

# NEWS RELEASE

UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center [www.fineartscenter.com](http://www.fineartscenter.com)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 6, 2009

**WHAT:** American Shakespeare Center presents *Romeo and Juliet*

**WHEN:** Tuesday, November 3 at 7:30 PM

**WHERE:** Bowker Auditorium  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or  
go online to [www.fineartscenter.com](http://www.fineartscenter.com)

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### **AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER BRINGS WILLIAM'S SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO AND JULIET TO THE UMASS BOWKER AUDITORIUM**

"This Shakespeare moves...we feel the inexorable sweep of the action but the poetry has a chance to breathe, too. And how wonderful to hear actors speak Shakespeare naturally. It is poetry come alive." – *The Boston Globe*

Dance, athleticism, and swordplay share the stage with sonnets, bawdy wit, and soul-searching speeches in this profoundly human and always surprising masterpiece. On Tuesday, November 3, the American Shakespeare Center returns to UMass on its 2009/2010 Rough, Rude, and Boisterous Tour, presenting the classic tale in its own inimitable style at 7:30 pm in the Fine Arts Center's Bowker Auditorium in Stockbridge Hall. The production is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies. There will be a pre-performance talk by Professor Arthur Kinney from 6:30-7:30 PM in Bowker Auditorium. For tickets and information, call the FAC box office at 413- 545-2511 or 1- 800-999-UMAS; order online at [www.umasstix.com](http://www.umasstix.com).

A long, hot summer in Verona enflames the old feud between the Capulet and Montague families, leading to public brawls. As the tension builds in the streets, two teenagers fall in love at first sight. Married in secret, they hope for reconciliation between their families. When short tempers lead to deadly consequences, the young lovers find themselves alone and on the run, facing impossible odds and making desperate

decisions. What starts as a bawdy teenage comedy transforms into a heart-stirring romance for the ages, and features the shining lyricism of Shakespeare's extraordinary poetry. The American Shakespeare Center recovers the joys and accessibility of Shakespeare's theatre and gives its audiences some of the pleasures that an Elizabethan playgoer would have enjoyed: universal lighting, doubling of parts, fun with gender confusion, minimal sets, familiar costumes and the use of music throughout.

By following the basic principles of Renaissance theatrical production, the American Shakespeare Center gives its audiences some of the pleasures that an Elizabethan playgoer would have enjoyed. Shakespeare's actors could see their audience; ASC actors can see you. When an actor can see an audience, they can engage with an audience. Through brisk pacing and a continuous flow of dramatic action, the ASC fulfills the "two hours' traffic of our stage" that the Chorus in *Romeo and Juliet* promises. Just as Shakespeare's company performed on a mostly unadorned large wooden platform, the ASC uses few set pieces to spark the audience's imagination to "piece out our imperfections with [their] minds." Shakespeare also had a soundtrack: above the stage, musicians played an assortment of string, wind, and percussion instruments before, during, and after the play. The plays are sprinkled with songs for which lyrics, but not much of the music, survive. The ASC sets many of these songs in contemporary style. The result is emblematic of their approach—a commitment to Shakespeare's text and to the mission of connecting that text to modern audiences.

This production of *Romeo and Juliet* is directed by Jim Warren, the artistic director of ASC. In the lead roles are Josh Carpenter and Brandi Rhome. Warren says, "We hope you let us take you on this ride and let the language envelope you in the love, the friendship, the humor, the rage, the ache, the fun that make this play as exciting and relevant today as it was four hundred years ago."

Tickets for the *Romeo and Juliet* are \$20. Youth 17 and under and Five College/GCC students are \$10. Tickets are available at the Fine Arts Center Box Office by phone at 800-999-UMAS or 413-545-2511, or online at [www.umasstix.com](http://www.umasstix.com). This production is sponsored by The River 93.9FM.