

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
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Asolo Rep Announces New Streaming School Program: BardWired – Connecting our Community through Shakespeare

***A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be available beginning
November 4**

(SARASOTA, FL) – Asolo Repertory Theatre is pleased to announce the launch of **BardWired**, an online adaptation of its award-winning program, Asolo Rep On Tour, which has brought professional, live theatrical experiences to over 15,000 Florida students each fall since 2008. In order to better connect with its community and support teachers and students through theatre, Asolo Rep is making its 40-minute adaptation of a Shakespeare classic available to stream to classrooms, distance learning students, and community organizations.

Presented by Asolo Rep and the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, **BardWired** is an introduction to Shakespeare's work that is designed to spark imagination and encourage conversation, using creative theatrical and filmmaking techniques to help Shakespearean language and stories connect with new generations of literature lovers. The **BardWired** company is comprised of third-year MFA students from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training and the production will be filmed in and around Sarasota creating an innovative theatrical experience that is uniquely Floridian.

Available for streaming to schools from November 4, 2020 through April 28, 2021, **BardWired's** premiere production will be one of Shakespeare's most celebrated comedies, ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***. Adapted and directed by Celine Rosenthal, Asolo Rep Associate Artistic Director, the production and accompanying program can be accessed by students and schools completely online. Included in the program are interactive learning experiences and talkback sessions with the company, creative team,

and members of Asolo Rep's Education & Engagement staff. Availability to join the talkback sessions is limited, and dates will be announced later this month.

A Midsummer Night's Dream uncovers a world of magic just outside the city limits and just inside the human heart. Helena loves Demetrius, Demetrius is after Hermia, and Hermia only has eyes for Lysander. The fairy royals are having a lover's spat and Puck is enlisted to exact vengeance. Add a hilarious play-within-a-play and a magical flower and you have a perfect storm of comedy. A mold-breaking tale of freshly-minted love, ***Midsummer*** is sure to speak to the experiences of young audiences and inspire them to realize a world where Shakespeare is for anyone and everyone.

"Our goal, as artists and educators, is to connect deeply with our community through theatre," said Muriel O'Neil Education & Engagement Director, Sara Brunow, "we may not be able to bring Shakespeare physically into schools this year, but it's possible that the online **BardWired** program could be even more accessible, both in content and in reach – bringing innovative, unique, and affordable professional theatre experiences to more students, more schools, and more communities."

"The online **BardWired** experience presents an exciting new way for us to engage students in an exploration of Shakespeare's text through an intimate and creative video performance," said Rosenthal. "Our ***Midsummer*** challenges its audience to examine the interwoven stories of the play's wonderful characters as they step out of the structures of their community and discover what truths the forest holds. Throughout the journey are conversations about status, empowerment, gender, and breaking free of the roles that society expects us to play."

"Now, more than ever, it is essential for the next generation of artists, policy makers, educators, and global citizens to understand the power and magic of theatre," said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director, Michael Donald Edwards. "Adapted and directed with extraordinary passion and skill by our super talented Associate Artistic Director, this version of ***Midsummer*** promises to be uniquely entertaining and accessible."

For a limited time through December 30, special low pricing options will be available to schools in the following counties: Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pinellas, and Sarasota.

From November 10 – December 18, Watch Parties and Curated Conversations will be available for Community Organizations.

Public Access to **BardWired's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*** will be announced at a later date.

Pricing, registration, and streaming information is available at asolorep.org/engage-learn/school-programs/asolo-rep-online-tour.

SUPPORT

The 2020-21 **BardWired** program is made possible by Youth and Families Lead Sponsor Community Foundation of Sarasota County; Koski Family Foundation; Publix Super Markets Charities; Charles Henry Leach II Fund; Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation; Linnie E. Dalbeck Memorial Foundation Trust; Cordelia Lee Beattie Foundation; Asolo Repertory Theatre Guild; Andrew R. Ferrell Foundation; The Huisking Foundation; and the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs.

ABOUT ASOLO REP

Now looking forward to its 62nd season, Asolo Repertory Theatre is recognized as one of the premier professional theatres in America and one of the largest in the Southeastern United States. One of the few select theatres in the nation that performs in true rotating repertory, Asolo Rep's highly skilled acting company and extensive craftsmanship bring to life this unique performance method that gives audiences the opportunity to see multiple productions in the span of a few days. Asolo Rep presents up to 10 productions each season including contemporary and classic works and provocative musical theatre experiences. A theatre district in and of itself, Asolo Rep is committed to expanding its reach into the community, furthering its collaboration with the best theatre artists working in the industry today and cultivating new artists through its affiliation with the [FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training](#). Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards and Managing Director Linda DiGabriele, Asolo Rep's ambitious theatrical offerings and groundbreaking education and community programming engage audiences and ensure its lasting legacy for future generations.

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