

News Release

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San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's tour of *The Comedy of Errors*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Shakespeare's rollicking tale of the chaos and confusion that reigns when two sets of twins unwittingly end up in the same town is now touring throughout California. San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's annual 'Shakespeare on Tour' program will perform *The Comedy of Errors* at libraries, schools (elementary through college), community centers, parks, and senior centers through mid-December. The show includes a couple of walk-on roles where audience volunteers get to be part of the performance. At the end of the play, the audience is also invited to pose any questions they wish to the cast.

This farcical tale has been one of Shakespeare's best-loved comedies since its debut in 1594 -- and with good reason! Its verbal wit and fast-paced slapstick humor provide a fun-filled performance that's a delight for audiences of all ages. Resident Artist Carla Pantoja (director of last season's hit touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*) directs this show in the commedia dell'arte style and its clever banter and antic behavior delivers a show that will readily resonate with contemporary audiences. She describes the production as being "absolutely about holding up the real stakes and the very real cost of family separation." In the play, two pairs of twins are separated soon after their birth. Two of the children (who grow up to be Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus) are taken from Emilia, their mother, after a shipwreck. Emilia later says that Corinthian fishermen "by force took Dromio and my son"—a forced separation that later leads to the play's madcap multitude of mistaken identities. Pantoja's production uses the play's slapstick antics to "underline how ridiculous boundaries can be. It is comical that these two sets of twins are identical, and in a city where one has status and the other is 'illegal.'"

The Comedy of Errors marks the 31st year of San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's 'Shakespeare on Tour' program, which annually travels an average of 10,000 miles to bring a one-hour version of a Shakespeare classic to communities and schools throughout the state. SF Shakes Education Director Phil Lowery comments that "Many people encounter Shakespeare for the first time by reading it in a classroom, but to fully appreciate the wit, the wordplay, the relevance, and the sheer pleasure of the Shakespeare's work, nothing beats experiencing it with a live performance."

For more information about San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and the Shakespeare on Tour program, call (415) 558-0888 or visit www.sfsakes.org.

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Note: Artists and staff are available for interviews at (415) 558-0888.

About San Francisco Shakespeare Festival

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. We accomplish this through the presentation of **Free Shakespeare in the Park** and a wide array of education programs: **Shakespeare On Tour**, **Tailor-Made Residencies**, **Bay Area Shakespeare Camps**, and **Midnight Shakespeare**. *Shakespeare On Tour* performs an abridged Shakespeare play at schools, libraries, and community centers all over the state. *Tailor-Made Residencies* connects teaching artists with classroom teachers for in-class theatre enrichment, specifically tailored to their learning objectives and their students. *Bay Area Shakespeare Camps* for ages 7-13 and 12-18 are two-week theatre

camps held throughout the Bay Area. *Midnight Shakespeare*, the Festival's after-school program for underserved and low-income youth, serves participants in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and Antioch.