

Readings will be from the script. Sides are posted on our website: www.conejoplayers.org. Note: Sides are very edited from the full script.

CHARACTERS:

*Casting can be diverse. Shakespeare is for everyone!*

*A note about accents. As the Elizabethan sound is lost (and believed to be closer to modern American than modern British), we will not be using British accents.*

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(These characters are not doubled)

*HENRY CONDELL. 45+; feisty, passionate, and hopeful friend and actor in the*

*King's Men.* SIDES 2 & 4

*JOHN HEMINGES. 50+; reasonable friend and financial manager of the King's Men; owner of the Globe Tap House; a good man, a gentleman, if serious.* SIDES 3 & 5

*RICHARD BURBAGE. 50+; seasoned Lion of the Stage, famous across England, loud and proud. (*Note-he has an amazing Act I Scene1, then isn’t seen until the end of the show when all reappear). SIDE 7

*BEN JONSON. 40+,Poet laureate of England. Friend/rival of Shakespeare. Amazing drunk. A bear of a man who enjoys his clout. Surprisingly weepy.* SIDE 10

*RALPH CRANE. 35+, Humble scrivener of the King's Men. Quick, shy, and exacting.* SIDE 18

*ALICE HEMINGES. 25-35, John's daughter who runs the Tap House. Knows everyone and hangs with the boys.* SIDE 19

*ELIZABETH CONDELL 40+,Henry's wife, savvy, fun, & quick witted. Very loving with her friends and family.* SIDE 4

*REBECCA HEMINGES 45+, John's wife, a good wife. Strong, busy with their grocery business, a woman who has weathered much but loves her husband, children, and God.* SIDE 5

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(These characters do some doubling before their main character appears)

*WILLIAM JAGGARD. 50+, Successful if shady publisher of books, plays, and playbills. He is confident in his ability to get what he wants. Very experienced, very connected, willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. An ass. He is also blind.* SIDE11

*ISAAC JAGGARD. 25-35, William's son, will inherit the business. Sensitive, an artist at heart. A complete contrast to his father.* SIDE13

(These characters have at least one very interesting scene. The actor’s playing these will double several other roles, so versatility is a must)

*ED KNIGHT. 40+, "Stage manager" for the King's Men, self-serious, worked off his feet. Also plays: A Bar Bully, A Kind Nobleman, A Hamlet Guard, & a print worker.* SIDE 21

*MARCUS. 25+, printer's apprentice at the Jaggard print shop, nosy, funny,*

*but honest. Also plays: A drunk, a sword fighter, A Hamlet Guard.* SIDE 20

*BOY HAMLET. 20ish, An overly assured young actor. Also plays: The Compositor, Romeo learning a dance, A Hamlet Guard.* SIDES 6 & 20

*EMILlA BASSANO LANIER. 40+, fiery Italian feminist and poet, independent woman, lover of life (and of Shakespeare). Also plays: Bar-goer, mourner, Dance teacher.* SIDE 14

*ANNE HATHAWAY SHAKESPEARE. 50+, Shakespeare's now ailing wife. Strong-willed, a classy lady - a survivor. Also plays: A bar goer, a mourning widow, a costumer, a fruit seller.* SIDE 15

*CRIER/SUSANNAH SHAKESPEARE. 20s, this performer will mainly play boys, until the end when they will be Susannah. The Crier announces the shows at the Globe and is used in many transitions. Should be charming and well spoken. Susannah is the good girl (but resentful) daughter of Shakespeare.*

*Also plays: a sword fighter, a printer, a bar goer.* SIDES 16 & 17.