



For more information contact:

Janet Gover

[jgover@kazooconvic.com](mailto:jgover@kazooconvic.com)

269-343-2280 ext. 1003

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## **Civic to present its first ever Shakespeare Festival!**

For the Civic's 89<sup>th</sup> Bigger, BOLDER season, TWO Shakespearean productions will be produced in the Parish Theatre over a three week period.

The Civic Youth Theatre will open *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, followed by an adult production of *Macbeth* opening the next evening on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mychelle Hopkins, who has directed many of the Civic's most successful Shakespearean productions, has returned to the Civic as a guest artist and is directing BOTH productions! Hopkins holds her Master's Degree from the prestigious Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, England where she studied as a Fulbright Scholar.

Shakespeare is an essential part of a theatrical education and there is no better play to introduce youth to the beauty and wit of Shakespeare than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This production will take place in a modern day prep school. The 70 minute version of the play will be very contemporary, and Hopkins believes that younger audiences will be able to recognize themselves in it. Also, they should be able to relate to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in that there is a father who wants to intervene in his child's life, and the authorities say "do whatever your father says!"

The adult production will challenge our volunteers with one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies. Written at the pinnacle of Shakespeare's career *Macbeth* provides us with a vehicle to examine the rise of political power, ambition and downfall. *Macbeth* will be set in an unspecified year in an unspecified Central American country which will create an ambiguous time and place in order to explore its themes of evil and the corruption of the human soul. Ironically, it was only after this sort of vague setting and concept was set for the Civic's production that all the political turmoil began in Venezuela. By making the setting more current, the story of *Macbeth* becomes even more relevant for a contemporary audience.

Resident Scenic Designer David Kyhn has designed a two level set to be reminiscent of London's Globe Theatre which will be used for both productions, and the time and place for each production will be set with props, costumes, furniture, and set dressing. The shows will be done in repertory fashion - which could be a backstage show in itself! For example, after the 4:00pm Saturday performance of *Midsummer*, all props, costumes and set dressing will need to be removed and stored in a specific method, so the *Macbeth* props, costumes and set dressing can be placed for that evening's performance. By keeping the props and set dressing simple, the emphasis will be on the actors to tell the story.

The Civic's Shakespeare Festival is a new event, and we hope audiences young and old will embrace the magic of Shakespeare's words.

Dates and times vary for each production and are available on the Civic's website at [KazooCivic.com](http://KazooCivic.com), or by calling the Civic box office at 269-343-1313.