

guage truly alive.

This multidimensional-ity, Parker believes, will make all the difference to middle- and high-school students, and even many adults, who might otherwise struggle with the centuries-old text and thus miss out entirely on the bard's timeless themes.

"What trips up the readers is not the 'thees and thous,' but the more dense, knotty passages," notes Parker, who was born and raised in England and now lives in Manhattan. "What we provide are visual footnotes: the text is illuminated by the performance which, in turn, clarifies what is going on and permits a closer reading, understanding, and, dare I say it, enjoyment."

He points to act one, scene five, of *Romeo and Juliet*. Young readers could be confused because Capulet "is basically reining in his nephew Tybalt, 'a saucy boy' who is being a hothead, while also trying to keep a party going—'Well said, my hearts!...More light, more light!'—[lines] that are actually said to other people," explains Parker. "You would never get that, or the feeling of dual purpose, without seeing Capulet's body language and hearing the different inflections in his voice."

Or take the opening of *Macbeth*. The text whimpers compared to the e-book's arresting performance by the three witches, whose bodies writhe together as they speak in a slithering, sliding, chanting verse—"Fair is foul, and foul is fair: Hover through the fog and filthy air." It's viscerally frightening and foreshadows the unearthly evil ahead. These are *plays*, after all, that were primarily designed to be seen, heard—and experienced. "It's striking," Parker says, "when you see that there are

limits to what words alone can convey."

The videos themselves are a new art form. Tightly framed by the camera, the actors



Visit www.harvardmag.com/extras to view several videos from the e-book.

move minimally, eschew histrionics, carry only essential props, and wear simple, dark clothes. There are no stage sets: actors are silhouetted against a stark white background. "We don't focus on specta-

cle," Parker explains. "The actors are much more out there on their own and have to really know their Shakespeare and deliver the meaning through diction, context, and subtle body language, along with word-perfect performances, which is very hard to do."

Parker has worked steadily with his director, Jessica Bauman, and cast members "to figure out the language of this new medium and use it intelligently," he says. He also consults with Yale's Shakespeare scholar, Bodman professor of English Da-

vid Scott Kastan (a New Book Press advisory board member), who has helped ensure that nothing is "dumbed down."

With the products now in hand, Parker has moved into marketing and distribution, with an initial focus on school districts. An extensive pilot program across the country during the last year indicated a desire for WordPlay Shakespeare, as the series is called. The medium fits well with the new Common Core State Standards education initiative, and also accommodates some of the "multiple intelligences"



Anand G. Mahindra

'60. *You have served the University on several continents with deep devotion and insight, affirming the vital importance of the humanities while advancing interdisciplinary studies within a broad liberal arts education.*



Emily Rauh Pulitzer

'63. *As Harvard Overseer, expert in modern and contemporary art, and devoted friend of Harvard's art museums, you have elevated the University and its embrace of creativity through your profound belief in the power of art and education to transform how we look at the world.*

John P. Reardon Jr. '60. *From Admissions to Athletics to Alumni Affairs, you have shaped the Harvard we know and love, touching and changing countless lives through your skillful leadership and sage counsel, your impeccable judgment and inimitable way with people. The whole Harvard family salutes you—and thanks you.*

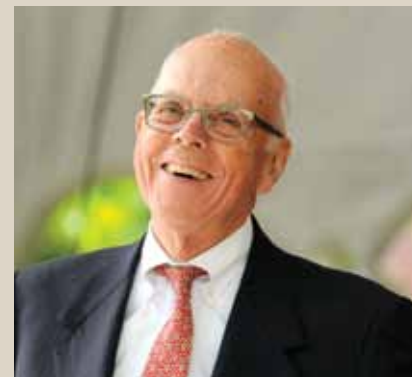
Harvard Medalists

ON COMMENCEMENT DAY, four alumni received the HAA's Harvard Medal, which recognizes extraordinary service to the University. The names of three recipients had been previously publicized; the surprise announcement at the meeting of a fourth, retiring HAA executive director John "Jack" P. Reardon Jr. '60, prompted cheers, applause, and a standing ovation in Tercentenary Theatre. "I hope you all can appreciate how much fun it was," HAA president Catherine Gellert '93 told the crowd, "to keep a secret from a man who knows everything about Harvard."

Anand G. Mahindra '77, M.B.A. '81. *Distinguished graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Business School, you have served the University on several continents with deep devotion and insight, affirming the vital importance of the humanities while advancing interdisciplinary studies within a broad liberal arts education.*

J. Louis Newell '57. *Whether cheering from the stands at the Stadium, or chairing the committee charged with making Commencement happy, you stand always ready to answer Harvard's call, as a stalwart leader of your Class, the Harvard College Fund, the Harvard Club of Boston, and the Harvard Varsity Club. (Newell could not be present; he will receive his medal at a later date).*

Emily Rauh Pulitzer, A.M. '63. *As Harvard Overseer, expert in modern and contemporary art, and devoted friend of Harvard's art museums,*



John P. Reardon Jr.



J. Louis Newell

COURTESY OF THE HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

STU ROSNER