

THE SAN FRANCISCO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

The mission of The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is to make the words and themes of Shakespeare accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, financial status, or level of education.



"Free Shakespeare in the Park is now a tradition." Christine, parent, Cupertino

Funded entirely by donations, the Festival's flagship offering, **Free Shakespeare in the Park**, brings professional productions of Shakespeare's works to large, diverse audiences in public parks throughout the Bay Area completely free of charge. Each year, we present twenty-nine shows to nearly 30,000 people – many of whom have never before seen a live Shakespearean performance – making the Festival one of the largest free Shakespeare programs in the nation.

Because we remove common barriers to cultural participation such as price, venue, and location, we are often people's first point of contact with Shakespeare and the performing arts. *Free Shakespeare* is particularly unique in its ability to engage young audiences. As performances take place outside, they are extremely family-friendly, and the relaxed environment allows children to engage with theater at their own pace. Locations include Pleasanton's Amador Park, Cupertino's Memorial Park, Oakland's Lake Merritt, The Presidio in San Francisco, and **new in 2005, San Mateo's Central Park**.



"I always dreamed of being a star and included in all the programs." Ruby, age 11, San Jose

Midnight Shakespeare offers at-risk youth in under-served urban communities the opportunity to learn literature, communication skills, performance skills, discipline and teamwork through the study and performance of Shakespeare. This ten-week after-school program partners the Festival with education and social service organizations such as the East Bay Conservation Corps and the San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

Midnight Shakespeare provides social, communication, and character-building skills to youth while offering them a positive outlet to develop their self-expression, a sense of belonging, and community involvement. The program culminates with a performance of a Shakespeare play, with sets and props designed and built by the participants. It is currently offered in West Oakland, San Francisco's Bayview/Hunter's Point district, and the Berryessa and Evergreen neighborhoods in San Jose.



"I thought you were better than the movies! Sincerely now a fan, Monique." Oakland H.S. student

Shakespeare On Tour brings live theater to schools and community centers throughout California. Created in 1988 to offer a professional and affordable touring program for schools, *Shakespeare on Tour* presents more than 200 performances for nearly 100,000 children each year. Our touring troupe travels the state in a van emblazoned with the Festival logo, presenting a 55-minute adaptation of a Shakespeare play followed by a question-and-answer session with students.

Teachers receive a curriculum guide with several weeks of easily-integrated lesson plans to give students an understanding of the material being performed. In the face of severe funding cuts in our schools, *Shakespeare On Tour* fills a critical gap in arts education. In fact, the *Tour* provides many students with their only exposure to live drama and their first experience with Shakespeare.



"Shakespeare Camp is fun. My favorite part is the rehearsing." Danny, age 10, San Francisco

Bay Area Shakespeare Camps provide an opportunity for young people to study Shakespeare's plays in a fun, supportive atmosphere while learning the skills necessary to perform them. Each two-week summer session presents a series of structured, performance-oriented workshops under the guidance of professional directors, actors, designers, and counselors. Community centers, schools, and parks provide space for the camps, often at discounted rates or in return for need-based financial scholarships.

The culmination of each camp is a mini-performance of a Shakespeare play, designed, staged and acted by campers for an audience of family and friends. Over 700 youngsters participate annually in twenty-nine sessions throughout the Bay Area, from San Francisco to San Jose, from Pacifica to Pleasanton.