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Hicks serves as consultant in staging Civil War Shakespeare story

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The set is designed to look like a Civil War battlefield, with soldiers from both armies playing roles in Henry V. // PHOTO COURTESY NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Best-selling author Robert Hicks has been serving as an adviser and consultant to The Nashville Shakespeare Festival, but not because of his knowledge of the Bard.

Hicks, whose books *The Widow of the South* and *A Separate Country*, and his preservation work explore the consequences of the 1864 Battle of Franklin and other aspects of the Civil War, has been consulting on the festival's current production, a story that wraps the historical drama *Henry V* within a Tennessee Civil War story.



Author and preservationist Robert Hicks

Denice Hicks, executive artistic director for the festival, explained:

"Toward the end of the Civil War, on the eve of battle, enemies come together on a Tennessee battlefield to enact Shakespeare's play about the young king of England who leads his nation into a war against France," she said. "We are excited to juxtapose these two important historical periods in this unique production."

Director **Nat McIntyre** said the story isn't much of a stretch. He noted that Shakespeare was performed and read all over the United States during the time of the Civil War.

"Politicians quoted Shakespeare in their speeches, generals in their orders, and

soldiers in their letters mailed home," he said. "In addition, slaves and former slaves turned to Shakespeare to educate and inspire. We plan to use the language of *Henry V* to reflect on the American Civil War and the challenges of reconciliation long past the last battle."

Performances begin at 7:30 Thursday through Sunday evenings through Sept. 13 at Nashville's Centennial Park, with pre-show entertainment starting at 6:30 p.m. There will also be a special Labor Day performance Sept. 7. **Food and drink** can be purchased at the park.

The show is free and open to the public with a \$10 suggested donation. For a very special experience, a limited number of reserved ringside seats and gourmet picnic dinners are available through the **Royal and Noble Packages**. Tickets purchased for Royal and Noble seating benefit Nashville Shakespeare Festival education programs. They are partially tax deductible.

For a list of cast members, several of whom have performed in previous Nashville Shakespeare Festival productions, click [here](#). In addition, **The Princely Players**, an African American a cappella group that was founded in 1967, will be an integral part of the production.

The set was designed by Morgan Matens to look like a Civil War battlefield. Costume design is by June Kingsbury and light design is by Anne Willingham.

2015 season supporters are the Tennessee Arts Commission, Metro Arts Commission, and Patterson Intellectual Property Law. Other support for Shakespeare in the Park has been provided by Metro Parks, National Endowment for the Arts, and Bradfield Stage Lighting. Advance Financial is an education sponsor of the festival.

2015 media sponsors include the *Nashville Scene*, Whitehardt Inc., xfinity, Jive! and [NowPlayingNashville.com](#).

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival relies heavily on the generosity of corporations, foundations, individuals and government agencies as it continues to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional Shakespearean experiences. Businesses and foundations receive excellent exposure and are granted myriad benefits in exchange for helping the festival give the gift of Shakespeare to the community. For more information, visit the festival's [Sponsorship web page](#) or call 615-255-2273.

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