



## SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

For further information, contact  
Mary McHugh, 314/910-1528  
[marymchugh1@mac.com](mailto:marymchugh1@mac.com)

### **Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Announces 'Love's Labors Lost' as the 2019 Main Stage Production**

*Tom Ridgely to direct the production set for May 31 – June 23 in Forest Park*

ST. LOUIS (Jan. 17, 2019) -- Shakespeare Festival St. Louis announced today that "Love's Labors Lost" will be the 2019 season main stage production at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. A comedic masterpiece by William Shakespeare, the production is scheduled May 31 through June 23; preview nights are set for May 29-30.

Tom Ridgely, executive producer of the Festival, will direct the production, his first since taking the helm of the organization last spring.

Belonging to Shakespeare's "lyrical" period, which also included 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' the play tells the story of the Princess of France and her ladies who arrive on a diplomatic mission to Navarre only to be met by a young king and his lords who have taken a vow not to see women. Affairs of state give way to affairs of the heart as Shakespeare reveals with great humor and compassion the way our culture sometimes doesn't fully prepare us for the realities of love and intimacy. A feast of language and theatrical virtuosity, 'Love's Labors Lost' shimmers with all the passion and promise of a first kiss.

Interesting point of note: "Love's Labors Lost" features the single longest word in all of Shakespeare's plays – honorificabilitudinitatibus.

"'Love's Labors Lost' is one of Shakespeare's most dazzling and delightful comedies - and a brilliant study of the ways culture shapes courtship," Ridgely said. "The Bard's insights into the different ways men and women love and want to be loved have never felt so contemporary, and the climactic final scene is one of the most moving and masterful in the canon. It's also the perfect play for Forest Park, with its lovers and clowns cavorting all over the sumptuous royal park of the King of Navarre, and I can't wait to share it with our audiences."

Formerly the artistic director and co-founder of Waterwell in New York, Ridgely was responsible for developing and producing more than a dozen world premieres and adaptations of classics. Under his leadership, Waterwell was nominated for three IT awards, a Drama Desk, a *New York Magazine* Culture Award and a *Village Voice* “Best of NYC.” He also adapted and directed Waterwell’s dual-language (English/Farsi) “Hamlet,” which was designed and performed by a company of predominantly Middle Eastern and South Asian artists. Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* described the production as "conceptually bracing...a magnetic reminder of where Hamlet came from and what he has lost."

Ridgely will be joined by creative team members Jason Simms (Set Design) of New York; Melissa Trn (Costumes), a former St. Louisan currently living in Los Angeles; and John Wylie (Lighting) and Rusty Wandall (Sound). This marks Wylie’s sixth season with the Festival, and Wandall’s eighth.

The cast for “Love’s Labors Lost” will be announced in April.

#### **About Shakespeare Festival St. Louis**

Shakespeare Festival St. Louis presents Shakespeare and works inspired by his legacy of storytelling. Since 2001, the festival has grown from producing a single production of Shakespeare in the Park to a year-round season of impactful theater in exciting and accessible venues throughout the St. Louis community. The festival’s artistic and education programs reached over 50,000 patrons and students during the 2018 season and have reached over one million since 2001. Leadership support for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis’ 2019 season is provided by the Whitaker Foundation. The festival is also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis. For more information, please visit [www.sfstl.com](http://www.sfstl.com), or call 314-531-9800.

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