



## The English-Speaking Union

Education. Scholarship. Understanding.

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Contact: Katharine Moran (ESU Education)  
212-818-1200 x 223  
shakespeare@esuus.org

### ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE FOR NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

New York City, March 11, 2015 -- Willington Vuelto, a student of Gabriel Silva at Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts in Manhattan, won the 2015 English-Speaking Union New York Branch Shakespeare Competition. The finals event was held on March 10th at the Morgan Library & Museum, where twelve student finalists from the New York City area presented selections from the Bard's timeless canon. Mr. Vuelto impressed the judges and captivated the audience with his performance of Antony from *Antony and Cleopatra* and his recitation of Sonnet 116. He was awarded \$250 from the Shakespeare Society and will go on to represent the New York City area at National Competition (scheduled for April 26-28 at Lincoln Center Theater).

Alexander Kestenbaum from SAR High School in the Bronx placed 2nd in the competition; he received \$250 from the Shakespeare Society and tickets to Theatre for a New Audience's production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Amari Leigh from Hunter College High School in Manhattan placed 3rd and received tickets to Classic Stage Company's production of *Hamlet*. Other finalists included: Sophia Bannister (Hackley School); Tommaso Bernardini (Trinity School); Joelle Encarnacion (Preston High School); Raimondo Graziano (Scholars' Academy); Tamera Henry (St. Barnabas High School); Aisling McDonagh (Marymount School of New York); Kayla Rivera (Academy of American Studies); Devante Rowe (Flushing High School); and Krystal Silfa (Talent Unlimited High School).

The judges for the program included: Peter Avery (Director of Theater, New York City Department of Education); Heidi Griffiths (Casting Director, The Public Theater); Ty Jones (Producing Artistic Director, Classical Theatre of Harlem); Katie Miller (Education Director, Theatre for a New Audience); and Dr. Robert Young (Former Director of Education, The Folger Shakespeare Library). The local program sponsors were: Classic Stage Company; The Morgan Library & Museum; The New York Public Library; The Shakespeare Society; and Theatre for a New Audience.

**The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition** is a performance-based education program in which high school students nationwide read, analyze, perform and recite Shakespearean monologues and sonnets. Through the program, students develop communication skills and an appreciation of the power of language and literature. In three progressive competition levels, students present the Bard's works in their own schools, at ESU Branch sponsored community competitions and at the National Shakespeare Competition. For over thirty years, the program has given more than 250,000 young people of all backgrounds the opportunity to bring the timeless works of Shakespeare to life and learn to express his words with understanding, feeling and clarity.

**The English-Speaking Union** is a non-profit, non-political educational organization, whose mission is to celebrate English as a shared language to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural opportunities for student, teachers and its members. The ESU carries out its work through a network of 68 Branches and affiliates in the United Kingdom and 50 other countries, sponsoring a variety of language and international education programs. For information on joining The English-Speaking Union of the United States, visit [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org) or call 212-818-1200.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES

144 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: 212-818-1200 Fax: 212-867-4177 email: [info@esuus.org](mailto:info@esuus.org) website: [www.esuus.org](http://www.esuus.org)



Caption: 2015 Finalists and Judges at the ESU New York Shakespeare Competition Finals



Caption: 2015 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Place and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winners (L to R)

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