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High-res images available upon request.

March 18, 2014

**THE PHILADELPHIA SHAKESPEARE THEATRE PRESENTS THE
ICONIC JOURNEY OF YOUNG LOVE IN A CONTEMPORARY
PRODUCTION OF *ROMEO and JULIET*
APRIL 4 – MAY 18**

This is *Romeo and Juliet* like you've never seen before. Beginning April 9, with *Pay What You Will* preview performances from April 4-6, The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre will present a fresh twist on Shakespeare's classic tale of star-crossed lovers. Accompany these young lovers from their first blissful kiss to their final parting words, as the powerful forces of traditional social mores suffocate them. The production is directed by the award-winning David O'Connor.

For centuries, *Romeo and Juliet* has been the love story by which all others are measured. It is as fresh today as it was 450 years ago. In this iconic romance, Shakespeare captured for eternity what it means to find love, fight for and sacrifice for it, then to ultimately determine what love is for ourselves, not as prescribed by other's outmoded and fossilized notions. This production breathes new life into this always-relevant, always-contemporary tale.

Commented Artistic/Executive Director Carmen Khan, "Romeo and Juliet's tale is an iconic example of remaining true to one's authentic self. They had to look beyond their names and follow their hearts. Times haven't changed all that much."

The production will include the love stories – in sonnet form – of five winners from the Theatre's first annual *Show Us Your Love Sonnet Competition*.

Romeo and Juliet is the keystone production of **Year of The Bard: Shakespeare at 450**, a celebration of William Shakespeare's 450th birthday. The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre has partnered with the Free Library of Philadelphia and other regional organizations to bring you this year-long salute. In honor of The Bard's birth, The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre is presenting special Shakespeare programming throughout 2014. Other highlights of from The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre as part of the **Year of the Bard:**

- A monthly Shakespeare in the World Lecture and Performance series
- A production of *Loves Labour's Lost* by the Classical Acting Academy from July 30 – August 17th
- A world-premiere production of *iHamlet*, a unique one-person Hamlet, for the Fringe Festival from September 17 – 28

- Workshops and performances by Akala and The Hip Hop Shakespeare Company of London, October 20 – 25
- A main stage production of *Henry V* from October 22 – November 16

Romeo and Juliet will take place at The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre at 2111 Sansom Street Philadelphia, PA 19103. The show runs at 7 pm on Wednesday through Saturday and 2 pm on Sunday with tickets from \$10 through \$35. For ticket sales and information, please visit www.phillyshakespeare.org or call the Box Office at 215-496-8001.

Carmen Khan holds a Bachelor of Education from The University of London, England and a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. For seven years, she was a company member of The Hip Pocket Theatre in Fort Worth, TX where she worked as an actor, dancer, and mime in over 26 productions. Carmen was co-founder of The Laughing Stock Theatre, a company devoted entirely to comedy. She was also the Artistic Director of The Red Heel Theatre Company, which was devoted to the little known classics of The Golden Age of English theatre. She is the Founding Artistic / Executive Director of The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre and has directed numerous Shakespeare plays, her favorites including *Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, and *The Tempest*.

Director David O'Connor has been a teaching artist and director with Philadelphia Young Playwrights since 2004. David came to Philadelphia to pursue his MFA in Directing at Temple University, and now calls Philadelphia home. David has directed for the Arden, PlayPenn, Hedgerow, the Philadelphia Fringe and the Lantern, where he was nominated for a Barrymore and named *Philadelphia Weekly's* Director of the Year for his production of "Master Harold" ...and the boys. He is also a lighting, sound and projection designer, as well as an adjunct faculty member of both Temple University and University of Pennsylvania.

Performance Information:

Romeo and Juliet will run from April 4 – May 18, 2014. Performances will be Wednesday through Saturday at 7pm and Sundays at 2pm. Preview performances are April 4, 5 & 6, Season performances begin April 9.

Tickets: Tickets for preview performances are PAY WHAT YOU WILL! Wednesday and Thursday Evenings: \$30, Friday, Saturday and Sunday: \$35, Student Tickets: \$20, Senior Tickets: \$25, Student Rush (Thursday nights, 30 minutes prior to performances): \$10. Group discounts are available. Tickets may be purchased at www.phillyshakespeare.org or by calling 215-496-8001. Tickets may also be purchased at the door. Group organizers are encouraged to call the box office for pricing and availability. Season subscriptions are on sale.

ABOUT THE PHILADELPHIA SHAKESPEARE THEATRE:

The mission of The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre is to be a world-class Shakespeare company, and to bring our education programs to every high school student in the region.

Since 1996, The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre has produced over 40 Shakespeare productions through fresh, muscular, and vivid interpretations.

Along with annual productions of works written by William Shakespeare, The Philadelphia Shakespeare

Theatre's seventeen year long, award winning Open Door Project, offers state-of-the-art Shakespeare programming to high school and middle school students including student matinees, Artist-in-Residence, and professional touring productions. We have served over 70,000 students in the Delaware Valley. We also offer a Shakespeare in the World lecture/performance, series with renowned Shakespeare scholars and professional actors. The Classical Acting Academy offers professional training for early career actors, classes for adults and teens, a summer Shakespeare camp, and free performances to the public each summer. For more information, please visit www.phillyshakespeare.org.