



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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The Bard Goes to School – 2019-Style

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' Education Tour introduces students to themes that transcend genres, cultures and centuries

ST. LOUIS (Jan. 31, 2019) – Power, ambition, courage, and fate vs. free will – issues people have grappled with no matter the culture or century – are just a few of the themes students will learn a bit more of as part of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' award-winning Education Tour, now through April 14. The tour includes more than 100 performances and workshops conducted at 50 schools throughout the bi-state area and rural Missouri.

The 2019 tour will feature two productions in rep: a timely interpretation of “Macbeth,” adapted and directed by Joanna Battles, and “The Last Cupcake,” an original play written by Nancy Bell and directed by Michael James Reed. “The Last Cupcake,” is a folktale set in the modern world, with plenty of laughs, a little bit of math, and a gentle message about sharing resources. It is inspired by two traditional stories, “The Magic Porridge Pot” and “The Gingerbread Man.”

Interactive workshops will accompany the performances and provide students with the tools to write their own plays, explore language to unlock the stories and characters packed into Shakespeare's plays, and use key principles of character education to build on the moral dilemmas presented by some of the Bard's most infamous characters. Supplemental curriculum guides are also available online at www.sfstl.com.

“The Education Tour is a central part of the Festival's programming, not only because it introduces so many young people to the pleasures and benefits of Shakespeare and live performance, but also because of how it engages with the Greater St. Louis area both in Missouri and Illinois,” said Tom Ridgely, executive producer of the Festival. “That range is so important as the Festival looks to thicken the ties between St. Louis and

larger region that we're a part of. Shakespeare's plays, and the theater in general, are all about revealing our interdependency. The Education Tour makes that manifest."

Support for the tour comes from the Monsanto Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, which has sponsored the Education Tour's visits to rural communities since 2013.

"Learning about Shakespeare can be exciting and at the same time a bit intimidating," said Michelle Insko, Monsanto Fund program officer. "Through its annual Education Tour, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has made the works of this great classical writer accessible and relatable for students throughout the region. The Monsanto Fund is proud to support arts programs which can be enjoyed in the communities where Bayer employees live and work."

The Festival's touring productions, workshops and study materials have a 19-year legacy of success in bringing to life the Bard's characters and their words to more than 300,000 students, and in the process, have won accolades from educators throughout the region. Shakespeare Festival is one of 40 professional theater companies selected to bring the finest productions of Shakespeare to middle- and high-school students in communities across the United States through Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

The Festival's education programs also include Camp Shakespeare and the SHAKE 101 artist residency program. During the eight-week SHAKE 101 program, students receive hands-on training from professional teaching artists in performance skills, the history and language of Shakespeare, and careers in the arts. The SHAKE 101 program will be offered to four schools in 2019: Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Ferguson, St. Cecilia's School in St. Louis, and a combined program connecting students from Clayton and McCluer High Schools.

In addition to support from the Monsanto Fund, the Festival's education programs also receive generous support from the Gateway Foundation, Saigh Foundation, UMB Bank, Incarnate Word Foundation, and First Bank. Financial assistance is provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

About Shakespeare Festival St. Louis

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis presents Shakespeare and works inspired by his legacy of storytelling. Since 2001, the festival has grown from producing a single production of Shakespeare in the Park to a year-round season of new plays in exciting and accessible venues throughout the St. Louis community. The festival's artistic and education programs reached more than 50,000 patrons and students during the 2018 season and over one million since the festival's first season in 2001. Leadership support for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' 2019 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, or call 314-531-9800.

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