

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:**

Katie Perkowski

[kperkowski@asf.net](mailto:kperkowski@asf.net)

334.271.5326



**Alabama Shakespeare Festival embarks on STATE OF THE SOUTH tour July 7–17**

**Diverse group of playwrights led by Artistic Director Rick Dildine explore seven southern states**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.,** (June 12, 2018) — The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is sponsoring a 10-day speaking and listening tour of the southeastern United States, July 7–17, 2018. The tour, titled the State of the South, has been developed to invigorate ASF’s prestigious Southern Writers’ Project, a program founded in 1991 at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to commission and develop new plays by Southern playwrights.

Artistic Director Rick Dildine has curated a diverse group of Southern playwrights whose work reflects the ever-evolving face of the South. The tour will make stops in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee to meet with residents in towns of all sizes. Through one-on-one interviews, group story circles, and town halls, the State of the South creative team seeks to answer:

Who is the South?

What is the South?

Where is the South?

“The face of the American South is changing, and with those changes comes the opportunity to reassess how we define Southern identity,” said Dildine. “That is why the Alabama Shakespeare Festival is sponsoring this tour of the Southeast. The goal is to better understand the state of the South and its people and to hear stories of what life in the South is like today.”

The playwrights on tour include Mobile native Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder, author of more than 11 plays, including *Gee’s Bend*, and winner of the prestigious American Theatre Critics’ Association Award. Most recently, Elyzabeth’s play *Everything That’s Beautiful* premiered at the New Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. The Baltimore Center Stage recently commissioned Elyzabeth to write a play for the acclaimed *My America, Too* project. Elyzabeth is a graduate of the dramatic writing program at New York University, where she was a Tisch Dramatic Writing Fellow. She teaches at Sewanee: The University of the South where she was the Tennessee Williams Playwright in Residence from 2012–2015. Find more information about Elyzabeth at [wilderwriting.net](http://wilderwriting.net).

Atlanta-based playwright and director Addae Moon is an artistic associate with Found Stages Theatre and a resident playwright with Maat Productions of Afrikan Centered Theatre (MPAACT) based in Chicago, IL. He received the 2015 International Ibsen Award for his dramaturgical work on the project *Master Comic* and the 2014 John Lipsky Award from the International Museum Theatre Alliance (IMTAL) for his immersive play *Four Days of Fury: Atlanta 1906*. Addae was also a member of Alliance Theatre’s 2015–2016 Reiser Artists’ Lab as co-writer on the immersive project *Third Council of Lyons* with Found Stages Theatre. Addae received his BA in Theatre Arts from Clark Atlanta University and an MFA in Playwriting from the Professional Playwright’s Program at Ohio University.

South Carolina native Donnetta Lavinia Grays’ plays include *Last Night and the Night Before* (upcoming at Denver Theatre Center, 2019), which has been recognized by the 2017 Kilroys List, 2017 Colorado New Play Summit, and 2015 NNPN National New Play Showcase. It won the 2015 Todd McNerney National Playwriting Contest and was a semifinalist at the 2014 Eugene O’Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference. Her other plays include *The Review* (O’Neill Center finalist); *Laid to Rest* (O’Neill Center finalist; Kilroys List honorable mention); *The New Normal*; and *The Cowboy is*

*Dying*. Donnetta is an inaugural Doric Wilson Independent Playwright Award recipient, 2017–2018 Time Warner Foundation WP Theater Playwrights Lab member, and 2018 SPACE on Ryder Farm resident playwright. Find more information about Donnetta at [donnettagrays.com](http://donnettagrays.com).

South Carolina native David Lee Nelson is an award-winning actor, playwright, and solo performer with an MFA from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival. He has taught playwriting and solo performance at the College of Charleston and Furman University, and he currently is on the faculty at the Fine Arts Center in Greenville, South Carolina. David is the Playwright in Residence at PURE Theatre in Charleston and is currently touring his newest show, *Stages*. Find more information about David at [davidleenelson.com](http://davidleenelson.com).

The tour begins with a conversation at the historic Kress building in Montgomery on July 7 and will culminate with a report and short film that will be presented at the October 2018 Southern Writers Festival at ASF. The State of the South report will be used to develop a new vision statement for the Southern Writers Festival.

***The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is among the largest Shakespeare theatres in the world. Designated as The State Theatre of Alabama, ASF has been located in Montgomery since 1985 when it moved from Anniston because of Mr. and Mrs. Wynton M. Blount's gift of a performing arts complex set in the 250-acre Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park. This program has been made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.***

###