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Free Shakespeare in the Park Returns to San Francisco's McLaren Park with Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, August 30-Sept 7

Performances continue at SF's Sue Bierman Park Sept 13-21

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is thrilled to announce its 43rd season of **Free Shakespeare in the Park**, featuring William Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. This lively, fast-paced romantic comedy will be presented at **two San Francisco locations** this year:

- Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park

Saturdays, Sundays, & Labor Day Monday at 2:00 PM
August 30 – September 7, 2025

- Sue Bierman Park at Washington & Drumm Streets

Saturdays & Sundays at 2:00 PM
September 13 – September 21, 2025

Each performance runs approximately 90 minutes with **no intermission**. Admission is **completely free**, with **no tickets or reservations required**.

This spirited play follows two young men as they journey from a small Midwestern town – rooted in simplicity and tradition – to the alluring promise of California, where dreams are made and shattered in equal measure. The two friends who venture westward confront their inner conflicts as they are seduced by the possibilities of love, success and reinvention. Grounded in the spirit of exploration, this adaptation captures the quintessential drive for self-invention, while acknowledging the costs that often accompany it. It's a fast-paced journey of mistaken identities and misguided romance, and sharp humor that explores the joys and pitfalls of personal transformation and what it truly means to love and be loved.

Directed by Ely Sonny Orquiza, the production brings his bold vision to the stage and reflects his unwavering commitment to equity and representation in storytelling and seeks to bridge the divide and differences amongst us. Through his art and advocacy, Orquiza is breaking down barriers and elevating marginalized voices for the American Theatre. **Assistant Director Katja**

Rivera adds, "This classic romcom blends humor with social insights, and I'm excited to collaborate with Ely and our talented cast to bring this timeless story to life."

This marks the Festival's second staging of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* for *Free Shakespeare in the Park*, following its 2010 production, directed by Kenneth Kelleher. It was also a beloved part of the Festival's *Shakespeare on Tour* program, which performed at schools, libraries, and community centers across California in 1997 and from 2005 to 2006.

Free Shakespeare in the Park, a cornerstone of the Festival's outreach, was established over 40 years ago, and has become a cherished summer tradition, offering family-friendly performances in public spaces. Throughout the Festival's history, San Francisco performances have been staged in Golden Gate Park and the Presidio. Performances at Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in **McLaren Park** debuted in 2013 and quickly became a favored venue offering bench seating as well as the option to roll out a blanket and picnic on the hillside.

Sue Bierman Park, located at Washington and Drumm Street, first became part of the Festival's venue lineup last summer in 2024, infusing the Embarcadero with fresh energy and cultural vibrancy through a collaboration with San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. "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."

2025 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

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

- Saturday, August 9 at 6:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, August 10 at 6:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, August 16 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 17 at 6:00 pm
- Saturday, August 23 at 6:00 pm
- Sunday, August 24 at 6:00 pm

San Francisco, McLaren Park, Jerry Garcia Amphitheater, off of John F. Shelley Dr. between Cambridge St and Mansell St

- Saturday, August 30 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, August 31 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Monday (Labor Day), September 1 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, September 6 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 7 at 2:00 pm

**San Francisco, Sue Bierman Park, Washington and Drumm St;
just north of Embarcadero Plaza, across from the Ferry Building**

- Saturday, September 13 at 2:00 pm (Preview)
- Sunday, September 14 at 2:00 pm (Opening)
- Saturday, September 20 at 2:00 pm
- Sunday, September 21 at 2:00 pm

(Performances also took place in Cupertino, July 19-August 3.)

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@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.



(L to R) Tyler Aguillo as Valentine and Brennan Pickman-Thoon* as Proteus in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2025 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

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*Member Actors' Equity Association / Photo: Neal Ormond



(L to R) Brennan Pickman-Thoon* as Proteus and Chanel Tilghman* as Julia in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2025 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

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*Member Actors' Equity Association / Photo: Jay Yamada



Joel Ochoa as Lance in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2025 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

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Photo: Jay Yamada



(L to R) Anthony Doan* as Lucetta and Joel Ochoa as Lance in San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 2025 production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

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*Member Actors' Equity Association / Photo: Jay Yamada



Free Shakespeare in the Park at McLaren Park's Jerry Garcia Amphitheater

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Photo: John Western



Free Shakespeare in the Park signature artwork

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