

Montana Shakespeare in the Parks
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Press Release
February 10, 2009

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For Immediate Release

Montana Shakespeare in the Parks announces MONTANA SHAKES!, a Shakespeare tour for Elementary Schools, will expand tour to eight weeks for a second season in spring 2009.

Beginning in March, MONTANA SHAKES! will begin a second tour throughout Montana and Wyoming with *All the West's a Stage*, a comical traveling troupe of actors coming straight to you from the stages of the Old West. They've dusted off their trunk of costumes and props and will be presenting the Shakespearean scenes from that have made them famous. Just don't be surprised if they need a little help from their audience.

In May 2008, MONTANA SHAKES! premiered with a pilot project which included 18 elementary schools throughout Montana and Wyoming. The tour met with such an enthusiastic response that the second season has been expanded to an eight week tour that will include forty elementary schools in Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and Idaho. The day long presentation begins with a 35-40 minute play featuring scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that have been rewritten to include additional audience participation from the students followed by new workshops in Stage Combat, Design and "Green Eggs and Hamlet" presented by an accomplished team of professional actor-educators. The program is specifically designed to expose the youngest students to their first "taste" of Shakespeare in a fun, non-threatening environment.

According to Artistic Director Joel Jahnke, this is an age level that has not been exposed as much to Shakespeare's work not only in Montana, but nationwide. "I feel it is very important to introduce young students to Shakespeare at an early age so they learn not to be intimidated by it. Some of our best audience members on our summer tour are children. They don't worry about the density of the language or complicated plot twists- they simple enjoy." MONTANA SHAKES! has put together a team of directors, designers and professional actors that will travel over 4,000 miles and work with over 8,000 students. Anyone interested in more information or in booking a performance should contact Kathy Jahnke at 406-994-1220.

A professional theatrical outreach program of Montana State University-Bozeman, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks has been bringing quality, live theatrical productions of Shakespeare and other classics to communities in Montana and vicinity with an emphasis on underserved rural areas since 1973. In 1993, the company added an educational outreach program (Montana Shakespeare in the Schools) that has since served more than 100,000 young people with productions of ***Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, Othello and Much Ado About Nothing.***

MONTANA SHAKES! 2009 TOUR FACT SHEET

WHAT: Elementary School Shakespeare Tour;
MONTANA SHAKES!

SHOWS: All the West's a Stage; Scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
by William Shakespeare
Directed by Susan Dickerson
Costumes and props by Stacy Hostetter
Set design by Joel Jahnke
Educational materials by Will Dickerson
Workshops by Kevin Asselin

CAST:

JORDAN AHNQUIST- FOURTH TOUR
TONYA ANDREWS- FOURTH TOUR
KEVIN ASSELIN- SEVENTH TOUR

WHERE: 40 performances in 35 different communities throughout
Montana and Wyoming.
Tour will run from March 23- May 15

MORE INFO: Contact - Kathy Jahnke (406) 994-1220 kjahnke@montana.edu