

# canadianstage

## Canadian Stage's Shakespeare in High Park celebrates 36 years of outdoor theatre in Toronto

Beloved Shakespeare pairing of *Romeo and Juliet* + *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to kick off 18.19 season from June 28 - September 2 at the High Park Amphitheatre

**June 5, 2018 - Toronto, ON** – Canadian Stage is proud to announce that **Shakespeare in High Park** will mark 36 seasons of staging open-air theatre in Toronto with adventurous contemporary adaptations of two of Shakespeare's most beloved plays: the tragic romance ***Romeo and Juliet*** and the frolicking comedy ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, running in repertory under the stars from June 28 to September 2 at the High Park Amphitheatre. A pay-what-you-can event, **Shakespeare in High Park** is Canada's longest-running outdoor theatre experience, and produced by Canadian Stage in collaboration with the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design at York University.

*"I love this time of year. My son and I are excited to get our blankets and picnic baskets ready to spend many a night dreaming under the stars with families from across the GTA at the 36th season of Shakespeare in High Park. Perhaps no two works better characterize the truly popular embrace of William Shakespeare's comic and tragic playmaking than this year's double offering of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*,"* said Canadian Stage Interim Managing Director and Executive Producer, **Sherrie Johnson**. *"We're pleased to see the return of **Frank Cox-O'Connell** and **Tanja Jacobs** leading an exceptional acting ensemble and creative team."*

Both plays speak to a profound and age-old dichotomy that continues to challenge us today: the deliciously anarchic power of love as it struggles for release from the conservative or even archaic structures of society. ***Romeo and Juliet***'s two protagonists try to break free from the prison of a seemingly eternal family conflict between the Capulets and the Montagues. In this new production, director **Frank Cox-O'Connell**, who played the title role in *Hamlet* in High Park in 2016 and George Tesman in *Hedda Gabler* by Necessary Angel Theatre Company in the Canadian Stage 2015-2016 season, sets the tragedy in contemporary urban society and style with roots in English and Italian soccer's hooligan culture, with its arbitrary loyalties, and violent expression; a culture poisoned by masculinity, with real consequences. When Juliet meets Romeo by chance, a new light shines on this backdrop: they fall in love, a true romantic love that slices through the cultural constructs and the bad teachings; the young lovers reject the world they've been asked to inherit.

The power of self-determination in the face of social conformity is also explored through Hermia and Lysander, the two young lovers whose attempted elopement sets off the chain of comic (if

love-filled) mishaps that make up the dream on that fateful midsummer's night. ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, Shakespeare's enchanting comedy of mistaken identity and romantic misadventure, returns to the High Park Amphitheatre in a stylish Fellini-inspired production set in a Roman amusement park in the early 1950s. Director **Tanja Jacobs** comes back to High Park after helming the crowd-pleaser *Twelfth Night* last season and *Love and Information* as part of the Canadian Stage 2017-2018 season.

The dynamic 12-person repertory cast – which includes seasoned High Park alumni and fresh faces - is comprised of: **Gordon Bolan, Jason Cadieux, Rachel Cairns, Frank Chung, Jakob Ehman, Peter Fernandes, David Patrick Flemming, Mac Fyfe, Navtej Sandhu, Naomi Wright, Amaka Umeh, Jenny Young.**

Canadian Stage continues its unique collaboration with the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design to integrate York student and alumni talent into the Shakespeare in High Park team.

*“As the popularity of our summer repertory season continues to rise year after year, we strive to find more ways to engage our growing audiences, while preserving that special something that makes Shakespeare in High Park such a magical and inclusive experience for adults and youth alike,”* added **Johnson.**

Additional SiHP+ pre-show activities include **Backstage Tours, Youth Days, Youth Nights,** and **Family Storytelling Day.**

**SiHP Backstage Tours** - Explore the history and the magic behind our annual outdoor Shakespeare in High Park productions. These intimate tours engage curiosity and allow audiences to peek at the mechanics that make these productions shine. **July 17, 18, 24, 25, 31; August 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29 @ 6:30pm**

**Youth Days in High Park** - Using our *Territorial Tales: Land Acknowledged* youth engagement program (created by youth for youth) as a catalyst, participants will have the opportunity to engage in narratives of displacement, home and the recapturing of spirit when removed from the familiar. They will bear witness to stories that span the globe, and then have the opportunity to create their own theatrical responses. **August 13, 20, 27 @ 10am-2pm**

**Youth Nights in High Park** - These special evenings, crafted to offer youth the opportunity to get up close and personal with the artistic process, allow participants to enjoy an in-depth pre-show experience that includes a workshop with a member of the creative team of *Romeo and Juliet*, a backstage tour, dinner, and front row seats to the evening's performance. **August 14, 21, 28**

**Family Story-Telling Day** - We are all made of stories and want to share in the bounty of narratives that our communities hold. Join us for an interactive day of poetry, spoken word, dance, and music that will be fun for the whole family. **August 19 @ 10am-3pm**

**Community Partnership with Shakespeare in Action** - Shakespeare in Action is joining us in High Park again this summer to award youth the possibility to create and perform in the great outdoors. For more information on this incredible company: [shakespeareinaction.org](http://shakespeareinaction.org)

A beloved seasonal event, Canadian Stage's *Shakespeare in High Park* is Canada's largest and longest-running professional outdoor theatre experience, attracting over 30,000 people each year. Founded as Dream in High Park in 1983, the series evolved into *Shakespeare in High Park* in 2013, presenting two alternating productions throughout the summer – one comedy, one tragedy – in innovative takes on Bard classics.

