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Shakespeare's birthday celebration April 22 at Centennial Park

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Calling all would-be Romeos and Juliets to Centennial Park April 22 for the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's celebration of William Shakespeare's 447th birthday.

For the second year, Denice Hicks, the festival's artistic director, will coach all those who would like to perform the famed balcony scene from one of Shakespeare's most beloved plays, *Romeo and Juliet*. Well-behaved dogs are welcome as well.

Interested individuals of all ages (no acting experience necessary) are requested to gather around 5:45 p.m., when edited scripts of the scene will be distributed. The performance will get underway at 6 p.m. Romeos will take their place on the ground, while Juliets line up on the "balcony," meaning the steps of the Parthenon. Fun prizes will be given in the following categories: best couple, best dog costume, most creative costume and funniest costume.

"What better place than Centennial Park, where the Shakespeare in the Park happens each summer, to celebrate the Bard's birthday!" Hicks said. "As we saw last year, the Parthenon is the perfect place to invite the public to perform this delightful sampling of Shakespeare."

Following the judging, birthday cake will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own picnic fare and stay for free family entertainment from various local troupes from 6:45 to 7:30 p.m. In addition, there will be an opportunity for kids of all ages to create balloon art with a Shakespeare theme.

The 2011 Shakespeare in the Park production will be *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by David Wilkerson and opening Aug. 18.

For more information, visit www.nashvilleshakes.org or call 615-255-2273.