



**Immediate Release**

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## **Shakespeare Is Here!** **Brought to Life By** **The Plimoth Plantation Players**

**Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, MA, May 13, 2010** – The excitement of sword fights, the energy of LIVE theater and the fun of exploring the past are all awaiting at Plimoth Plantation this summer! The **Plimoth Plantation Players** is a brand new troupe of actors in residence at Plimoth Plantation for the summer of 2010. This cast of six professional actors has been formed to present 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century English theater in the style that the Plymouth Colonists would have known before leaving for America in 1620 – with young male actors handling the women's roles as well. Yes, Juliet was first portrayed by a young man. Shakespeare lived from 1564 to 1616. He lived and worked in London while many future Plymouth Colonists were also living and working in the city. As part of this year's emphasis on storytelling and the importance of memories, the Museum is exploring the world that the Plymouth Colonists left behind, by presenting three popular works of Shakespeare (**Romeo & Juliet, The Tempest and Twelfth Night**) LIVE on stage, every week in July and August for Museum guests to enjoy, just as the plays would have been experienced centuries ago.

“Until 1662, women were not allowed to act on the London stage. Actors were male,” said Richard Pickering, Associate Deputy Director of Plimoth Plantation. “But how many people today have ever seen the plays of the Shakespeare as they were originally presented? With the Bard's verse and skillful acting convincing audiences there was a flesh and blood woman on the stage; all the great women's roles were originated by men. And how many actors can say they have been a part of groundbreaking experiments in re-creating 400-year-old theatrical performances?”



*Wampanoag Homesite*



*Mayflower II*



*1627 English Village*

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At Plimoth Plantation... we're always fresh and new in an effort to be old-fashioned! We'll proudly say, this is your great, great, great, great, grandfather's Shakespeare, just as funny and touching and dynamic today, as it was back in the 1600s."

Historians estimate that London playhouses generated half a million visits per year, at a time when the city's population was only 200 thousand. Even those living outside of London could have experienced Shakespeare's work firsthand. Centuries ago, it was common for London play companies to also tour the provinces. Most playing companies devoted part of the year to touring and found themselves out on the road when the London theaters were closed due to plague. It is likely that the companies toured with reduced casts, with actors playing multiple roles. From the 1580's to the closure of the theatres in 1642 this practice of role doubling and tripling dictated the structure of many plays and added to the excitement of live theater. These energetic adaptations, like those performed at Plimoth Plantation, were presented in country towns throughout England.

This summer the exciting tradition of the Elizabethan touring player will be brought to life weekly at Plimoth Plantation, as the Museum presents **Shakespeare At Night**. Three nights a week, (Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays) The Plimoth Plantation Players will perform some of Shakespeare's best-loved plays. All of the roles, male and female, will be performed as they historically would have been portrayed. Plimoth Plantation hopes this authenticity will bring the fun and wonder of this style of 1600s Shakespeare to life for children and adults to enjoy, as it originally was.

Opening night of **Shakespeare at Night** is Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 p.m., as the Plimoth Plantation Players present *Romeo & Juliet*. The plays will run in repertory through Labor Day, with performances of: *The Tempest*, a play with historic ties to Plimoth Colony on Thursday nights; *Romeo & Juliet* on Fridays; and *Twelfth Night*, presented on Saturdays. Performances begin at 8 PM, in the Henry Hornblower II

Visitor Center. Tickets are \$12 per person and \$8 for Plimoth Plantation Museum Members. Call 508-746-1622 for tickets and more information.

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In addition, **Shakespearean Sword Fights—An Interactive Stage Combat Workshop**, will be presented weekly by members of the Plimoth Plantation Players. This exciting workshop demonstrates the art of stage combat with a focus on choreographed sword fighting. Museum guests will have an opportunity to discover

specific moves used to create a sword fight and how to string them together cohesively to present a believable duel on stage. Some audience participation is involved in this highly entertaining workshop, offered every Thursday, Friday and Saturday throughout the summer, at 2:00 p.m. (weather-permitting).

The Shakespeare experience continues online as the Plimoth Plantation Players will be launching a new blog on Monday, May 17. The blog can be found at [www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org), and will chronicle the Company's adventures in adapting and presenting 17<sup>th</sup> Century Shakespeare to today's audiences. From costuming to special performances, to the behind the scenes shenanigans of a young professional acting company, it promises to be an interesting read.

Something wonderful this way comes to Plimoth Plantation in 2010!

**Plimoth Plantation** is a bicultural, 17<sup>th</sup>-century living history museum located an hour south of Boston in Plymouth, (Exit 4, Route 3 south) and 20 minutes north of Cape Cod. The museum is a private, non-profit educational institution supported by admission fees, contributions, memberships, function sales and revenue from Museum dining programs/ services and Museum shops. Plimoth Plantation is a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate and receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, The Federal Institute of Museums and Library Services, The National Endowment for the Humanities, private foundations, corporations, and local businesses. For more information visit: [www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org).