

# LEARNING



## Twenty years of bringing Shakespeare to life in the move from page to stage.

In 2010, Bell Shakespeare celebrates 20 years of bringing Shakespeare's extraordinary imagination to schools and theatres across Australia. Through his stories, young people can explore the world they live in, see life through other people's eyes and ponder timeless moral questions and dilemmas.

**Actors At Work**, Bell Shakespeare's oldest and most popular interactive education initiative, began life in 1991 with the cast of the Company's first play, *Hamlet*, visiting 70 schools in the Sydney area from the eastern suburbs to the Blue Mountains.

Thus began a community and education programme that, ever since, has continued to develop and mature to the point where Bell Shakespeare learning initiatives are now enjoyed each year by more than 80,000 students nationwide. Federal and state governments have acknowledged Bell Shakespeare as Australia's Shakespeare resource.

Three teams of four young actors will tour schools across Australia from April to October 2010 with **Actors At Work**, scripted by Ned Manning. Principal Education & Youth Sponsor Optus brings **Actors At Work** to remote students through the Interactive Distance Learning broadcasts of **Actors At Work** in performance.

The unique **Make A Scene** online competition, presented by Optus and Bell Shakespeare, gives students a fresh point of access to Shakespeare. Students select a Shakespearean phrase and interpret it in their own way, submitting a still image, audio or movie file.

**School matinees** are available for Bell Shakespeare's touring productions *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night*, as well as the return Sydney season of *Just Macbeth!* These are preceded by introductory sessions for students, and include access to online Learning Packs.

Bell Shakespeare encourages students to master more than the text with its **Student Masterclasses**. The Company's Arts Educators, who are all trained, experienced actors, connect students with Shakespeare's language, characters and plots the way they should be – as a play in performance. In 2010, the Company is also offering **The Hamlet Seminar**, an intensive, interactive masterclass where Bell Shakespeare experts give students insight into *Hamlet* in the lead up to the HSC and VCE.

Bell Shakespeare also offers **Teacher Professional Development** programmes, presented in partnership with the Faculty of Education and Social Work at The University of Sydney and endorsed by the NSW Institute of Teachers. Teachers can benefit from activity-based sessions that introduce theatrical approaches to bringing Shakespeare to the classroom. Free **Teacher Forums** are presented in every state and territory, as well as full-day **Teacher Masterclasses** on teaching *Hamlet*, *As You Like It* and *Romeo And Juliet*.

As access to live theatre is particularly limited outside of the capital cities, Bell Shakespeare, with the support of sponsors, offers two scholarship programmes to talented young thespians in rural and regional areas: the **Regional Performance Scholarship** and AUSTAR's **Stage For Life**. Teachers from regional areas can apply for the **Regional Teacher Scholarship**, offered with the financial support of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, which enables 12 teachers to join Bell Shakespeare in Sydney for an intensive four-day course on teaching Shakespeare.

John Bell says: "Shakespeare reaches across time, culture and language. But while his plays speak to audiences of all ages and cultural backgrounds, they can be baffling on the page, even for experienced actors.

"It's by performing them, speaking them aloud to each other, interacting and feeling their emotional drive, that their meaning and resonance are revealed."

For more information on Bell Shakespeare's learning programmes, visit [bellshakespeare.com.au/learning](http://bellshakespeare.com.au/learning)

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