



## SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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### **Shakespeare Festival St. Louis Announces 2019 Free Fall Programming** *'Love's Labors Lost,' a Romantic Comedy, Opens May 31* *at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park*

ST. LOUIS (April 25, 2019) – The nationally-recognized Shakespeare in the Streets program will highlight the stories of not just one community, but two – Normandy, Missouri and Brussels, Illinois -- for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' first urban-rural exchange Sept. 12-14. The performances will be inspired by the Bard's play, "As You Like It."

Audiences will choose whether to start in Normandy or Brussels -- 45 minutes from one another -- where Act One will begin at the same time in both locations. Act Two will take place on busses that transport the audience members to the banks of the Mississippi River. The final act will occur on the water between Missouri and Illinois where the actors will unite to share not only the same space but also the same story. Partners include Beyond Housing, the Normandy Schools Collaborative and Brussels High School. Event locations, casting and creative information will be released in July.

In October, the Festival will unveil Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's 1957 12-part suite titled, "Such Sweet Thunder," an extraordinary but long-forgotten piece of work inspired by different Shakespearean characters. In 1960, French choreographer Maurice Béjart used it as the score for an avant-garde ballet. The work will be revived in partnership with Jazz St. Louis to reconstruct the score, Big Muddy Dance Company to create new choreography, and the Festival, which will weave the pieces together with Shakespearean scenes and sonnets. A fourth partner, Nine Network, will host the resulting three free performances Oct. 3-5 in its Public Media Commons. Additional details will be released in late summer.

### **'Love's Labors Lost' – May 31 through June 23**

The Bard's comedic take on love and courtship will resonate throughout Shakespeare Glen when the Princess of France (Kea Trevett) and her ladies arrive in the King of Navarre's (Sky Smith) royal forest during Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' production of "Love's Labors Lost," May 31 through June 23, in Forest Park.

Performances are nightly, excluding Mondays, and begin at 8 p.m. Preview performances are scheduled May 29-30.

Highlights of this lyrical comedic production include original music composed by St. Louis-based Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra, a diverse cast under the direction of the festival's Executive Producer Tom Ridgely, and a forested set that blurs that line between stage and park.

“Love’s Labors Lost” features Shakespeare’s largest cast of comic characters, including four sets of lovers, and is the only one of his plays set in a park. The story revolves around the princess and her ladies who arrive on a diplomatic mission to Navarre, only to be met by the 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.

“I think Love’s Labors Lost asks the question of what happens when the ideas of love that young people absorb from their culture have totally unprepared them for what it’s like to actually be in a relationship with another human being,” Ridgely said. “The Bard’s advice to young lovers, I think, is how grand gestures don’t always pan out. Nor do disguises. He’s asking them to be curious, to get to know the actual person.”

The nightly Green Show will begin at 6:30 p.m. and feature local musicians, family art activities and roving performers. Free backstage tours will begin at 6:30 p.m. in front of the main stage. A 20-minute mini-play of “Love’s Labors Lost” will be performed Friday through Sunday by the Festival’s advanced teen ensemble, the Shakespeare Squadron.

Open lawn seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Premium seating, priced at \$10 and \$20, can be reserved online beginning Wed., May 1, at [www.sfstl.com](http://www.sfstl.com) until noon the day of the show, or purchased after 5:30 p.m. in the Glen. Festival souvenir picnic blankets, comfortable for two and pre-set in the blanket seating area, are also available for \$40.

Picnic fare, including sandwiches, snacks, beer, wine, soda, and water are available for purchase, provided by the Saint Louis Zoo. Audiences will be able to purchase Schlafly’s signature craft beer, available exclusively at the production in Forest Park. Cash, debit, and credit cards are accepted in Shakespeare Glen.

Four performances – June 4, 6, 13 and 20 – will be American Sign Language interpreted, thanks to support from Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Mind’s Eye Radio will also audio describe a performance for the visually impaired.

For a full cast and creative team list, please visit [www.sfstl.com](http://www.sfstl.com).

### **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. In 2019, the Festival was recognized as a "What's Right with the Region" finalist by Focus St. Louis. 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. **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/shakesfestSTL> **Twitter:** @shakesfestSTL **Instagram:** ShakesfestSTL **Snapchat:** shakesfestSTL