

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 17, 2023

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival announces Show Titles, Directors and Assistant Directors for 2024 season

*Shakespeare on Tour brings an hour-long production of **As You Like It** to CA schools
Free Shakespeare in the Park brings **The Tempest** to Bay Area parks*

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival announces Shakespeare's ***As You Like It*** will perform in schools and libraries this Feb thru May, and Shakespeare's ***The Tempest*** will perform outdoors this summer for Free Shakespeare in the Park.

Following a fully booked 2023 season, [Shakespeare on Tour](#) will be back on the road with a production of Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*, directed by SF Shakes Resident Artist Sydney Schwindt. Katja Rivera will be the assistant director. A 5-actor troupe will travel with set, costumes, and props throughout the state bringing the magic of live theater and the beauty of Shakespeare language to students of all grade levels, elementary through college. In addition to being a welcome curriculum enrichment at schools, public shows will also be scheduled at libraries and community centers where all are welcome to attend, at no charge.

People of all ages will find the classic comedy ***As You Like It*** engaging as well as enriching. Join Rosalind, Orlando, Celia, and Touchstone as they escape to the forest of Arden in Shakespeare's antic comedy focusing on love, loss and redemption. With a hilarious love triangle, mistaken identities and an exciting wrestling match, this production is sure to delight. Featuring one of Shakespeare's strongest heroines, thought-provoking family dynamics and the famous "All the world's a stage..." speech, *As You Like It* is a perfect way to introduce students to Shakespeare's works, as well as further the exploration with those already familiar.

[Free Shakespeare in the Park](#) will present ***The Tempest*** for summer of 2024. This compelling play will be directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka. Rotimi looks to highlight the

themes of forgiveness and recovering from loss. All are invited to attend at no charge. Shows will take place July through September in public parks throughout the Bay Area, including San Francisco's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park. Dates, times, and additional location details will be announced soon. Cast members, creative team, and other exciting announcements are also tba.

Thought to be Shakespeare's last solo written play, *The Tempest* tells the tale of a father (Prospero) and daughter (Miranda) set adrift to sea by the jealous machinations of Prospero's brother. On an island inhabited with magical creatures, Prospero uses magic to rule the land, until a tempest washes ashore Prospero's brother and co-conspirators. Complete with clownish shipwrecked sailors, *The Tempest* explores themes of revenge and forgiveness and asks the audience to find the humanity in all the characters they meet.

This season's selection process was helmed by new Artistic Director Carla Pantoja. Carla worked in concert with the Festival's Director Selection Committee, composed of Resident Artists and staff members. As a way to broaden the selection process and to center the artist, a general invitation went public for directors to propose a play they would like to direct with SF Shakes. Carla says "So many incredible directors and proposals came through, I'm excited for this next level of collaboration with directors and season selection".



Sydney Schwindt - Director

Shakespeare on Tour's *As You Like It*

Sydney is an actor, fight director, and teaching artist. She has acted, fight directed, and directed in a variety of productions and programs with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival where she is a Resident Artist. Sydney served as the instructor of stage combat at the American Conservatory Theatre's graduate program until it closed in 2022 and has taught at Indiana University, University of the Pacific, Independent Drama UK, and others.

Fight directing credits include American

Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, and others. Sydney earned her BFA in Acting from The Hartt School and has trained with the San Francisco Clown Conservatory, Academia dell'Arte (Arezzo, Italy), the Society of American Fight Directors, British Academy of Stage and Screen Combat, and Stage Combat Deutschland. More at Sydney-schwindt.com

[\(Click for large image\)](#)



Katja Rivera - Assistant Director
Shakespeare on Tour's *As You Like It*

Katja is a Theater Artist, Bodyworker and Abuela. She is originally from Los Angeles, and studied theater at LACC Theatre Academy and Drama Studio London at Berkeley. Bay Area acting credits include: Shotgun Players, Magic Theatre, Theatre Rhinoceros, Center Rep. Directing credits include Shotgun Players, Theatre Cultura, Douglas Morrison, CustomMade, RPE (Danville), SF Playground and TheatreFIRST. She is a long-time company member of Shotgun Players, an associate producer with PlayGround-SF

and a member of Latinx Mafia. Recent directing credits include: *Yerma* (Shotgun Players) *La Vida Loca* (Theatre Cultura) *References To Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (Custom Made Theatre).

[\(Click for large image\)](#)



Shakespeare on Tour's 2023 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Millbrae Library

Photo: Neal Ormond)

[\(Click for large image\)](#)



Rotimi Agbabiaka - Director

Free Shakespeare in the Park's *The Tempest*

Rotimi is thrilled to be conjuring this *Tempest*.

Directing credits include the world premieres of *The*

Red Shades: A Trans Superhero Rock Opera (Z

Space) and *VS.* (TheatreFIRST), *Seeing Red: The*

Radio Play (San Francisco Mime Troupe), Ben

Okri's *The Secret Source* (Word for Word), and Wole

Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* (Cutting Ball). As

an actor, Rotimi most recently played Oberon and

Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Folger

Theatre, Washington D.C.) and originated the roles

of William Craft in *The N****r Lovers* (Magic Theatre), James Baldwin in *In the Evening*

By The Moonlight (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre), and Cellphone/Narrator in *If Pretty*

Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka (Playwrights Horizons, Off-Broadway). Rotimi penned

the solo shows *Type/Caste* (TBA award), and *MANIFESTO*; co-wrote the musical,

Seeing Red; dazzles nightlife stages (as alter-ego Miss Cleo Patois); and teaches

acting and solo performance at Stanford University. Rotimi is eternally grateful to Dr.

James Loehlin and Dr. James "Doc" Ayres of [Shakespeare at Winedale](#) for teaching him

to love the Bard. [\(Click for large image\)](#)



Ely Sonny Orquiza - Assistant Director

Free Shakespeare in the Park's *The Tempest*

Ely, a 2023 YBCA 100 Honoree, is a multidisciplinary

Queer Filipino artistic director, stage director, and

arts educator native to San Francisco Bay Area, the

unceded territory of the Ramaytush Ohlone People.

Through theater and the performing arts Orquiza

illuminates the experiences of the Asian diaspora,

explores the politics of Queer/ness, and amplifies

the voices and narratives of People from the Global

Majority. As an artist, Orquiza draws on his heritage

and lived experiences to create stunning theatrical

productions that captivate audiences and spark meaningful conversations about equity

and representation. Through his art and advocacy, he is breaking down barriers and

elevating marginalized voices for the American Theatre. For extended bio:

elysonnyorquiza.org

[\(Click for large image\)](#)



Free Shakespeare in the Park's 2023 production of *Cymbeline* at San Francisco's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater
Photo: Neal Ormond)
[\(Click for large image\)](#)

###

Note to Editor: To schedule an interview with the artists and educators of SF Shakes, please email sfshakes@sفشakes.org or call 415-865-4422.

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.