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Free Shakespeare in the Park's *The Tempest* to perform in San Francisco's Sue Bierman Park Sept 14 through 22

***The performances are the latest addition to a growing menu of free arts
activations and events enlivening Downtown***

SAN FRANCISCO - San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, in partnership with the San Francisco Recreation & Park Department, announces the 2024 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Tempest* will perform for the first time at Sue Bierman Park, located at Drumm and Washington streets, just north of Embarcadero Plaza across from the Ferry Building.

Performances will take place Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m. on September 14, 15, 21 and 22. The show runs approximately 100 minutes without intermission.

The free production is the latest in a diverse array of weekend and evening events bringing new energy and excitement to the Embarcadero under Mayor Breed's [Roadmap](#) to San Francisco's Future. Recent events include the [Bricks](#) at Embarcadero Plaza, a 12-week pilot launched on August 7 presenting weekly evening and lunchtime events including trivia nights, tango lessons, happy hours, and family programming. The launch comes on the heels of the Dirtybird: Back to Baysics concert on July 21 presented by Another Planet Entertainment that drew more than 5,000 people to Embarcadero Plaza.

"The Embarcadero is the gateway to Downtown San Francisco and our beautiful Bay is the best backdrop for all these events that are bringing thousands of people here and transforming our City into a 24/7 destination that is fun year round," **said Mayor London N. Breed.** "We want to thank the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and Recreation & Park Department for providing the public with this great summertime experience as we continue to innovate and invest in

events and activations that are transforming this neighborhood and communities across the City.”

The performances at Sue Bierman Park are in addition to those scheduled for Aug. 31 – Sept. 8 at the Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park. Free Shakespeare in the Park has been performing across San Francisco’s open spaces for 42 years.

“This new offering of Free Shakespeare in Sue Bierman Park demonstrates that the performing arts are critical to Downtown’s revitalization,” said San Francisco Shakespeare Festival Executive Director Toby Leavitt. “There is untapped potential for the arts to uniquely activate these unsung spaces—both now and in the future. We did it ten years ago in McLaren Park with great success and we are excited to do it again in Sue Bierman Park.”

Leavitt initiated conversations about bringing Free Shakespeare in the Park to Sue Bierman Park last November, when the City issued a call to the arts community to enliven Downtown. She started conversations with the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, with whom the company has a decades-long relationship.

“Free Shakespeare in the Park has been an amazing partner over the years, performing at some of our most iconic parks. I’m elated to see this magical performance come alive in Downtown,” said SF Rec and Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg. “Carefully thought-out public events emphasizing art and culture are just what our Downtown needs to ensure that it remains a vibrant and exciting place to be.”

The production is directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka and has been [acclaimed](#) for its joyfulness. Actor Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe plays the role of [Prospero](#). 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 is the Festival’s fourth presentation of *The Tempest*, having staged it in 1983 (the debut of San Francisco Shakespeare Festival), directed by Margrit Roma; 1991, directed by Albert Takazauckas; and 2006, directed by Kenneth Kelleher. Throughout its history Free Shakespeare in the Park has performed in a number of sites in San Francisco (as well as other Bay Area communities) including locations in Golden Gate Park and the Presidio. Performances in Jerry Garcia Amphitheater began in 2013 and the location quickly became an audience favorite due to the provided bench seating, dramatic focus of the amphitheater, and the sylvan setting of the stage.

Free Shakespeare in the Park attracts a wide range of audience members from all sectors of

San Francisco's diverse population and its many visitors. Executive Director Toby Leavitt comments that "Bringing the magic of live professional theater and the beauty of Shakespeare's language to life in a communal park setting is what the Festival is all about. We strive to eliminate barriers to participation in the cultural arts as much as we possibly can. Free Shakespeare in the Park is truly a 'come as you are' event!"

Audiences wishing to attend performances of *The Tempest* at Sue Bierman Park can easily take BART to reach the production. Sponsor BXP will also make discounted \$10 flat rate parking available to attendees, with parking validations for any of the four Embarcadero parking decks (1EC, 2EC, 3EC, or 4EC)

San Francisco's McLaren Park, Jerry Garcia Amphitheater

- Saturday, August 31 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, September 1 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Monday (Labor Day), September 2 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, September 7 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 8 at 2:00 pm

San Francisco's Sue Bierman Park

- Saturday, September 14 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, September 15 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, September 21 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 22 at 2:00 pm

(Performances also took place in Cupertino and Redwood City earlier this summer.)

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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To schedule an interview with artists or staff sfshakes@sfshakes.org or 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.



Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe* as Prospero in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Tempest*
([Click to download image](#))

Photo: Jay Yamada



(L to R): Alex Camerino as Miranda, Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe* as Prospero, and Nicolas Moore as Ferdinand in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Tempest* ([Click to download image](#))

Photo: Jay Yamada



Free Shakespeare in the Park at McLaren Park's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater ([Click to download image](#))

Photo: John Western