



## SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Extends its Programming with  
In the Works at the Grandel Theatre this Fall**  
*Cast for the main stage production of “Romeo & Juliet” is finalized.*

ST. LOUIS (Feb. 12, 2018) -- Shakespeare Festival St. Louis will be adding a fourth pillar – In the Works – to its In the Schools, In the Streets, In the Park programming, enhancing its appeal as a year-round festival, it was announced today. In the Works, a month-long ticketed event, scheduled for late fall at the Grandel Theatre, will culminate the 2018 season that includes the Education Tour (Feb. 5-April 15), SHAKE 38 (April 18-22), the main stage production of “Romeo & Juliet” (June 1-24) and Shakespeare in the Streets’ production of “Blow, Winds,” (June 15-16).

The Festival also announced that casting for “Romeo & Juliet” is complete – Sigrid Wise and Reynaldo Piniella will play the star-crossed lovers in “Romeo & Juliet.” Wise, a graduate of the Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University, was recently seen on Festival stages in “The Winter’s Tale” and, in the “The Tempest” in partnership with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Piniella is a New York-based actor with theater, film and TV credits, including The Signature Theatre and Theatre for a New Audience, the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, “Sneaky Pete,” “Flesh & Bone,” “Greenleaf,” and “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.”

In the Works is a festival of new plays that will include a local premiere production; staged readings of a newly commissioned work, and a family show for young audiences. Deep-dive talkbacks and art-making workshops for kids will round out the events. Additional information on In the Works, including show logistics, cast and ticketing will be announced later this summer.

“With In the Works we are taking the next step in deepening our commitment to our mission to produce not only the work of the Bard, but the work of artists inspired by his canon, and to build on the success of our commissions for our Schools and Streets programs,” said Jennifer Wintzer, interim producing director of the Festival. “Producing work by local, contemporary artists has paved the way for us to broaden our offerings with new works from artists across the country. We are excited to give our patrons even more opportunities to experience the Festival year-round with the added bonus of being indoors.”

In addition to In the Works, season highlights include:

### *In the Schools*

#### **Education Tour & Programming: Feb. 5 - April 15**

Missouri students will learn a bit more of the Bard's take on identity and difference, issues people have grappled with no matter the genre, culture or century, and all part of the 2018 Shakespeare Festival St. Louis award-winning Education Tour, Feb. 5 through April 15. The tour includes more than 150 performances and workshops conducted at more than 50 schools throughout the metro area and rural Missouri.

### *In the Streets*

#### **SHAKE 38: April 18-22**

The Festival's community organized marathon of the Bard's 38-play canon, heads into its ninth season. Since its inaugural year, SHAKE 38 has grown from a 38-hour performance by 200 artists to a free, five-day event attracting more than 1,500 artists throughout the region and dozens of diverse community partners. Participants interpret one of the Bard's plays any way they see fit – in any location. Kicking off this year's marathon is the SHAKE 38 Fashion Fund Showcase set for 5 to 7 p.m., on Wed., April 18. Hosted in partnership with the St. Louis Fashion Fund, the event will be held at the St. Louis Fashion Incubator (1533 Washington Ave.) and will feature ensembles inspired by Shakespeare's canon, curated by local stylist Sarah Stallman. Prepare for the unexpected.

#### **"Blow, Winds": June 15-16**

This free, theatrical experience invites St. Louis neighborhoods to tell their stories. The production, set for 8:30 p.m. each night, will take place on the steps of the St. Louis Public Library, Central Branch (1301 Olive St.). Pre-show activities will kick off at 7 p.m. and will include a half dozen food trucks, live music and a family craft area. Playwright Nancy Bell authors the production. The event is presented in partnership with The St. Louis Public Library, and community partners including The Urban League and Gentlemen of Vision.

### *In the Park*

#### **"Romeo & Juliet": June 1-24; Preview performances: May 30-31**

Elena Araoz will direct the main stage production, which runs nightly, excluding Tuesdays in Forest Park. The nightly Green Show will feature pre-show entertainment including music, synopsis, roaming performers, and family arts and crafts. The traditional "mini-play" version of the main stage show will be performed Friday through Sunday, each weekend of the production.

#### **"Romeo & Juliet" Cast**

Joining Wise and Piniella in the cast of "Romeo & Juliet" are Festival veterans Gary Glasgow (Friar), Michael James Reed (Lord Capulet), Cherie Corinne Rice (Lady Capulet), Antonio Rodriguez (Benvolio), and Pete Winfrey (Paris/Prince). Newcomers include Patrick Blindauer (Apothecary); Patrice Foster (Lady Montague); Dakota Granados (Tybalt); Karl Hawkins (Balthazar); David Heron (Lord Montague); Jane Paradise (Nurse); Chris Ware (Friar John); and Terrell Wheeler (Mercutio); along with Webster Conservatory students Harrison Farmer and Esmeralda Garza.

"I think Shakespeare's voice rings loudly throughout this play, and at the end of this well-loved tragedy, he reminds us of tolerance and the power community," said Araoz, director of *Romeo & Juliet*. "We invite our audiences to come, be entertained, and maybe more importantly, to interact with a centuries-old play that continues to hold up a mirror to our modern cities."

## **Support**

Support for In the Works is provided by Mont and Karen Levy. Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' Education Tour visits to rural communities are sponsored by the Monsanto Fund. The Tour also receives generous support from the Gateway Foundation, Saigh Foundation, UMB Bank, the Dana Brown Charitable Trust, and First Bank. SHAKE 38 is sponsored by Nancy and Ken Kranzberg. "Shakespeare in the Streets: Blow, Winds" is underwritten by PNC Arts Alive with additional support from the Whitaker Foundation, the William E. Weiss Foundation, the Strive Fund, Spire, and Spencer Fane.

## **About Shakespeare Festival St. Louis**

Since its inception in 2001, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has surpassed the one million mark in attendance through its work In the Schools, In the Streets and In the Park with more than 710,000 people attending the free main stage productions at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. The organization has reached an additional 300,000 students In the Schools through its educational programming. In 2010, the Festival launched SHAKE 38, a marathon participatory presentation of Shakespeare's entire 38-play canon community wide. In 2012, the Festival shut down its first street, Cherokee, to present a community-based play In the Streets. Leadership support for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' 2018 season is provided by the Whitaker Foundation. The Festival is also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis. For more information, please visit [www.sfstl.com](http://www.sfstl.com), or call 314-531-9800.

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