



Contact:
 Colleen McLaughlin
 Arts Midwest
 2908 Hennepin Ave, Suite 200
 Minneapolis, MN 55408
 612.238.8052 | colleen@artsmidwest.org

For Immediate Release

May 31, 2018

**Arts Midwest Announces 2018-2019
 Shakespeare in American Communities Grants**
*16th Year to Feature Female Directors, Underserved Audiences,
 and Innovative Youth Programming.*

Minneapolis, MN – Arts Midwest today announced the recipients of \$1 million in Shakespeare in American Communities grants to 40 nonprofit, professional theater companies from 27 states and the District of Columbia. Participating theater companies will present plays by William Shakespeare to student audiences along with educational activities including in-school residencies, workshops, and post-performance discussions. Performances will take place between August 1, 2018, and July 31, 2019.

The awards mark the sixteenth consecutive year of Shakespeare in American Communities, a national program managed by Arts Midwest in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. Since the program’s inception in 2003, Shakespeare in American Communities has introduced 2.9 million middle and high school students to the power of live theater and the masterpieces of William Shakespeare through performances and educational activities.

“Arts Midwest is thrilled to continue our long partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts connecting youths with the transformational power of Shakespeare through shared live performance and educational experiences created by America’s finest theater companies,” said Adam Perry, Arts Midwest’s vice president for strategy and programs. “Discovering Shakespeare’s cannon inspires students from all backgrounds across America’s cultural landscape to dream, love, explore and create new futures in epic Shakespearean style. The Shakespeare in American Communities grant awards bridge the past to the present where leaders of the next generation are discovering that tomorrow is indeed, promised to all.”

One hundred and eleven theater companies across the United States have taken part in Shakespeare in American Communities since 2003. These companies have presented 33 Shakespeare plays through 11,300 performances and 41,500 educational activities at more than 10,000 schools in 4,300 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Each year, thousands of students have an opportunity to experience Shakespeare performances and educational activities through Shakespeare in American Communities,” said National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu. “The National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Midwest are committed to expanding access to the arts to audiences across the country.”

The types of activities that will be conducted by theater companies funded by Shakespeare in American Communities include the following:

A Noise Within (Pasadena, CA) will perform *Othello* for 2,600 school-age students, the majority of whom come from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds. Directed by Jessica Kubzansky and featuring a diverse cast, *Othello* will offer fresh perspectives that challenge students to explore themes of social justice and telling the truth in an era where ‘post-truth’ is Oxford Dictionary’s word of the year. *Othello* will be part of A Noise Within’s Classics Live!, a suite of programs for students, teachers, and schools, led by Education Director Alicia Green, that includes performances, activities, workshops, and in-school artist residencies.

Cincinnati Shakespeare Company (Cincinnati, OH) will perform *Macbeth* for 1,500 high school students. *Macbeth* will be directed by Associate Artistic Director Miranda McGee as part of CSC’s 25th anniversary season and will explore how fear and war change people. In-school workshops, led by a team of teaching artists who receive special training from Shakespeare’s Globe in London, teach students to write new scenes between *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* that are then performed by the company’s ensemble of professional actors. *Macbeth* will be a part of PROJECT38, CSC’s innovative initiative to work with 38 schools to create student new interpretations of all 38 of Shakespeare’s plays in one year.

Tennessee Shakespeare Company (Memphis, TN) will perform a fast-paced, accessible production of *Romeo and Juliet* for 6,300 students, directed by Education Director Stephanie Shine and performed by a multi-ethnic ensemble of teaching actors. The company partners with the Shelby County Public School system to provide all 9th grade students in the county, the majority of who attend Title I-designated schools, to present the *Romeo and Juliet* Project, a comprehensive anti-violence residency. Over the course of four school visits, teaching actors from the production will transform classrooms into miniature theaters, getting students on their feet to breathe, speak, and feel the characters in the play while rehearsing life-saving techniques for navigating peer pressure, armed violence, and community healing.

Selected companies

The following 40 theater companies have been selected to participate in the program for 2018-2019. The list of companies can be found at <http://www.artsmidwest.org/programs/shakespeare/upcoming>.

- A Noise Within, Pasadena, CA
- The Acting Company, New York, NY
- Actors’ Shakespeare Project, Somerville, MA
- Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Montgomery, AL
- Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, GA
- American Players Theatre, Spring Green, WI
- American Shakespeare Center, Staunton, VA
- Aquila Theatre Company, Katonah, NY
- Barter Theatre, Abingdon, VA
- California Shakespeare Theater, Berkeley, CA
- Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Baltimore, MD
- Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Chicago, IL
- Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, Cincinnati, OH
- Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Boulder, CO
- Dallas Theater Center, Dallas, TX
- Folger Theatre, Washington, D.C.
- Great Lakes Theater, Cleveland, OH
- Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN

- Hartford Stage, Hartford, CT
- Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Cold Spring, NY
- Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Boise, ID
- Kentucky Shakespeare, Louisville, KY
- Lantern Theater Company, Philadelphia, PA
- Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Bozeman, MT
- Nashville Shakespeare Festival, Nashville, TN
- Nebraska Shakespeare, Omaha, NE
- Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland, OR
- Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Orlando, FL
- Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Center Valley, PA
- Shakespeare & Company, Lenox, MA
- Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis, St. Louis, MO
- Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington, D.C.
- The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, Florham Park, NJ
- Tennessee Shakespeare Company, Memphis, TN
- Theater at Monmouth, Monmouth, ME
- Theatre for a New Audience, New York, NY
- Trinity Repertory Company, Providence, RI
- Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cedar City, UT
- Will Geer Theatrical Botanicum, Topanga, CA
- Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, CT

About Arts Midwest

Arts Midwest promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six nonprofit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 30 years. For more information, visit artsmidwest.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. For more information, visit arts.gov.