

FEATURE STORY

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SHE DOES IT ALL . . . AND THEN SOME!

Multi-talented Suzanne Dean takes on the role of a lifetime

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May 12, 2008 - San Pedro, CA – Suzanne Dean has waited a long time to play Cleopatra and her day has finally arrived! Recently cast as the lead in Shakespeare by the Sea's (SBTS) summer production of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Dean prepares to take on one of her greatest aspirations – playing one of the most famous queens of all time.

"There isn't a soul out there like Suzanne Dean. She is super talented, hard-working and is an inspiration to all those who watch, work with and know her," said Lisa Coffi, Producing Artistic Director for SBTS. "We are thrilled beyond words to have her playing Cleopatra."

The extremely versatile Dean is no stranger to taking on challenging roles both on stage and off. In addition to being an actress, Dean is freelance film and video producer, a mother of two boys (ages 12 and 14) and is the Development Director for SBTS, the Little Fish Theatre and Shaking it up with Shakespeare. With a resume like hers, it's safe to say there isn't much Dean doesn't do – and she does it all incredibly well.

"I feel the most truly alive when I am acting," Dean said. "So for me, days are spent begging for funds, bartering for services and teaching workshops to underserved youth, but evenings are spent in rehearsals or performances. So I have a different kind of reward at the end of the day."

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, Dean first knew she wanted to act at age three when she saw *The Wizard of Oz*. "Or maybe I just wanted to live in Oz!" Dean said. But by age six after seeing *Gone With the Wind*, Dean was certain acting was her passion. An only child, Dean attended performing arts schools in both Middle and High School and left Texas after graduation to pursue an acting career.

Since then, Dean has acted in well over 60 plays, 17 of them Shakespeare (five of them more than once) and 10 of them with SBTS. She has graced the stage time and again playing many of Shakespeare's most infamous characters including Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* and Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*, among others.

When asked her favorite role? "Lady Macbeth has definitely been my favorite," Dean said. "I could play that role for the rest of my life and still find new things to love."

Mission Statement:

Shakespeare by the Sea's mission is to bring new, contemporary and classical works to underserved, culturally diverse audiences in order to ignite imagination, promote literacy and encourage artistic expression.

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SHAKESPEARE BY THE SEA

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Audiences continue to find new things to love about Dean and are in awe of her ability to bring her multi-layered characters to life on stage. She is compelling, dynamic and magnetic and has a gift for turning Shakespeare's prose into clear poetic dialogue that even a first-time Shakespeare theatre goer can understand. She is a Shakespeare by the Sea superstar drawing fans from all walks of life that come each season just to see her perform.

"Suzanne Dean is my favorite, she always makes the characters come to life. It's like she is who she's playing." – Marty Barrera, audience member.

Dean's training includes the British American Drama Academy (BADA) in Oxford, England, a BFA in Theatre and Film from Hofstra University in New York, The Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, The Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum and the Actor's Studio Theatre in California.

Her biggest inspirations are Vivien Leigh, Natalie Wood and James Dean – and most recently Kenneth Branagh has risen to the top of her list. "I am in awe of his talent and ease, especially with Shakespeare," Dean says.

No doubt about it, *we* are in awe of *Dean's* talent and ease, especially with Shakespeare and can't wait to see her Cleopatra shine this summer in Shakespeare by the Sea's *Antony and Cleopatra* opening June 19th at 8pm at Point Fermin Park in San Pedro.

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:

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For more information on SBTS and our schedule of performances please refer to our website www.shakespearebythesea.org.

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