



## SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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### **'Henry IV and Henry V' Cast Announced:**

#### **2014 Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Opens First of Two-rotating Productions May 17 at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park**

ST. LOUIS (January 23, 2014) -- Jim Butz will play the expansive role of Prince Hal/King Henry V in Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' productions of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, May 17 through June 15, at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park, it was announced today by Rick Dildine, artistic and executive director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis.

Butz is a St. Louis native and winner of two Kevin Kline awards for his previous Festival performances as Marc Anthony (*Julius Caesar*/2006) and Hamlet (*Hamlet*/2010). *Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2*, written originally as two separate plays, will be edited to fit into one evening. It will open on May 17 and will be directed by Tim Ocel. *Henry V*, directed by newly appointed SFSTL associate artistic director Bruce Longworth will open on May 24. The productions will then play on alternate evenings and will be produced to stand alone as complete evenings of theater. There will be two double-feature Saturdays -- June 7 and June 14 -- when the audience will be able to see both plays back-to-back during a matinee/evening performance.

"Epic events like this are rare for actors," Dildine said, "and Jim Butz is one of those incredibly smart actors in the country who can accomplish this monumental task. He has to track a character over a decade in very detailed scenes. We watch 'Hal' grow from being a rebellious son to the King of England. In the past quarter of a century similar theatrical events include *Angels in America* and *Coast of Utopia*. Event theatre like this is a unique opportunity to experience history the way Shakespeare saw it, and all in one sitting."

According to Directors Longworth and Ocel, the chance to play the whole arc, from Prince Hal in *Henry IV Part 1* through *Henry V*, is a rare one. "Every actor wants to complete the story, and this offers the chance to do so," Longworth said.

"Jim totally understands the progression of the young Prince Hal into King Henry V," Ocel said. "As a human being, he has access to all the parts of his youth, but also has the reality and sins of being a grown-up. When you couple that with being a skilled and intelligent actor, it makes for an exciting time in the rehearsal hall, and a terrific journey through a good decade of history."

Butz was most recently seen in The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis' production of *Freud's Last Session*, as C.S. Lewis. He has enjoyed working in New York and in regional theaters across the country. Favorite credits include *Hamlet* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis), *A Number* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), *Lobby Hero* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), *Measure for Measure* (The Mustardseed Theatre), *The Merchant of Venice* (The New Jewish Theatre), *Biloxi Blues* (The Geva Theatre), *The Lion in Winter* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), *Amadeus* (Georgia Shakespeare Festival), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare Santa Fe).

The plays are part of Shakespeare's tetralogy about the successive reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry V. Both productions will feature the same cast of 22 actors, the majority of them in dual roles, and all but six of them from St. Louis.

"Some of the characters die before *Henry V*, so the challenge with this season was putting together a company of actors who could create two similar yet distinct worlds," Dildine said. "Tim Ocel and Bruce Longworth have created productions that use the same vocabulary and setting, so they were looking for similar types of actors for these plays."

In addition to two opening nights and a slightly expanded performance run (May 17 - June 15), the two productions will require four extra weeks of rehearsal built into the regular schedule. Rehearsal time will be split between both shows with actors working with the two directors on a near daily basis.

Joining Butz will be veterans Kari Ely, Gary Glasgow, Joneal Joplin, Anderson Matthews, Andy Neiman, Michael James Reed, Chauncy Thomas and Jerry Vogel. New additions include Drew Battles, who recently appeared in the lead role in the Festival's Shakespeare in the Streets in The Grove neighborhood. The role of Falstaff will be played by Tony DeBruno, a 21-year company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. St. Louisans Dan Haller and Leo Ramsey, students in the Festival's advanced teen program, Shakespeare Squadron, have also been cast.

Rounding out the cast is Robert Ashton, Mason Conrad, James Hesse, Dakota Mackey-McGee, Alex Miller, Charles Pasternak, Reginald Pierre, Antonio Rodriguez, and Kelley Weber.

The creative team includes Festival veterans Scott Neale (Set Design), Dottie Marshall Englis (Costume Design), John Wylie (Lighting Design), Rusty Wandall (Sound Designer), and Gregg Coffin (Composer).

Based on the success of last year's introduction, Butler's Pantry and the Festival will continue its intimate and elegant communal dining experience for select evenings throughout the run of the shows. A special pre-ordered picnic option will also be available for the double-feature days on June 7 and 14. As in previous years, the pre-show Festival activities will include a nightly Green Show at 6:30 p.m.

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](http://www.sfstl.com) or call 314/531-9800.

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