



Stone Soup Shakespeare

Created in 2010 by Julia
Stemper

Chicago, Illinois



Source: Stone Soup Shakespeare

NOTE FROM THE CO-EDITORS

Stone Soup Shakespeare is a theatre company that does improv during their performance in order to create an interactive environment that promotes community. They do this by incorporating elements of the community they are performing for into their show, which makes each show unique. An example of their connection to the community, they created a version of *Hamlet* that 3-year-olds would be able to understand, called for them to interact with the story, and taught them a lesson about emotions. This idea of community is at the core of their company and its creation. This is conveyed through "The Tale of the Stone Soup." This story is about how a community can come together and can make something great that benefits that community.

They were originally going to perform *Hamlet* for their 10th anniversary tour; however, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their plans for that show and tour before rehearsals had even started and they instead had to adapt. At the beginning, they thought it would only be a couple of weeks and then they could. One way they attempted to do this was by testing their modified version of *Hamlet* over Zoom, but it did not work out, so they tried other ways to interact with their audience during the COVID-19 pandemic. They tried a play by mail, which did not work but served as a learning experience. Julia Stemper says it is important for artists to have

these learning experiences. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the George Floyd tragedy and the Black Lives Matter movement brought attention to issues of racial discrimination that have unfortunately been around for a long time. This also impacted Stone Soup Shakespeare and the theatre community as a whole as displayed in the release of "We See You, White American Theatre." By the time Stone Soup Shakespeare could start again on their 10th anniversary *Hamlet* show again, they had to recast. When it came to rehearsing, they took precautions against spreading COVID-19, including quarantining, staying home when sick, getting vaccinated, and monitoring the situation with the Delta strand. They are excited to be touring and performing for many communities again.

JADA JOHNSON

Jada Johnson is a third-year student majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in Psychology and Theatre. She is involved in the Fencing club, the French club, and the String Orchestra. She is a co-editor for the Fall 2021 Issue of *Ideas Magazine*. She also works as a UTA and UTA Co-Coordinator in the Writing Lab and as a Fall 2021 intern for *Arthuriana*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Stone Soup Shakespeare. "Julia Stemper, Head Dreamer and Player." Photo of Julia Stemper and Stone Soup Shakespeare logo. Accessed December 19, 2021.
<https://www.stonesoupshakespeare.com/julia-stemper.html>.