### **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

***Romeo and Juliet*** runs from June 28 to September 1 with performances on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 pm. Opening night will be July 12 with previews June 28, 30, July 3, 5, 7, and 10.

***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** runs from June 29 to September 2 with performances on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 8 pm. Opening night will be July 13 with previews June 29, July 1, 4, 6, 8, and 11. Both performances run at the High Park Amphitheatre (1873 Bloor St. W). Gates open at 6 pm.

### **TICKETS**

Each performance is pay-what-you can (suggested \$20 contribution) and premium cushion seats can be reserved by donation in advance for \$25, online at [canadianstage.com](http://canadianstage.com) or by calling the Canadian Stage box office at 416.368.3110.

*Shakespeare in High Park* is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport through the Celebrate Ontario program. *Territorial Tales: Land Acknowledged* has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada, and extraordinary leaders from coast to coast.

**Facebook: @cdnstage @sihpTO | Twitter @canadianstage | Instagram: @canadianstage #SiHP, #csRJ, #csDream**

**Website:** [canadianstage.com/online/shakespeare](http://canadianstage.com/online/shakespeare)

### **Photography:**

Promo Image ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com))

Headshots ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com))

General High Park Photos ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com))

For more information or interview requests, please contact: Jennifer Otter, Associate Director of Marketing, Canadian Stage, 416. 367.8243 x 223 [jotter@canadianstage.com](mailto:jotter@canadianstage.com)

### **SHAKESPEARE IN HIGH PARK: ROMEO AND JULIET + A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**

A Canadian Stage production in collaboration with the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design at York University

## CAST

Gordon Bolan	Capulet/Egeus
Jason Cadieux	Friar Lawrence/Oberon, Bottom
Rachel Cairns	Juliet/Helena
Frank Chung	Paris/Starveling
Jakob Ehman	Tybalt/Demetrius
Peter Fernandes	Benvolio/Puck
David Patrick Flemming	Romeo/Lysander
Mac Fyfe	Mercutio/Theseus, Flute
Navtej Sandhu	Escalus/Snug, Mote
Naomi Wright	Lady Capulet/Titania, Hippolyta
Amaka Umeh	Samson/Hermia
Jenny Young	Nurse/Penny Quince

## CREATIVE TEAM

Director (R&J)	Frank Cox-O'Connell
Assistant Director (R&J)	Carly Chamberlain
Director (Dream)	Tanja Jacobs
Set and Lighting Designer	Ken MacKenzie
Sound Designer	James Bunton
Fight Director	Simon Fon
Costume Designer (R&J)	Shannon Lea Doyle
Composer (R&J)	Andrew Penner
Costume Designer (Dream)	Victoria Wallace
Production Stage Manager	Kristin McCollum
Stage Manager	Krista MacIsaac
Assistant Stage Manager	Sandi Becker
Apprentice Stage Manager	Andreane Christiansen

### **Canadian Stage x York University: Unique collaborative artist mentorship**

Launched in 2011 as a bridge between emerging and established theatre artists, the landmark collaboration between Canadian Stage and York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design (AMPD) supports the development of next-generation talent. The capstone in this multi-faceted partnership is the York University MFA in Stage Direction – in collaboration with Canadian Stage, a two-year graduate program offering highly specialized, advanced training in large-scale theatre directing that integrates studio work in York's academic setting with creative projects at Canadian Stage. Alongside the MFA, Canadian Stage offers diverse professional development opportunities for York undergraduate and graduate theatre students to share their talents on stage, backstage and on the creative teams for Shakespeare in High Park.

### **About Canadian Stage**

Canadian Stage is one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts organizations. The company produces, presents, commissions, and collaborates with multiple partners on cross-disciplinary work with a focus on performance styles that integrate theatre, dance, film, visual arts and more. Sharing innovative and vibrant performance work from Canada

and around the world, we stage an annual season at three Toronto venues (The Bluma Appel Theatre at Civic Theatres Toronto; The Berkeley Street Theatre; and the High Park Amphitheatre), in addition to running a series of artist training through our MFA in Theatre Stage Direction in collaboration with York University, RBC Emerging Artist Program, and TD Accessible Ticket Program, Canadian Stage has established a distinct place within the national cultural landscape. Operating in the culturally vibrant downtown east end of Toronto, Canadian Stage is a home for new, challenging dynamic art forms, as well as an incubator and exporter of leading edge contemporary and multidisciplinary activity. Our vision is to be a catalyst to shape, revitalize, and animate the physical and social character of our ever-changing neighbourhood around arts and cultural activities.

For more information, visit [canadianstage.com](http://canadianstage.com).