



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 28, 2018

CONTACT: Bill Prenevost
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COMPLETE PROGRAMMING SET FOR 2018 FESTIVAL

(Normal, IL) The Illinois Shakespeare Festival (ISF), under new artistic director John C. Stark, announces full slate of programming for its 2018 summer season. The Festival begins June 30 and continues through August 11. Tickets are available online at **IllinoisShakes.com**.

The mainstage productions are *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V* by William Shakespeare, and *Shakespeare In Love* by Tom Stoppard & Marc Norman; adapted by Lee Hal. These productions will open over the first three weeks of the Festival starting with *Merry Wives*, July 5–7, and *Henry V*, July 12–14, both at the Ewing Theatre. *Shakespeare in Love* will begin July 19–22 at the Illinois State University Center for the Performing Arts (CPA) Theatre. A rotating repertory schedule will commence July 24–August 10.

A special event will launch the 2018 Festival on Saturday, June 30 when MooNie the MagnifCent will perform two shows. Born at the Festival in 1992, Philip Earl Johnson's one-man circus of juggling, rope walking, and audience participation has delighted audiences across the country for the last 25 years. MooNie will perform a family matinee at 2 p.m. and a new show for older audiences, *To Flop or Not to Flop* at 8 p.m. In this second show, MooNiE speaks for the first time, telling true clown stories alongside Shakespeare's legendary fools.

The Improvised Shakespeare Company returns once again to perform three comedic "made-up plays" based on audience suggestions. The performances will take place July 8, 25, and August 8 at the CPA Theatre.

ISF's Theatre for Young Audiences will present *Double, Double* by Nancy Steele Brokaw, which draws upon the connections between local figure Abraham Lincoln and Shakespeare. The performances will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursdays and Saturdays, July 7–August 9 at Ewing Cultural Center. The July 21 performance will be held at Bloomington's Franklin Park. All performances are free and for all ages.

Reserved-seating tickets for the mainstage shows are available as season passes for as little as \$40-\$109 for all three plays. Single play prices are \$20-\$54. Tickets to MooNiE run \$15-\$18; and Improvised Shakespeare tickets are \$18, all general seating. Purchase tickets online at IllinoisShakes.com or by calling **(309) 438-2535**.

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Founded in 1978, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival is the only fully professional theatre in central Illinois, serving in residence at Illinois State University, College of Fine Arts. It is a member of the University Resident Theatre Association engaging union actors, directors and designers. ISF is also a member of Theatre Communications Group, and the Shakespeare Theatre Association.



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**ISF ANNOUNCES GROUNDBREAKING SYMPOSIUM
"SHAKESPEARE IN THE LAND OF LINCOLN"**

Bloomington-Normal, IL-- The Illinois Shakespeare Festival (ISF) announces a revealing "Shakespeare in the Land of Lincoln" symposium, which will explore the unique fascination that Abraham Lincoln had with William Shakespeare's writings. The symposium events coincide with ISF's 2018 season of plays and other activities starting June 30, 2018.

Our 16th president's affinity for the Bard is well known. According to Lincoln scholars, he kept a book of Shakespeare's work on his desk in the White House, and *Macbeth* was his favorite play. However, the references to this connection were not definitive until author Michael Anderegg's 2015 book, *Lincoln and Shakespeare* (University of Kansas Press).

According to ISF managing director William Prenevost, "There is a rich local history involving Mr. Lincoln from the years he worked in Bloomington-Normal. It is celebrated every summer with Lincoln's Festival on Route 66. After Dr. Anderegg agreed to come ISF to talk about his book with our patrons, local Lincoln scholars convinced me to expand it into a symposium."

"Shakespeare in the Land of Lincoln" is produced in partnership with Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington-Normal and the Looking for Lincoln organization in Springfield, Illinois. The symposium includes four lectures by leading Lincoln scholars, a new play for young audiences, and exhibits on both Lincoln and Shakespeare. The lectures will be held at the historic Ewing Manor next door to ISF's home stage, Ewing Theatre. The lectures are free. Reservations are recommended.

James M. Cornelius, Ph.D. July 14 at 2 p.m.

