



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The 2017 Shakespeare in the Streets Production will be
Performed in Downtown St. Louis Sept. 15-17**
PNC Arts Alive will underwrite the first citywide celebration

ST. LOUIS (Dec. 6, 2016) – Residents from all neighborhoods will be asked to reflect on “what it means to be a St. Louisan today” as part of the sixth annual 2017 Shakespeare in the Streets: ONE CITY, underwritten by PNC Arts Alive, Sept. 15-17, in downtown St. Louis. The specific location will be announced at a later date.

“We are taking our neighborhood approach, which we have utilized for the past five years, and elevating it to a citywide conversation,” said Rick Dildine, artistic and executive director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis. “Over and over again we’ve recognized consistent themes throughout what would seem varied communities. With our resulting research, connections, and ideas, we felt it was time to bring the entirety of the St. Louis region together and ask ourselves ‘What does it mean to be a St. Louisan today? What are our hopes and dreams for this great inclusive city?’”

Nancy Bell, playwright-in-residence at Shakespeare Festival St. Louis and author of the past five SITS productions, will create the adaptation for the 2017 event, along with creative team members Tom Martin (director) and Mark Wilson (set designer). The Urban League of St. Louis will also serve as a producing partner of the production.

In keeping with the event’s tradition, a street is closed so professional actors can perform alongside local residents and community leaders to tell the story of their particular neighborhood. The creative team typically begins meeting with residents nearly a year prior to the performance. The resulting script is a reflection of Shakespeare’s plays, real conversations with the residents, and Bells own impressions. Patrons are encouraged to bring lawn chairs to watch the nightly free performances that are staged in the street.

“Despite anything and everything, we are indeed one city, and our fate belongs to each other,” said Bell. “We can’t wait to celebrate that.”

Bell, a 2017 St. Louis Visionary Award honoree, is the author of the Shakespeare in the Streets adaptations: “*Remember Me*” (Maplewood, 2016); “*The World Begun*” (Old North; 2015 St. Louis Theatre Circle Award for Outstanding New Play); “*Good in Everything*” (Clayton, 2014); “*Old Hearts Fresh*” (The Grove; 2013 St. Louis Theatre Circle Award for Outstanding New Play); and “*The New World*” (Benton Park West, 2012).

The support from PNC is part of a multi-year initiative to support visual and performing arts groups with the goal of increasing arts access and engagement in new and innovative ways.

“The PNC Foundation has a long history of providing grants to organizations that strengthen and enrich the lives of our communities,” said Michael Scully, PNC regional president for St. Louis. “We understand that a rich arts community is a significant driver of our economic success, providing employment, boosting tourism and making the region attractive for businesses, residents and visitors.”

Since its inception in 2001, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has surpassed the one million mark in attendance through its work In the Schools, In the Streets and In the Park with more than 710,000 people attending the free main stage productions at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. The organization has reached an additional 300,000 students In the Schools through its educational programming. In 2010, the Festival launched SHAKE 38, a marathon participatory presentation of Shakespeare’s entire 38-play canon community wide. In 2012, the Festival shut down its first street, Cherokee, to present a community-based play In the Streets. Shakespeare Festival St. Louis receives generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis. In 2016, the Festival was named Arts Organization of the Year by the Missouri Arts Council. For more information, please visit www.sfstl.com or call 314-531-9800.

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Shakespeare in the Streets

2016 *Remember Me* (a mash-up of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo & Juliet*)
Sutton Boulevard, Maplewood

2015 *The World Begun* (based on Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*)
N. 14th Street, Old North

- 2014 *Good in Everything* (based on *As You Like It*)
Central Avenue, Clayton
- 2013 *Old Hearts Fresh* (based on *The Winter's Tale*)
Manchester Road, The Grove
- 2012 *The New World* (based on an adaptation of *The Tempest*)
Cherokee Street/Benton Park West