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# Former Titan Eddie George helps tell powerful 'Othello'

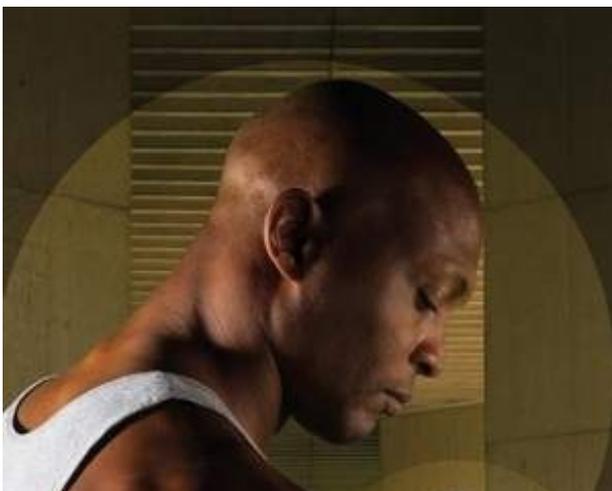
## Eddie George fills title role in classic play

Dec. 28, 2013 | 0 Comments

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Nashville Shakespeare Festival explores all aspects of the "other" this winter, seasoning the psychological thriller "Othello" with a longtime actor in his Nashville Shakes directorial debut, a former Nashville performer returning from Los Angeles to take part — and a past Tennessee Titans running back/Heisman Trophy winner in the title role.



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Eddie George will play the title role in 'Othello.'

Written by  
**Fiona Soltes**  
For The Tennessean

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The story itself lends a strong hand; it is an intimate, racially tinged [work](#) of trained soldiers with no war to fight, turning their energies on each other instead. It is the idea of being out of one's element, of trusting the wrong source and of seeing disastrous consequences as a result.

"There is so, so much to learn from 'Othello,' " says Jon Royal, the Nashville Shakes

veteran at the directorial helm. "And one of the biggest things is regarding the [bonds](#) that you make, being very careful with the relationships you form and the people you listen to. Learning to trust your own judgment."

Othello, experienced at battle but not at love, allows his faith and relationships to be poisoned by Iago, one of Shakespeare's most notorious and sinister villains. Walking in new territory, he has allowed himself to be vulnerable.

### 'Nerves are there'

That's a spot that Eddie George, taking on the part, both understands and embraces. George, whose post-football [career](#)

has included motivational speaking, philanthropic efforts and entrepreneurial business ventures, says acting allows him to look deeper within. He relates to Othello in particular from a post-game view: No longer having the game to play is much like no

### If you go

**What:** Nashville Shakespeare Festival presents its Winter Shakespeare production of "Othello."

**When:** Jan. 9-Feb. 2. Performances at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. Sundays.

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**Where:** Trout Theater, 2100 Belmont Blvd.

**Tickets:** \$27; \$24 for seniors ages 60 and older; \$15 for [students](#) ; admission is \$3 less when purchased in advance online. A Winter Shakespeare Royal Package (\$100) is available with premium reserved balcony seating, cast meet-and-greet and other benefits.

**Contact:** [www.nashvilleshakes.org](http://www.nashvilleshakes.org) or 615-852-6732. The piece is recommended for those ages 10 and older.

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longer having that battle to fight, he says.

“It’s very much about that transition, about the psychological standpoint of how it affects you. How that energy matures and evolves, and takes on a life of its own.”

George, who made his debut with Nashville Shakes in the 2012 winter production of “Julius Caesar,” admits being “less intimidated” by the process this time around.

“The nerves are there,” he says. “But now it’s more about being honest with the story than it is about me performing it.”

In addition to George, the cast includes Nathaniel McIntyre as Iago, Laura Crockarell as Desdemona, Erin Parker as Emilia and Eric D. Pasto-Crosby as Cassio, plus Derek Whittaker, Ross Bolen, Jennifer Richmond, Brad Oxnam and Jaye Phelps. The show is not set in any particular time or place to highlight the universality of its themes. Alongside public performances, it will be available for youth during school-day shows.

For five performances during the run — Jan. 17-24, while George is fulfilling other obligations — John Byron Brooks, who performed in the 2006 Nashville Shakes production of “Macbeth” in addition to taking the stage with Tennessee Repertory Theatre, will portray



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Othello. It's a role he's played before, with the Los Angeles Theatre Ensemble — and one he says he can't wait to play again.

"It was one of the biggest challenges of my career," he says. "When it was over, it was bittersweet. I always knew it was a role I wouldn't mind revisiting."

The opportunity opened after an online birthday greeting from Nashville Shakes artistic director Denice Hicks; he auditioned via video, and says the chance to spend a month in the city where he was raised, visit with family and friends, return to a part he knew he could do well and work with Nashville Shakes again was a perfect setup.

Add in the chance to understudy George, "a future NFL Hall of Famer? Come on," Brooks says. "It's tremendous. I know this is Eddie's show. But for those nights, it's going to be mine. I look at it like he's passing me the ball. And I'm going to run with it."

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