Curator of the Lincoln Collection in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum in Springfield, Illinois, Cornelius was previously at the University of Illinois Library's Illinois Historical and Lincoln Collections for eight years.

Spotlight Speaker, Michael Anderegg, Ph.D. July 21 at 4 p.m.

A professor of English for most of his career, Anderegg has written several books including *Cinematic Shakespeare* and *Orson Welles, Shakespeare, and Popular Culture*. In *Lincoln and Shakespeare*, Anderegg describes how Lincoln discovered the Bard's works at a time when they were first being widely distributed and read in the U.S. The words and stories resonated with the future president. Anderegg states, "It was to Shakespeare's dramatic universe that Lincoln turned to again and again for intellectual nourishment, emotional support, and sheer pleasure he could find nowhere else."

Guy Fraker, Ph.D. July 28 at 2 p.m.

A Lincoln scholar and author, Fraker has written two books about Lincoln: *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency: The Eighth Judicial Court* and *Looking for Lincoln in Illinois: A guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Court* which is a part of the Looking for Lincoln book series.

Robert Bray, Ph.D. August 4 at 2 p.m.

Bray has authored multiple works on Lincoln including *Reading with Lincoln* which describes the influence on the president's speeches, writing, and policies. Bray also co-wrote the play, *Lincoln's in Town!* that tells of a young Lincoln's historical connections to the Bloomington area.

Registration for the symposium is available on the ISF website, IllinoisShakes.com.

Lincoln's Festival on Route 66: Trails, Rails & Roads in Bloomington-Normal offers a weekend of events July 20-22. This festival is a celebration of Lincoln's life and his historic legacy in the area. The three-day event offers Lincoln-related programming and experiences for all ages. All events are open to the public and most are free. Go to LincolnsFestival.net.

The Illinois Shakespeare Festival is a proud partner in the Looking for Lincoln - Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. The National Heritage Area is a 42-county region in Illinois dedicated to preserving and sharing the legacy of Abraham Lincoln with visitors from around the world through authentic historic attractions, stories, and special events that capture the essence of Lincoln's 30 years in Illinois. For more information, visit LookingForLincoln.com.

The Illinois Shakespeare Festival is supported by the Illinois Arts Council and sponsored by Candlewood Suites, Bloomington. For more information about visiting Bloomington-Normal, IL, go to VisitBN.org.

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Founded in 1978, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival is a member of the University Resident Theatre Association to engage union actors, directors, and designers. ISF is also a member of Theatre Communications Group, and the Shakespeare Theatre Association.

2018 SEASON FACT SHEET

Key Staff:

Artistic Director, John C. Stark

Managing Director, William Prenevost (also contact for media inquiries)

Main Stage Plays:

The Merry Wives of Windsor by William Shakespeare

Henry V by William Shakespeare

Shakespeare in Love by Tom Stoppard & Marc Norman; adapted by Lee Hal

Featured Events:

MooNiE the Magnif 'Cent by Phil Johnson

The Improvised Shakespeare Company

Double, Double by Nancy Steele Brokaw (Theatre for Young Audiences)

Venues:

Ewing Theatre

An open-air space with thrust stage, 438 seats at the Ewing Cultural Center,
Bloomington, IL

Center for the Performing Arts (CPA) Theatre

A traditional space, 499 seats, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Production Schedule:

Each play will have one week to preview, after which the three plays will be in rotating repertory.

<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Preview July 5	Opens July 6	Ewing
Theatre			
<i>Henry V</i>	Preview July 12	Opens July 13	Ewing
Theatre			
<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>	Preview July 19	Opens July 20	CPA
Theatre			

Except for two performances of *Merry Wives* July 17 and 18, the rotating repertory schedule will commence July 24 through August 11.

Performances Times:

Tuesdays-Thursdays 7:30 p.m.

Fridays & Saturdays 8 p.m.

Matinees 2 p.m. (except July 21 at 3 p.m.)

Single Ticket Prices: \$20, \$35, \$54

Season Ticket Prices: \$40, \$70, \$109

Group Discount: 20% off for groups of 12 or more

Ordering Tickets:

Online: IllinoisShakes.com Telephone: (309) 438-2535

In Person: Illinois State University CPA Box Office or

Box Office at Ewing Theatre (opens 1 hour prior to show time)