



For Immediate Release  
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## **CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER TO RECEIVE 2009-2010 SHAKESPEARE FOR A NEW GENERATION GRANT**

### ***Department of Justice partnership supports Shakespeare projects for at-risk youth***

Berkeley, CA, April 23, 2009—California Shakespeare Theater today announced that it is one of 37 theater companies receiving a grant of \$25,000 to participate in Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national initiative sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest, from June 1, 2009-May 31, 2010. California Shakespeare Theater will also receive additional funding of \$15,000 as one of six organizations participating through a newly-established partnership between the NEA and the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Part of the NEA's Shakespeare in American Communities initiative, Shakespeare for a New Generation targets middle and high school students, introducing young people to the power of live theater and the masterpieces of William Shakespeare. Managed by Arts Midwest, the program already has benefited more than one million students and their teachers with live performances and educational activities.

"We are extremely grateful to the National Endowment of the Arts for recognizing the depth and quality of our programs by selecting us for the highly competitive Shakespeare for a New Generation program for the fourth consecutive year, and for including us in the inaugural partnership with the Department of Justice," commented Cal Shakes Managing Director Susie Falk. "Cal Shakes is committed to broadening access to Shakespeare and the classics. This funding allows us to serve youth populations where the need is chronic and our impact can be substantial - in under-resourced schools and in the juvenile justice system."

California Shakespeare Theater will present 5 Student Discovery performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Aaron Posner, with accompanying educational activities, to at least 1,175 middle and high school students from 21 or more underserved schools throughout the Bay Area and the rural areas of the northern Central Valley of California. These students represent an increase of 24% over the Theater's fall 2008 program, comprising 40% of all middle and high school students attending in 2009. In addition to attending the performance, students will encounter a wide array of activities designed to deepen their experience of the work: Pre- and post-performance workshops; an enhanced on-site theater experience consisting of opportunities to compete against their peers in the "32 second Shakespeare" version of *Midsummer*, a lively pre-show warm-up with a Teaching Artist to discuss the play's themes, plot, and historical context; and a moderated Q&A with the



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actors following the performance. The grant will also fund 35 extended in-classroom residencies serving 875 middle/high school students, including 425 in low-income schools; and advanced teacher training to incorporate easy-to-replicate arts methodology into standard lesson planning.

The additional grant, which is supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, will allow Cal Shakes to expand the reach of its Shakespeare for a New Generation program activities to youth involved with the juvenile justice system. Cal Shakes' program builds on its long-term relationship with Alameda County Library's Write to Read (W2R) program, a program which offers a variety of programs for incarcerated youth in Juvenile Hall, including artist visits and book talks to illuminate literature and history, and to inspire literacy. The NEA grant will expand and deepen the scope of Cal Shakes' relationship with W2R to lead on-going Shakespeare-based workshops in performance and writing for up to 50 participants in the fall of 2009, and up to 75 participants in the spring of 2010. It will develop and lead two extended residencies for 32 youth serving longer sentences, structured around the development of a final performance piece featured on Cal Shakes Main Stage at the Bruns Amphitheater. In addition, the youth and chaperones of Juvenile Hall's Camp Sweeney will attend select performances of *Midsummer*, and participate in pre-show workshops exploring the play's plot, themes, and language.

"I am very pleased to be working in partnership with our colleagues at the Department of Justice to reach out to young people with this truly transformative theater project," said NEA Acting Chairman Patrice Walker Powell. "Shakespeare for a New Generation not only enriches the educational experience by bringing live theater performances to new and young audiences—some of whom may grow up to have a career in theater—but it also provides employment for today's theater artists."

Including the newly selected companies, more than 80 of the nation's theater companies have taken part in the NEA's Shakespeare program since its inception. By June 2009, participating theater companies will have presented performances at 3,600 schools in 2,300 communities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Please visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov) for a complete list of the 2009-2010 Shakespeare for a New Generation grantees.

Photos are available upon request.

#### ABOUT CAL SHAKES

Founded in 1974, California Shakespeare Theater is a fully professional, critically acclaimed theater known for its innovative productions of the plays of William Shakespeare and other reimagined classics. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Jonathan Moscone and Managing Director Susie Falk, Cal Shakes is committed to being a leading community citizen by nourishing the imaginations of audiences, artists, and learners of all ages. Cal Shakes makes boldly imagined and deeply entertaining interpretations of Shakespeare and the classics; provides in-depth, far-reaching artistic learning programs for learners of all ages and circumstances; and brings disparate communities together around the creation of new American plays that reflect the cultural diversity of the Bay Area.

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