



# Welcome

## 16th Season of the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival.

Wasn't it just yesterday that the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival was taking its first steps across the boards with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? Don't you remember that terrible family feud between the Capulets and Montagues at the festival's first anniversary? Could the festival really have only been a three-year-old when it performed *Twelfth Night*? And wasn't the festival just so cute when it first launched that *Bard to Go*. And now, just look at it, 16 years of the festival, it hardly seems possible that the time could go so quickly. Sweet 16 already, and ready now to face the world as a festival that has come of age – although reviewing our list of productions, it may be hard to sell the “never been kissed.” While there is no fancy dress debutante ball, the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival welcomes you to the Sweet 16 season with another very exciting festival filled with exciting theatre and other arts to celebrate Shakespeare and his culture. Please use this program as a guide to all of the various festival events and make plans to be a part of our sweetest season yet.

Last season, we celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary by restaging the festival's inaugural production, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, opening the door for the festival to select productions from among all of Shakespeare's greatest works, including those already staged by the festival. This season, we felt no production captures the theme of Sweet 16 like the classic tragic tale of young love, *Romeo and Juliet*. Embodied in this play is the innocence, the impulsiveness, the passion, and the beauty of young love. Come and enjoy an old favorite and shed a tear anew, or if you are a first-time viewer, come see why this play endures so well.

In addition, the festival's popular traveling production and now internationally famous *Bard to Go*, which takes Shakespeare to the classroom, develops the Sweet 16 theme with a restaging and reworking of their popular production, *Lovestruck*. The festival includes a special conference, Shakespeare Connects, featuring Guest Resident Scholar Curt Tofthland, who is known especially for his Shakespeare work with the inmates of Kentucky's Luther Luckett prison, as the keynote speaker. Events also include a screening and discussion of the documentary film *Shakespeare Behind Bars* with Curt Tofthland, Greenshow performances, and the Renaissance Faire. The festival will conclude November 7 with an awards presentation for the festival student competition and a free public performance of *Bard to Go: Lovestruck*.

