

Playbill

Montford Park
Players 54th
Season



Taming of the Shrew

by
William
Shakespeare

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JULY 3 - AUG 1, Friday-Sunday at 7:30pm, Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre, 92 Gay Street, Asheville, NC



This project receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Dept of Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, through ArtsAVL.

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THE MONTFORD PARK PLAYERS PRESENTS

Taming of the Shrew

By

William Shakespeare

Directed by

Jason Williams

Autumn Mitchell & Dana Gillihan, Stage Managers

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CAST

Katherine - Mandy Bean
Petruccio - Eric Vik
Bianca - Esha Sarai
Baptista - Alan Steele
Gremio - Tedd Godagar
Lucentio - Mickey Poandl
Hortensio - Emily Bolinger
Grumio - Darren Marshall
Tranio, Haberdasher - Caroline Roth
Biondello - Joshua Kerber
Merchant, Widow, Servant - Lauren Powers
Tailor, Servant - Mark Hunter
Curtis, Various - Rowan McCabe
Vincentio, Servant - Jason Williams

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director - Jason Williams
Stage Manager - Autumn Mitchell
Stage Manager - Dana Gillihan
Choreographer - Kristi Deville
Costumer - Katie Ybarra
Intimacy Choreographer - Laura Rikard
Stage Combat Choreography - Deanna Braine Smith
Lighting Designer - Jason Williams
Set Designer - Amaru Gutierrez
Props - Connor Hamsworth
Light/Sound Board Op - Jan Dixon

TO OUR PATRONS

- Thank you for joining us this evening. We hope you enjoy our 2026 Season as presented by The Montford Park Players, North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare Festival.
- There will be one twenty-minute intermission. Concessions will be available at the entrance to the amphitheatre. Many thanks to The Matt & Molly Team for sponsoring Shakespeare's Tavern, where you will find a delightful selection of wines and local beers on tap.
- We are pleased to accept all major credit/debit cards, cash, checks, Venmo and PayPal for your donations and concessions. One of our actors will be in the audience each night with a credit card reader for your convenience.
- Please turn the volume off on all cell phones and pagers to avoid distracting your fellow audience members.
- Flash photography is not permitted in the theatre.
- Canine companions will be given a treat at the concession stand.
- Unattended children will be given a double espresso, an energy drink and a free puppy .
- The Montford Park Players is going GREEN! Please help us conserve the environment by depositing your empty cans in the marked recycle bins

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments by phone at (828) 254-5146, email at info@montfordparkplayers.org, or snail mail at Montford Park Players, PO Box 2663, Asheville NC 28802-2663. You can also follow us on Facebook (Montford Park Players) or on Twitter (@MontfordPlayers) or on Instagram (@montfordparkplayers).

WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the board of directors and the members of The Montford Park Players, I want to personally welcome YOU to our 54th season of free theatre, sponsored by ExploreAsheville!

We're pleased to tell you that ALL our shows are free-of-charge – all season long! We at MPP envision a world in which everyone can experience exceptional live theatre, regardless of the ability to pay. Therefore, all of our shows are donation only. "Pay what we're worth." "Pay what you can." Some may even call it crazy. Call it what you will – and enjoy the show!

Here's our summer 2026 schedule:

- May 1 – 30 The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (non-musical version) directed by Erin McC Carson – 5 weeks/14 performances
- June 5 – 27 Othello directed by Stephanie Hickling-Beckman – 4 weeks/11 performances
- July 1 – Aug 1 Taming of the Shrew directed by Jason Williams – 5 weeks/14 performances
- Aug 7 – 29 The League of the Scarlet Pimpernel – World Premiere, directed by David Doersch – 4 weeks/11 performances
- Sept. 4 – 26 Romeo & Juliet directed by Kristi DeVille – 4 weeks/11 performances
- Oct. 2 – 24 The Hope of Oz – World Premiere, directed by Gabby Bailey – 4 weeks/11 performances

All performances are Friday, Saturday and Sunday, starting at 7:30 pm. Final show for each run is on a Saturday.

Making the most of your visit:

We want you to fully enjoy your experience with us. Feel free to bring a picnic and your favorite beverage, or purchase wine, sodas, local beers and snacks at our concession cart. Four-legged friends are always welcome! (There are treats for them at the concession stand, too!)

