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SAN FRANCISCO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2025 BOARD OFFICERS

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is pleased to announce that Aaron Kabaker succeeds Cynthia Francis as chair of its board of directors; happily, Cynthia remains a member of the board. Board member Gorkem 'Kem' Ozbek will succeed Aaron Kabaker as co-vice chair, joining Roshni Jain to share the vice-chair-ship. Raymond Kutz remains the board's Chief Financial Officer and Michael Li-Ming Wong remains its secretary.

Aaron works in Operations Strategy for YouTube and has a BA in Public Policy from Stanford and an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management. As a member of Stanford's Shakespeare theater troupe, Aaron realized how much he enjoyed the Bard when his plays were taught as performance and not simply as literature. He was drawn to SF Shakes for that reason as well: because of its commitment to bringing Shakespeare and the arts to children across the Bay Area through a blend of performance and study. "I am dedicated to working with the board and SF Shakes's professional staff to meet the moment for arts and cultural organizations here in the Bay Area," says Aaron. "We must keep the arts accessible through our vital arts education programs and the beloved summer tradition of Free Shakespeare in the Park."

Gorkem works in Engineering at Asana, and has a BS and MS from Stanford. Although his introduction to the Bard was through the footnotes of Arden Shakespeare, Co-vice chair Kem Ozbek was lucky enough to work with teachers and artists who have shown him that Shakespeare demands to be seen and heard on the stage. He has enjoyed opportunities in acting, directing, and theater research that have taught him the transformative power of Shakespeare's verse. He believes that having free access to Shakespeare in performance can illuminate its true understanding for youth across the Bay's underserved communities, and empower them with emotional and intellectual range required to develop empathy, so desperately needed in a society where interactions are increasingly impersonal and biased.

For a full list of the current board of directors, click [here](#).

To learn more about and express interest in board membership with SF Shakes, click [here](#).



(L to R) Michael Li-Ming Wong, Board Secretary honors outgoing board chair Cynthia Francis; Cynthia remains a member of the board of directors.

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(L to R) Aaron Kabaker, Board Chair; Roshni Jain, Co-Vice Chair; Gorkem 'Kem' Ozbek, Co-Vice Chair; outgoing chair Cynthia Francis; Ray Kutz, Chief Financial Officer; Michael Li-Ming Wong, Board Secretary

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Note to Editor:

To interview artists, board or staff, please email sfshakes@sfshakes.org or call 415-558-0888.

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. We accomplish this through our arts and education programs [Free Shakespeare in the Park](#), [Shakespeare's Heartbeat](#), [Shakespeare for All Neighbors](#), [Shakespeare On Tour](#), and [Bay Area Shakespeare Camps](#).