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Shakespeare Isn't Dead **2016 New Orleans Shakespeare Festival Celebrates the Power of the Classics in Citywide Celebration**

NEW ORLEANS (January 14, 2016) – This year the Crescent City is cast as a lead actor in the global commemorations surrounding the 400th anniversary of the death of the world's most famous playwright.

Five key public events associated with Shakespeare and the classics will unfold across the city:

- A once-in-a-lifetime exhibition entitled [First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare](#) will be on Tulane's campus from May 9-31, 2016.
- A production of Lisa Wolpe's *Shakespeare and the Alchemy of Gender* will run from May 20-22, 2016 in Tulane's Lupin Theater.
- A production of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* will run June 18-July 2, 2016 in Tulane's Lupin Theater.
- A production of Tony Kushner's *The Illusion* will run from July 23-August 6, 2016 in Tulane's Lupin Theater.
- Two, one night only collaborations with [The NOLA Project](#), entitled *By Any Scenes Necessary*, will run June 21 and July 27 in Tulane's Lupin Theater.

A video announcement can be viewed on the [Festival's YouTube page](#).

"In 2016 New Orleans will present one of the most unique celebrations of Shakespeare's life in the world," said Martin Sachs, the Festival's Artistic Director. "The Festival is thrilled to partner with internationally acclaimed actors like Lisa Wolpe and local stars like the members of the NOLA Project," said Clare Moncrief, the Festival's Managing Director.

Tulane University has been chosen by the Folger Shakespeare Library as the only location in Louisiana to host a special exhibition entitled [First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare](#), and the Festival is thrilled to be a part of the events. Considered one of the world's most treasured books, the *First Folio* was the first printed collection of Shakespeare's plays. Only 233 copies are known to still exist, and in 2001 a copy sold for \$6.2 million at Christie's. A multi-panel exhibition exploring Shakespeare's impact will be accompanied by

digital content and interactive activities. In addition, Tulane will host an opening reception and jazz funeral as part of citywide events surrounding the visit.

In May the Festival will present an acclaimed one-woman show entitled ***Shakespeare and the Alchemy of Gender***. Internationally renowned actor Lisa Wolpe has arguably played more of the Bard's male roles than any woman in history. Fresh off an international tour, she will bring her dynamic solo show to New Orleans for three performances only. From cross-gender exploration to the unforgettable story of her life, Lisa will triumphantly illustrate that Shakespeare's insight into the human condition is as relevant as ever. Her work continues to receive critical praise and was recently highlighted in [American Theatre Magazine](#).

In June the Festival will open Shakespeare's beloved comedy ***The Two Gentlemen of Verona***, which gives us some of the Bard's most memorable moments. Proteus has a devoted best friend and a girlfriend who adores him, but all that changes when he meets Sylvia. Cross-dressing, music, bandits, broken hearts, and a scene-stealing pooch make this one of Shakespeare's most delightful comedies. New Orleans native Jessica Podewell, the daughter of Festival co-founder Buzz Podewell, will direct.

In July the Festival opens Tony Kushner's adaptation of Corneille's seventeenth century French masterpiece entitled ***The Illusion***. Mr. Kushner is one of the USA's most celebrated playwrights and screenwriters, winning both the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award. *The Illusion* begins as a desperate man stumbles into a sorcerer's cave in search of his estranged son. The magician is able to conjure visions of the son, but no one is prepared for what the old hermit ultimately reveals. Chaney Tullos, who recently directed *Incarnate* and *The Luna Series* for the Festival, will direct the production.

The Festival will round out the season by partnering with New Orleans' hottest ensemble theatre company, [The NOLA Project](#), for two unique, one night only events. ***By Any Scenes Necessary*** is a riotous theatre/improv hybrid that will attempt to recreate two of Shakespeare's masterpieces without a script. "William Shakespeare" himself hosts the entire evening. *Macbeth* will be presented on June 21 and *Hamlet* on July 27.

The mission of the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane is to produce professional, classical theatre with a primary focus upon the works of William Shakespeare. Our commitment is to utilize local, national, and international talent to create dynamic, visceral, text-based performances celebrating Shakespeare's brilliant insight into the human condition. With this programming we will provide to the people of the Gulf South both entertainment and educational resources of the highest quality, honoring Shakespeare's legacy.

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