We are so grateful to our current donors, sponsors, and advertisers and YOU, our faithful audience, without whom we could not exist. Now sit back, relax, and be ready to laugh, cry, and be entertained as the curtain rises on another great production by the Montford Park Players.

John Russell
Executive Director



MONTFORD PARK
PLAYERS

MEET THE CAST & CREW



Mandy Bean (Katherine) has been a Montford Park Player since 2007. A native of Weaverville, she studied theatre at Appalachian State and has a degree in Theatre Education. She is co-founder of Multiverse Theatre Collective. Recent favorite roles include Frankie (*Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*), Goneril (*King Lear*), and Jeanie (*The Great American Trailer Park Musical*). Playing Kate has been a dream of hers ever since she first read the play, and she's grateful to Jason for this opportunity. Sparklefish loves Pistolfish, Wigglefish and Gigglesfish. Thank you for supporting live theatre!

Eric Vik (Petruccio) is giddy he gets to be in another show with his lovely wife Lauren. A few of Eric's MPP credits include Bolingbroke/Henry IV (*Richard II*), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*) and Polonius (*Hamlet*). MPP is such a wonderful group to get to play with. Eric hopes you enjoy the show!

Caroline Roth (Tranio, Haberdasher) is ecstatic to make their debut on the Montford stage. Previously, they assisted with costumes and puppetry for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Wendy and Peter* at Montford Park Players, and played Orsino in the Moppets' production of *Twelfth Night*. While they've spent the past two years confined in the purgatorial program of UNCSCA's High School Visual Arts conservatory and unable to act on any stage anyhow, surviving purely off the fumes of turpentine and oil paint, they are glad to return to theater. They will be attending Wellesley College in Massachusetts this fall to study theater, history, anthropology, French, and whatever else strikes their fancy. They would like to thank their parents (especially their father for his... creative character choices when running lines), their wonderfully supportive friends, including Ava Leigh Manderson, the Gus 'TT' Showbiz to their Shawn Spencer; and the incomparable cast of *Taming of the Shrew*.

Emily Bolinger (Hortensio) is delighted to be back for a third Montford summer. Past appearances include *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* (Ensemble) and *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Fenton). She is especially excited to be in *Taming of the Shrew*, which she read in 9th grade and which helped her understand for the first time what people mean when they say Shakespeare is funny (thanks, Ms. Barry!). Emily thanks her friends and family for their endless support, Jason and Dana for putting together this hilarious show, and English teachers everywhere.



Tedd Godager (Gremio) Tedd is honored to be back at MPP for a second season, appearing last year as Ed Knight in *The Book of Will*, and the cuddly yet lovable Count De Guiche in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (what?!). Since moving to AVL from San Francisco, he also played Willy Banburry in *Fallen Angels* for TAP at ACT's 35below. He has been a lifelong Shakespeare geek since graduating in the Acting Specialist program from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. A sincere thanks to everyone at MPP, onstage as well as those behind it, and all the people who financially support this wonderful gem.

Esha Sarai (Bianca) is thrilled to be back on the Montford stage after a fifteen-year (yikes!) hiatus. Other than an infamous stint as Caesar's ghost in a covid-era Zoom reading, she was last seen here as Aeneas in *Troilus and Cressida*, and "old man" in *King Lear*. She is currently a non-profit video producer in New York, where she spends her free time playing Javanese gamelan. She would like to thank her mom, boyfriend, and Allegiant Airlines for enabling her to live in two cities at once.



Darren Marshall (Grumio) can look scary, but he's really not. Until he is. (Kidding, he's not.).



Alan Steele (Baptista) is happy to be working with old friends and making new ones in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Last summer he made his Asheville debut with the Montford Park Players playing John Heminge in *The Book of Will* and Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He also played Caden in *The Thanksgiving Play*. He is a graduate of The National Shakespeare Conservatory of Acting in NYC.



The outdoor theatres listed here are only a small fraction of theatres across the country where you can experience thrilling live performances in an amazing variety of venues. Discover beautiful parks, desert canyons, mountainside theatres, and performances by the sea. We hope that you will join us for an evening under the stars!

Montford Park Players: North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare Festival, now in its 53rd season, May 9 - Oct 25, Fri-Sun at 7:30 pm. All shows are FREE. www.montfordparkplayers.org 828-254-5146.

