

SHAKESPEARE IN THE RUFF

MEDIA RELEASE

April 25, 2023

RUFF EXPANDS ACCESSIBILITY CAPACITY WITH GRANT FROM OTF

Toronto, ON – Thanks to a \$10,900 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in 2022, Shakespeare in the Ruff (Ruff) has been working to expand its accessibility capacity as an organization over the past year. The project has involved consulting with Deaf and disability community advisors Elizabeth Morris, Alex Bulmer, and Ophira Calof, and training to make Ruff's website accessible.

"I was very pleased to see the efforts of Shakespeare in the Ruff recognized and supported by OTF," said Peter Tabuns, MPP for Toronto-Danforth. "It is no surprise that Ruff has undertaken this project to make Shakespeare available to an even wider audience."

With this support from OTF, Ruff developed Accessibility-on-Demand in 2022 – offering a menu of access options for audience members attending every performance of their summer production of *Othello* in Withrow Park. These options included open captioning, pre-show touch tours, sighted guides to assist audience members through the park, and description buddies. Ruff will be offering these same options and more for their summer 2023 production of *Richard Three*.

"We are very grateful to the OTF for supporting this project," said Christine Horne, Shakespeare in the Ruff leadership collective member. "Accessibility is a major priority for us at Ruff, and to have funds dedicated to our training so we can continue to grow as an organization is a big step forward. Particularly at a time for the sector when just keeping our heads above water is difficult enough."

Richard Three, with Accessibility-on-Demand, runs from August 20th to September 4th, 2023, in Withrow Park. For updates join Ruff's mailing list at www.shakespeareintheruff.com or find them on social media.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations celebrates 40 years of grant making in Ontario and making a lasting impact in communities. Last year, OTF invested nearly \$110M into 1,022 community projects and partnerships, which included funding for the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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