



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GINO CHELAKIS MAKES HOUSTON DIRECTORIAL DEBUT
WITH THE UST DRAMA DEPARTMENT PERFORMING
SHAKESPEARE'S 'A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM'**

HOUSTON (Oct. 5, 2006) – Dr. Gino Chelakis makes his Houston directorial debut with Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 5 in Jones Theatre, 3910 Yoakum, on the University of St. Thomas campus.

Chelakis is a new assistant professor of drama at the University of St. Thomas. The legendary director and playwright Sam Havens, chair of the UST drama program, is retiring over a period of several years.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream' belongs to the period of transition from Shakespeare's experimental, imitative comedy to his mature, romantic, philosophical, festive vein," according to *The Necessary Shakespeare*. In a bold and festive effort, Chelakis has set the play in a gritty, Prohibition-era city.

Shakespeare's original text remains intact, expect for some "very slight" adjustments, Chelakis said. "Shakespeare's play reflects the duality of the real world verses the fairy world; the UST version shows contrasts the law-abiding daylight work with the underground world of Prohibition," he said.

Chelakis has dual worlds of his own. He was born and educated in Houston and for three years studies for the priesthood at the University of St. Thomas. He eventually realized that the priesthood was not for him. He moved with this family to Austin and graduated from St. Edwards University. Armed with a degree in philosophy, he joined the Houston Police Department. Well into his year-long probationary period, Chelakis once changed his mind. "I realized that law enforcement was not for me," he said.

Chelakis moved to Chicago, where he earned a MFA in acting and directing at DePaul University and found work as an actor and director. He then migrated westward to Los Angeles, where he became director of casting and development for Nickelodeon. After that, he moved to Baton Rouge to complete a PhD in dramatic literature from Louisiana State University. His next stop included a tenure-track teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania. "Then the job opened up at St. Thomas, and I came home as quickly as I could," he said.

University of St. Thomas is a private institution committed to educating leaders of faith and character to the liberal arts and the religious, ethical and intellectual tradition of Catholic higher education.



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