



performances. Matt Garner makes a marvelous NSF debut as young Henry, giving us a worthy and relatable hero. He delivers Shakespeare’s familiar text with great care and conviction, allowing each word to reflect on his boyish face.

His impassioned St. Crispin’s Day speech is powerful, but I also was struck by the quiet humility with which he roams the camp, reminding his sorely out-numbered men that: “Every subject’s duty is the king’s; but every subject’s soul is his own.” And his fervent prayers to “steel my soldiers’ hearts” somehow feel less self-serving here, and more like the sincere wish of a man wrestling with his own guilt.

David Compton also gives a masterful performance as Exeter, honoring the piece with sensitivity, intelligence and restraint. Aaron Muñoz, on the other hand, plays multiple roles — including the Archbishop of Canterbury and an all-too-brief Falstaff — with a perfectly brilliant sense of bluster.

Tamiko Robinson Steele and newcomer Karen Sternberg provide an engaging Chorus, but they’re even better in their fiery renditions of Jamy and MacMorris. And together with the aforementioned Muñoz as Fluellen, they offer a smart mix of comedic and colloquial moments.

Ross Bolen, Tony Morton and Alan Lee also lend a rough-hewn sensibility to the commoners Pistol, Bardolph and Nym, with Bolen’s musical gifts on full display. And the talented a cappella group The Princely Players enhances the story with traditional spirituals such as “Steal Away” and “Joshua Fit the Battle.”

At a time when our nation still struggles to make sense of its past (and future), NSF’s thoughtful “Henry V” reminds us that humanity exists on both sides of any dispute.

## Go

**What:** Nashville Shakespeare Festival presents “Henry V”

**When:** Through Sept. 13. Performances at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays-Sundays (plus Labor Day Monday); pre-show entertainment 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** The Bandshell at Centennial Park, 2600 West End Ave.

**Tickets:** \$10 suggested donation. A limited number of “Royal and Noble” seating packages are available, including ringside seats and gourmet picnic dinners.

**Info:** Blankets/lawn chairs welcome; bleacher seating available. Food/drink vendors available on site, or bring your own picnic.

**Contact:** [www.nashvilleshakes.org](http://www.nashvilleshakes.org)



Ross Bolen, Tony Morton and Alan Lee perform in Nashville Shakespeare Festival's "Henry V." (Photo: Rick Malkin/NSF)

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