



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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Two Opening Weekends Highlight Season Kick-off for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' *Henry IV* and *Henry V* *Henry IV Opens May 17; Henry V Opens May 24*

ST. LOUIS (May 5, 2014) -- Jim Butz will portray nearly a decade in the life of Henry V when Shakespeare Festival St. Louis kicks off its first-ever repertory season of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* May 17 through June 15 at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. Two opening nights, May 17 (*Henry IV*) and May 24 (*Henry V*), communal dining, double-feature Saturdays, and picnics in the Park are just a few of the amenities audiences can experience under the stars this year.

Following their respective opening weekends, the shows will alternate nightly. Two double-feature Saturdays (June 7 and 14) will give audiences the opportunity to watch both plays back-to-back. *Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2*, written as two separate plays, have been edited to fit into one evening. It will open on May 17 and is directed by Tim Ocel. Preview nights are May 15-16. *Henry V*, directed by Bruce Longworth, will open on May 24; preview nights for this show are May 22-23. While the Festival encourages patrons to attend *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, both shows will be produced to stand alone as complete evenings of theater.

"Audience members can expect a once-in-a-lifetime theatrical experience this season," said Rick Dildine, Artistic and Executive Director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis. "Many theaters around the world have performed these plays in consecutive seasons; however, we are performing them at the same time with the same cast on the same set."

The productions feature the same cast of 22 performers playing multiple parts. *Henry IV, Part 1* is believed to have been written no later than 1597; *Henry IV, Part 2*, sometime between 1596 and 1599; and *Henry V* in approximately 1599. The stories are part of Shakespeare's tetralogy about the successive reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V.

At the annual free festival in Forest Park, no tickets are necessary, and there are no gates to walk through. Patrons can bring a blanket or chair and sit in the free lawn seating, which is first come, first served. They can also enjoy their own picnic or purchase concessions on site. Ticketed seating is also available for \$10 or \$20 premium seating and can be reserved online at <https://www.sfstl.com/in-the-park/plan-your-visit>.

Patrons wanting added flair to their experience in the Glen can purchase tickets to the Festival's intimate and elegant communal pre-show dinners, scheduled on select evenings

throughout the production. Catered by Bixby's, a Butler's Pantry-owned restaurant, the full-course meal will begin at 6 p.m. on Fridays beginning May 30. Tickets are \$50 and include dinner and a reserved seat and must be purchased online. A cash bar will be available.

The nightly Green Show, at 6:30 p.m., will include a 20-minute adaptation of the mainstage show, which will introduce the characters and plot to children of all ages. Musicians, dancers, singers, jugglers, and a family art activities area round out the green show entertainment

This season has been made possible with the support of the Regional Arts Commission; financial assistance provided by the Missouri Arts Council; a state agency, and funded in part by the Arts and Education Council.

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 city-wide marathon 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 launched 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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EDITOR'S NOTE: Reporters, photographers and camera crews are invited to the performance. For more information on interview opportunities, or to attend one of the V.I.P. opening nights, please contact Mary McHugh, 314/910-1528 (marymchugh1@mac.com).