The Lost Colony: The story of the first attempt of English colonization in America, told on the site where these events actually occurred, now in its 88th Anniversary season. The 2025 season runs from May 31st-August 23rd, Monday-Saturday at 8:30pm. 1409 National Park Drive, Manteo, NC 27954. www.thelostcolony.org or 252-473-6000.

Unto These Hills: The compelling story of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians from first contact with Europeans through the removal west on the infamous Trail of Tears. The drama celebrates its 75th Anniversary Season in 2025, including a special recognition on July 1st. The 2025 season runs from May 31st - August 23rd, Monday - Saturday at 8pm. 688 Drama Rd, Cherokee, NC 28734. www.cherokeeadventure.org or 828-497-2111.

Shakespeare In Delaware Park: Celebrating 50 years of FREE Shakespeare in Western New York. 2025 season-TWELFTH NIGHT June 19-July 13 and RICHARD III July 24-August 17 Tuesday-Sunday 7pm. 199 Lincoln Parkway Buffalo, NY 14222 on Shakespeare Hill www.shakespeareindelawarepark.org 716-856-4533.

TEXAS Outdoor Musical: "TEXAS" fictionalizes the stories, struggles, and triumphs of the settlers of the Texas Panhandle in the late 1800's! Featuring vibrant characters, song, dance, and special effects set against the backdrop of the beautiful Palo Duro Canyon State Park, TEXAS is celebrating its 59th season in 2025. Performances 6 nights a week in June-August at 8:00pm. 1514 5th Ave, Canyon, TX 79015. www.texas-show.com or 806-651-2181.

Piedmont Shakespeare Company: Celebrating its inaugural season of free Shakespeare in the Piedmont region of North Carolina with HAMLET, touring Alamance, Guilford, and Forsyth counties, June 12-29. www.piedmontshakes.org 216-374-8000

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant: An outdoor drama sharing the childhood story of Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family in Walnut Grove, Minnesota during the late 1800's. Grasshoppers, prairie fires and the Olesons help tell the story in its 47th year during the first three weekends in July. More information check the website at <https://walnutgrove.org/pageant/> or follow us on Facebook.

Tecumseh! Witness the epic life story of the legendary Shawnee leader as he struggles to defend his sacred homelands in the Ohio country during the late 1700's. The 2025 season runs from June 12-August 31st, Tuesday-Saturday at 8:00pm. 5968 Marietta Rd. Chillicothe, OH 45601. www.tecumsehndrama.com or 740-775-4100.

SETC is home of the National Conference on Outdoor Theatre. For over 60 years, this organization has provided a professional network for theatres. To learn more, contact us at outdoortheatre@setc.org, or visit setc.org/national-conference-on-outdoor-theater/.



MEET THE CAST & CREW



Mickey Poandl (Lucentio) is a lifelong theatre artist who enjoys acting, directing, writing and improvising. Most recently, he appeared in Montford Park Players' *Edward III* (Prince Edward), performed with Double Dip Productions' improv troupe Scuttlebutt, and wrote the 1970s chapter of *New Queens Eve* at The Magnetic Theater in 2023. Originally from Washington, D.C., Mickey now works in public relations and lives in downtown Asheville with their bobtail cat, Smokey Puss.



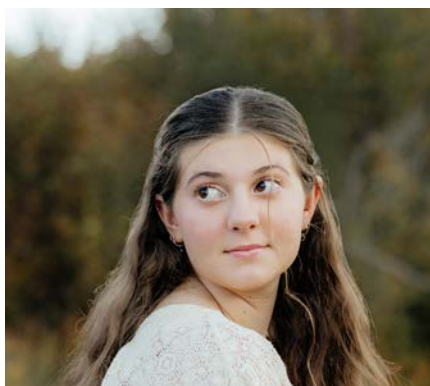
Joshua Kerber (Biondello) is excited to be performing as Biondello in *Taming of the Shrew*. He is a local Asheville actor who has performed in a number of shows at Montford, including *She Kills Monsters*, *King Lear*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and four out of the six plays of 2024's *War of the Roses* saga. He has also performed at ACT (*Clue*, *Fight Girl Battleworld*, *Elf the Musical*) and Hendersonville Theatre (*The Haunting of Hill House* and *Much Ado About Nothing*). Joshua would like to thank his friends, family, the amazing theatre community, and his beautiful girlfriend for being so supportive



Lauren Powers (Merchant, Widow, Servant) is happily enjoying a second childhood in WNC! She most recently appeared as Hostess Quickly in in the Montford Park Player's productions of *Henry IV Part 1 & 2* and *Henry V*. Other WNC shows include *Young Frankenstein: The Musical*, *Debatable Love Songs: An Opinionated Cabaret*, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*, and MPP's *Treasure Island and The Three Musketeers*. Lauren particularly fancies performing with her husband, Eric Vik. may just be a Muppet wearing a human suit.



