

Media Contact Only:
John Western, Marketing Director
San Francisco Shakespeare Festival
415-865-4422
jwestern@sفشakes.org



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San Francisco Shakespeare Festival announces play and director for Summer 2023, 41st season of Free Shakespeare in the Park: Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, directed by Maryssa Wanlass

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that its summer 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park production will be Shakespeare's ***Cymbeline***. The play will be directed by Festival Resident Artist **Maryssa Wanlass**.

Cymbeline, Shakespeare's epic romantic adventure, is believed to be one his final plays and is widely considered one of his greatest achievements. It features a dazzling mix of comedy, tragedy, and fairy tale that concludes with inventive scenes of revelation and joyous reconciliation. The play was selected by the company's Resident Artists, who felt that this play's sweeping story would help remind us of the power of live theater and the joy of coming together to share an epic experience.

Wanlass has performed in and taught nearly every program the Festival offers. She has appeared in numerous Free Shakespeare productions including *Much Ado About Nothing* (2022); *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (2021); *As You Like It* (2019), *Hamlet* (2017); *The Winter's Tale* (2016), and *Macbeth* (2013). They began their work at SF Shakes as Lady M in the school and community tour of *Macbeth*, and since then has been drawn to the many ways that SF Shakes engages with communities. As such she is a member of the SF Shakes Engagement team, and is currently working with [Shakespeare for All Neighbors](#), a storytelling workshop series in partnership with the Healing Well. "We believe that everyone has a story to tell that is as important as William Shakespeare's," says Wanlass. "With Shakespeare for all Neighbors, we help connect people with their creativity to experience the joy of storytelling."

Cymbeline returns to perform in Cupertino, Redwood City, and San Francisco (see dates and times below.) In this tale King Cymbeline of Britain has banished Posthumus

who has secretly married his daughter, Princess Imogen. A series of unimaginable misadventures ensue that test the strength of their commitment to each other. This will be the company's second production of *Cymbeline*, having previously staged it in 2011. Director Wanlass is interested in the fairytale quality of this story, and wants to lean in to the archetypal characters and set the play in an alternate universe fantasy realm. Casting will reflect the many communities for which SF Shakes performs, and the main love story between Imogen and Posthumus will be told with a queer lens. Expect big performances, music, delicious villains and ultimately a family-friendly coming of age story.

2023 is San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 41st season of Free Shakespeare in the Park. Since its beginning, the Festival has been bringing the words and themes of William Shakespeare to audiences throughout the Bay Area and beyond, regardless of their age, ethnicity, financial status, or level of education. The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival believes that Shakespeare experienced in a communal setting -- whether outdoors, in a classroom, in a theater, or live online -- elates the soul, inspires the mind, and unifies those who sit beside each other

41st Season Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Cymbeline*

Cupertino, Memorial Park Amphitheater, Stevens Creek Blvd and Mary Ave

- Saturday, July 22 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, July 23 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Friday, July 28 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Saturday, July 29 at 6:00 pm (Opening)
- Sunday, July 30 at 6:00 pm
- Friday, August 4 at 6:00 pm
- Saturday, August 5 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 6 at 6:00 pm

Redwood City, Red Morton Park, Vera Ave and Valdota Rd

- Saturday, August 12 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, August 13 at 6:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, August 19 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 20 at 6:00 pm
- Saturday, August 26 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 27 at 6:00 pm

San Francisco, McLaren Park, Jerry Garcia Amphitheater

- Saturday, September 2 at 2:00 pm (Preview)

- Sunday, September 3 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Monday (Labor Day), September 4 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, September 9 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 10 at 2:00 pm

Admission is free. For more information call the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival at 415-558-0888 or visit www.sfshakes.org

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Note to Editor: To schedule an interview with artists or staff please email sfshakes@sfsakes.org or call 415-558-0888.



Maryssa Wanlass* director San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2023 production of *Cymbeline*

*Member Actors' Equity Association
Photo: courtesy of director

[\(click to download image\)](#)



Maryssa Wanlass* (director of 2023 Free Shakespeare in the Park's *Cymbeline*) as Don Pedro in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2022 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Much Ado About Nothing*

*Member Actors' Equity Association
Photo: Jay Yamada

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