



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clayton and the Old North Neighborhood Selected for the 2014 and 2015 Performances of Shakespeare in the Streets *Local theatre also announces Playwright-in-Residence*

ST. LOUIS (Feb. 10, 2014) -- Rick Dildine, artistic and executive director of the Festival, announced today that Shakespeare Festival St. Louis will take to the streets in Clayton and Old North neighborhoods for the 2014 and 2015 performances of the wildly popular Shakespeare in the Streets (SITS).

The event in Clayton is scheduled for September 18 - 20, with Old North to be scheduled in September 2015. The now three-year-old SITS is a grassroots theatrical experience that invites St. Louis neighborhoods to tell their unique community stories, and which culminates with three, free one-hour street performances that showcase the combined talents of professional actors who perform alongside local residents.

The largest programming expansion since the Festival's founding in 2001, SITS debuted in 2012 on Cherokee Street in the Gravois Park/Benton Park West neighborhood to enthusiastic reviews. Last year, the event was held on Manchester Road in The Grove/Forest Park Southeast neighborhood.

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis also adds Nancy Bell as the organization's Playwright-in-Residence through 2016. Bell has written the two previous Shakespeare in the Streets plays: *The New World* (2012) and *Old Hearts Fresh* (2013). Both plays were nominated for a St. Louis Theatre Circle Award for Outstanding New Play.

"After our experience on Cherokee Street and in The Grove on Manchester, it is clear that every neighborhood has a distinct story, and that every perspective and point of view contributes to the success of our region," Dildine said. "With Shakespeare in the Streets, under the creative guidance of Nancy Bell, we have begun the journey of telling St. Louis' story one neighborhood at a time."

"The Shakespeare Festival is one of the exciting additions to Clayton's 2014 special event lineup," said Clayton Mayor Harold Sanger. "We are excited about and welcome the opportunity to partner with the other communities in the SITS network."

Constantino (Tino) Ochoa, Board President of Old North St. Louis Restoration Group, is equally excited about his neighborhood's selection for the 2015 event.

"Old North is home to a diverse and growing population with a vibrant, emerging arts scene," Ochoa said. "Having Shakespeare in the Streets here will be a wonderful addition to the quality of life for Old North's residents and all of the other adjacent neighborhoods just north of Downtown."

In the eight months leading up to the Clayton performance, the Festival's creative team -- Director Alec Wild, Playwright Nancy Bell, and Production Designer Sean Savoie -- will be meeting with residents and community leaders who will contribute to all aspects of the production from story development to the live outdoor performances. The resulting script will be a reflection of one of Shakespeare's play, real conversations and Bell's own impressions. Details on the street location, cast members and actual play for the Clayton performance will be announced later this summer.

Support for SITS programming in 2014 and 2015 is being provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

In Forest Park, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis will be producing three plays in two alternating main stage shows -- *Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2* and *Henry V* (May 17 - June 15). This will mark the first time audiences will be invited to experience more than one of Shakespeare's works in a rotating repertory; each show will play on alternate nights, with two double-feature Saturdays built into the schedule.

In the past 13 years, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has attracted more than 600,000 people to its annual free performances in Forest Park. The organization has reached 250,000 students through its educational programming and, in 2010, launched Shake 38, a marathon city-wide presentation of Shakespeare's entire 38-play canon. Since 2011, Shakespeare in the Streets has invited St. Louis' neighborhoods to tell their unique community stories, shutting down a street for performances that present the combined talents of professional actors alongside local residents. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Regional Arts Commission, SHAKE38.com, will launch on April 23, 2014, Shakespeare's 450th birthday. For more information, please visit www.sfstl.com or call 314/531-9800.

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