Mark Hunter (Tailor, Servant) is excited for this opportunity to bring out his inner tailor



Rowan McCabe (Curtis, Various) is super excited to be returning for her second show with MPP! Last year, you might have seen her as Anne Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Next year, she will be attending Western Carolina

University to major in Acting! She would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her acting journey, and she hopes everyone enjoys the show!



Jason Williams (Director, Sound and Lighting Design) is an actor, director and designer that works for many local theatre companies around Asheville and WNC. Recent MPP directing credits include: *King Lear*, *Richard II*, *The Little Prince*, *Macbeth* and *Pericles*. He would like to thank you for coming to see the show tonight. He sees theatre as a valuable life experience and an important part of the cultural fabric. If you enjoyed tonight's show he encourages you to seek out other performances in our vibrant local theatre scene, and please consider an additional donation or sponsorship to keep the area theater scene thriving



Autumn Mitchell (Stage Manager) is never gonna give you up, never gonna let you down



Dana Gillihan (Deputy Stage Manager) has

stage managed and performed with theaters in Asheville and across WNC, in Raleigh, on a train, and at a Fringe Festival in NYC that one summer. She loves supporting live theater and is moved by the common human experience it reveals (human beings, wow!). When not at the theater, Dana volunteers with FurEver Friends Animal Rescue in Asheville, helping felines and people make loving lifelong connections. She shares a home with her personal forever friends, husband Chris and cats Xander and Rosie.



Katie Ybarra (Costume Design) hopes you enjoy the show today! *Taming of the Shrew* is her first production with the Montford Park Players. She recently stage managed and costumed *Much Ado About Nothing* at Hendersonville Theatre, and stage managed, costumed, and fabricated a giant space whale puppet for Skysail Theatre's *Sirenium: A Lesbian Folk Opera*. When not working on local theater productions, Katie enjoys baking, knitting, sewing, reading, natural dyeing, basket weaving with foraged fibers, and holding her beloved Porch Cat over the trash can to remind him where he came from



Amaru Gutierrez (Set Design) came to Asheville five years ago and has designed sets for several local theaters. Montford Park Players is delighted to have them designing for *Taming of the Shrew*!

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The Seldoms photo by Andrew Glatt; courtesy of Trillium Arts

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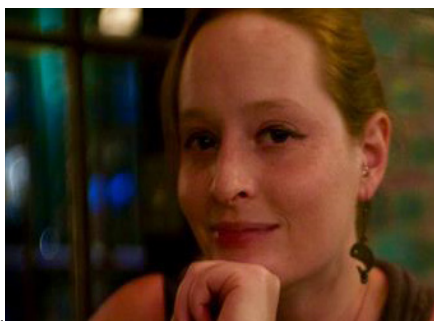
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MEET THE CAST & CREW



Kristi DeVille (Choreographer) has been working as a director, dance choreographer, and actor for the past 30 years. For the past several years, she has been active as an intimacy choreographer as well. Locally, Kristi is the Resident Dance Choreographer and Marketing Director for Montford Park Players, the Director of Movement for Different Strokes! Performing Arts Collective, an Artistic Associate for the Sublime Theatre, and a company member of the Cardboard Sea. In the past, she was an Adjunct Instructor for the Theatre Department at Warren Wilson College and was the director of First Stage Youth Theatre.



