

## News



### Petersburg theater to perform Shakespeare at Battersea estate

Recommend

42 people recommend this.

By [JEREMY SLAYTON](#) | TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER  
Published: July 16, 2010

vote  
now **Petersburg, Va.** -- An 18th-century estate in Petersburg is transforming into the stage for the latest production from Sycamore Rouge, the city's professional theater.

Battersea, built in 1768 near the south bank of the Appomattox River, is the site for 11 performances of William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in Sycamore Rouge's first attempt at an outdoor production.

"It is the biggest thing we have ever undertaken," said kb saine, producing artistic director at Sycamore Rouge. "In all aspects, it is the largest production that we have ever done."

More than 30 actors will perform under the direction of Shanea N. Taylor, with a fantasy-filled design by production designer Keith Saine and costume designer Andre Harrington.

The first show is today at 8 p.m. All performances are free.

The productions at Battersea are the result of a partnership between Sycamore Rouge and the Battersea Foundation, a nonprofit group leading restoration and preservation efforts at the historic home. It presents the opportunity to showcase the estate, while bringing theater into the community, the organizations said.

"It's going to be a first-class production; the setting could not be more perfect," said Tempy C. Barbru, executive director of the Battersea Foundation. "It's ideal for a family outing."

As the estate is transformed into an outdoor theater, one of the biggest concerns is electricity and the ability to adequately light the productions, but saine said production has been smooth.

At the same time, Battersea Foundation is in the midst of a \$1 million capital campaign to raise funds toward the purchase and continued restoration of the 242-year-old home. So far, the group has raised \$60,000 for the purchase. The city of Petersburg currently owns the home and is selling it for \$200,000 to the foundation.

"They are interested in us completing the sale by the end of the year, but are willing to work with us, if, for some reason, we might need a few extra months," Barbru said. "We feel very good about the progress. In these economic times people have been very, very generous, and we deeply appreciate all the commitment so far."

Monies are also being raised for matching grants from the Cabell Foundation and Save America's Treasures Foundation to fund preservation and restoration projects. Proceeds from the sale of food, beverages and retail products will benefit Sycamore Rouge and Battersea Foundation.

"It's the final production of our fourth season, and I think it's a really great way for us to go into being five," saine said.

#### If you go

Sycamore Rouge presents "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at historic Battersea.

**When:** starting today, with performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings through Aug. 7; Battersea opens at 6:30 p.m., and performances begin at 8; admission is free

**Where:** Battersea, 1289 Upper Appomattox St., Petersburg

**More info:** (804) 957-5707 or [SycamoreRouge.org](#)