



## The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition



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### **Manhattan Student wins 2016 English-Speaking Union Shakespeare400 Competition**

**New York City, March 11, 2016** – With his performance of Angelo from *Measure for Measure* and his recitation of Shakespeare Sonnet 138, Abel Garcia, a student of Gabriel Silva at Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts in Manhattan, won the 2016 English-Speaking Union New York Shakespeare Competition.

Celebrating the Shakespeare400 legacy, the ESU New York Shakespeare Competition took place on March 10th on the stage of the Gilder Lehrman Hall at the Morgan Library & Museum, where twelve finalists from New York City area high schools (selected from among more than 70 contestants) competed. They presented selections from the Bard's works hoping to represent New York in the ESU National Shakespeare Competition on May 1-3, 2016 at Lincoln Center Theater and compete with winners of some 60 ESU competitions nationwide. Mr. Garcia received a cash prize of \$200 from The Shakespeare Society and two tickets for a performance of *Henry V* at BAM.

Na'Shay Kelly from Bronx High School for Writing and Communication Arts placed second, winning \$200 from The Shakespeare Society and two tickets to Theatre for a New Audience's production of *Pericles*. Esther Ritchin from White Plains High School captured third place, winning \$100 from The Shakespeare Society and two tickets to *Peer Gynt* at the Classic Stage Company.

The remaining finalists were Fiona Calberson (Townsend Harris High School at CUNY / Queens College); Chassidy David (Talent Unlimited High School); Alessandro Lopez (Williamsburg Preparatory High School); John Nuñez (Hillcrest High School); Davion Osbourne (Chelsea Career & Technical Education High School); Olivia Reis (Elisabeth Irwin High School / LREI); Jelani Richards-Cantave (Cardinal Spellman High School); Diana Vasilevski (Brooklyn Technical High School); and Dylan Weber (Long Island School for the Gifted). Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill, Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, thanked all the contestants remarking favorably on the talent, energy, and enthusiasm each displayed for the works of the Bard.



Abel Garcia, the 2016  
New York Shakespeare  
Competition winner

Judges for the competition included Peter Avery (Director of Theater, New York City Department of Education),



ESU New York Shakespeare Competition 2016 Finalists and Judges

Mary E. Hodges (Actor, Harlem Shakespeare Festival), Katie Miller (Education Director, Theatre for a New Audience), Michael Sexton (Artistic Director, The Shakespeare Society) and Dr. Robert Young (Former Director of Education, The Folger Shakespeare Library). BAM, Classic Stage Company, The Morgan Library & Museum, the New York Public Library, The Shakespeare Society, and Theatre for a New Audience provided valuable support for the New York Branch Shakespeare Competition.

Christopher Broadwell, Executive Director of the English-Speaking Union, welcomed the contestants, their parents, teachers and friends, to the Competition, noting that this year the entire world is celebrating the legacy of William Shakespeare. He said, “The English-Speaking Union, a leader in Shakespeare education in America, and is also celebrating Shakespeare 400 legacy through the hundreds of thousands of students, teachers and members who have participating in our National Shakespeare Competition, workshops and classes for educators in the US and UK, and lectures and events across the country.”

The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition is a school-based program designed to develop speaking skills, critical thinking and an appreciation of literature in students throughout the United States. It is the only national Shakespeare competition in the country and the only such program exclusively for high school students. Students read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespeare monologues and sonnets in three qualifying stages: at the school, community and national levels. Since its inception in New York City in 1983, the program has engaged more than 300,000 young people. The program currently reaches 21,200 students and 2,400 teachers in 60 English-Speaking Union Branch communities across the United States. The Competition has been recognized by the Globe Center (USA), the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America and the American Academy of Achievement.

The English-Speaking Union (ESU) is a non-profit, non-political educational organization that fosters global understanding and good will through English by providing educational and cultural opportunities for students, educators and members. The ESU carries on its work through a network of 61 U.S. Branches and affiliates in the United Kingdom and some 50 other countries, sponsoring a variety of language and international education programs. For additional information about the ESU or to join the ESU New York Branch please email [newyork@esuus.org](mailto:newyork@esuus.org), call 212-818-1200 or visit [www.esuus.org/newyork](http://www.esuus.org/newyork).

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