Deanna Braine Smith (Fight Choreographer) is a fierce Valkyrie with an inner core of great kindness and humor



taming of the shrew

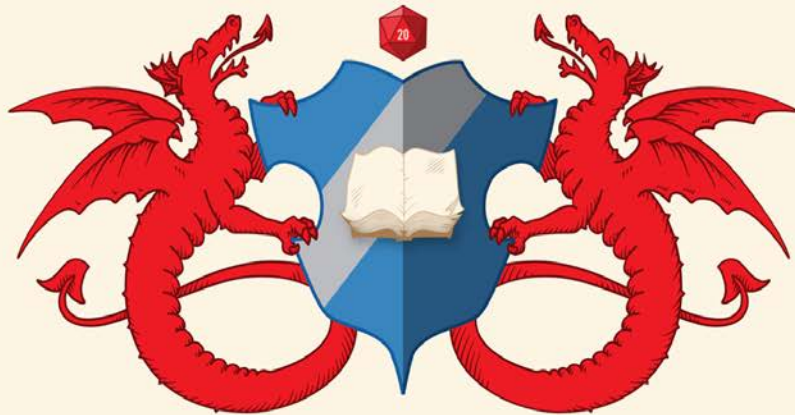
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Love's Labour's Lost

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The Merchant of Venice PP

As You Like It

The Taming of the Shrew

All's Well That Ends Well PP

Twelfth Night

The Winter's Tale LR PP

Pericles, Prince of Tyre LR FF

The Two Noble Kinsmen LR FF

Note: Plays marked with LR are now commonly referred to as the "late romances". Plays marked with PP are known as the "problem plays". The three plays marked with FF were not included in the First Folio.



Montford Park Players

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Montford Park Players

July 3- August 1



Taming of the Shrew

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* has long been one of most popular, and most debated of his plays. Many audiences, like me, first encounter it through adaptations such as *10 Things I Hate About You*, or that one *Moonlighting* episode. Many generations of actors have jumped at the chance to play Kate including notable names such as Elizabeth Taylor, Vanessa Redgrave, Fiona Shaw, and Meryl Streep. Yet despite its enduring popularity, the play continues to spark discussion because of its treatment of gender, marriage, and power.

Depending on who you ask, it's either a story full of misogyny and mistreatment of women or a story about two strong-willed people who find their match in one another. Perhaps it's both. The misogyny feels intentional, but not because Shakespeare is endorsing it. Instead, maybe he is holding a mirror up to the gender politics and double standards of his time. Part of the play's longevity may lie in its ability to support multiple interpretations.

Historical context might help illuminate some of the divisiveness the play elicits. Baptista refuses to allow his younger daughter Bianca to marry until Katherine has found a husband. To modern audiences, this may seem cruel and unfair, but in Shakespeare's England unmarried women had limited economic independence. Kate would have had nowhere to go once her father died if she was unable to find a husband. She could not inherit property or enjoy any freedoms as an unmarried woman, and would have either depended on the generosity of relatives or been forced to live in a convent. By requiring Katherine to marry before Bianca, Baptista protects Kate's future while giving Bianca more time to find a more suitable husband than an old man, or a snobby dourf.

When Petruchio enters the story, he initially appears motivated by Katherine's wealth. However, he quickly finds himself matched with someone who is every bit as intelligent, stubborn, and outspoken as he is. Their unusual relationship remains difficult and often uncomfortable for modern audiences, and productions continue to wrestle with how to present Petruchio's behavior. Yet Shakespeare in his plays, frequently highlights the social realities of his time, sometimes holding up a mirror to the audience that exposes the unfair cultural expectations placed on women. Perhaps Petruchio's exaggerated conduct should not be read in the simple binary of either misogynistic or time period appropriate, but as part of a larger theatrical exploration of power and performance.

By the end of the play, Katherine has hardly become silent. She has spent her life being shamed and criticized for speaking her mind, because that was considered unacceptable behavior for an unmarried woman, but in the end delivers the longest speech in the play. In that monologue she is allowed to speak her mind about the Widow and Bianca without reproach. Perhaps it's Shakespeare again highlighting the double standard imposed on women of the Elizabethan world that women can only speak their mind in the presence of their husbands. Katherine's ending can be interpreted in different ways: as submission, strategic adaptation, or even a form of victory for her.

The play's legacy also extends beyond Shakespeare. In John Fletcher's sequel, *The Tamer Tamed*, Petruchio finds himself on the receiving end of the same treatment he once imposed on Katherine, suggesting that even early audiences may have viewed his behavior with humor and skepticism.

Rather than offering simple answers, *The Taming of the Shrew* invites audiences to engage with difficult questions about relationships, gender expectations, and social roles. Its complexity is one reason it continues to be performed, debated, and reimagined today.

We hope you enjoy our vision of the show.

Forward, I pray,
since we have come
so far,
And be it moon, or
sun, or what you
please.
And if you please to
call it a rush-
candle,
Henceforth I vow it
shall be so for me.



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