

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Leadership Reimagines Alabama Shakespeare Festival  
2018-2019 Season Announcement  
14 Productions – New Festival Format**

**Montgomery, Ala.** (August 20, 2018) — Artistic Director Rick Dildine and Executive Director Todd Schmidt have announced their inaugural New Festival Season at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, which features 14 extraordinary productions, with a full six weeks of spring repertory along with unexpected theatrical experiences in found spaces.

“We are moving into a new stage of ASF’s history,” said Artistic Director Rick Dildine. “Our 47<sup>th</sup> season represents a return to the festival repertory format with more than one show running at a time, along with a renewed commitment to this community with plays that reflect who we are today. This slate of shows includes more Shakespeare, two plays by Christina Ham in repertory together, a residency from NYC’s Bedlam Theatre Company, and a world premiere of a new play by Susan Ferrara and directed by ASF acting alum and Emmy Award winner Carrie Preston.”

The new season is full of unique and transformative theatrical events, beginning with Duncan Macmillan’s **Every Brilliant Thing**, where the entire audience is seated on the Festival stage in an interactive performance. The festival continues with plays and musicals that run in tandem with each other on two stages: **The Sound of Music** and **The Gospel of Luke** in November/December; **Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963** and **Nina Simone: Four Women** in January/February and in March/April Shakespeare’s **As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet**, Thornton Wilder’s **Our Town**, Robert Harling’s **Steel Magnolias** and George Brant’s new comedy **Into the Breeches!** The festival returns in September/October with the world premiere **Buzz** by Susan Ferrara (directed by Carrie Preston), staged in ASF’s Scene Shop, and Bedlam Theatre’s critically acclaimed productions of **Saint Joan** by George Bernard Shaw and Shakespeare’s **Hamlet**.

With the recent opening of the Equal Justice Initiative National Memorial for Peace and Justice and Montgomery’s primary position on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, the community of Montgomery, Alabama, has been nationally recognized as a top tourist destination in 2018. “There is tremendous opportunity in this moment for ASF to return to its festival roots,” said newly appointed Executive Director Todd Schmidt, who recently moved to ASF from Papermill Playhouse in New Jersey, where he was Managing Director. “ASF will enhance the already robust opportunities for visitors to Montgomery with multiple concurrent productions in three different venues.”

Subscriptions are on sale now through the ASF Box Office (open Monday - Saturday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.), by calling 800-841-4273, or visiting [asf.net](http://asf.net).

**Every Brilliant Thing – Sept. 29 – Oct. 20, 2018**

**By Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe, directed by Rick Dildine**

Imagine a list of everything that’s brilliant about the world—all of the reasons a 7-year-old would want to live: ice cream, the color yellow, laughing so hard you shoot milk out of your nose. A refreshingly intimate and collaborative performance that celebrates the lengths we will go to for those we love.

**The Sound of Music – Nov. 15 – Dec. 30, 2018**

**Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse  
Suggested by “The Trapp Family Singers” by Maria Augusta Trapp, directed by Rick Dildine**

The beloved story of Maria, a young and spirited nun-turned-governess, and the Von Trapp family. This delightful musical will thrill audiences with its Tony, Grammy, and Academy Award winning Best Score. Directed by Rick Dildine.

**The Gospel of Luke – Dec. 6 – 30, 2018**

**Realized by Bruce Kuhn**

*The Gospel of Luke* is told with the passion and surprise of an eyewitness account. In a compelling ninety minutes, the tale comes alive with the urgency, passion, and humor of someone who was there.

**Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963 – Jan. 25 – Feb. 13, 2019**

**By Christina Ham, directed by Tangela Large**

Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, and Addie Mae Collins. Four little girls who are multitalented and filled with promise share their hopes and dreams against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement.

**Nina Simone: Four Women – Jan. 30 – Feb. 17, 2019**

**By Christina Ham, music by Nina Simone, directed by Lydia Fort**

Through storytelling and song, this production celebrates how Nina Simone helped define the sound of the Civil Rights Movement. Featuring powerful anthems such as “Mississippi Goddam,” “Old Jim Crow,” and “To Be Young, Gifted and Black,” *Nina Simone: Four Women* is a personal and provocative musical journey.

**Our Town – Feb. 21 – Apr. 27, 2019**

**By Thornton Wilder, directed by Bruce Longworth**

*Our Town* follows young lovers Emily and George and their neighbors through a life journey that delivers universal truths about what it means to be human.

**Romeo and Juliet – Feb. 28 – Apr. 29, 2019**

**By William Shakespeare, directed by Rick Dildine**

An exciting new production of Shakespeare’s iconic love story. Romeo is a Montague, and Juliet a Capulet—“star-crossed lovers” whose families’ long-standing feud has pitted neighbor against neighbor.

**The Cat in the Hat – Mar. 3 – May 5, 2019**

**by Dr. Seuss, directed by Neil David Seibel**

From the moment his tall, red-and-white striped hat appears, his mischievous antics begin! With some tricks (and a fish) and Thing Two and Thing One, with the Cat in the Hat, the fun’s never done!

**Steel Magnolias – Mar. 21 – May 5, 2019**

**By Robert Harling, directed by Rick Dildine**

The hilarious and heartwarming story of six Southern women who gather and gossip at the local beauty parlor. With wit, warmth, and intelligence, they rise to meet whatever challenges life sends their way.

**Into the Breeches – Apr. 4 – May 4, 2019**

**By George Brant, directed by Shana Gozansky**

Montgomery, 1942: With the local playhouse’s director and actors off at war, the director’s wife sets out to produce an all-female version of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. A hilarious and moving comedy about the transformative power of art.

**As You Like It – Apr. 11 – 25, 2019**

**By William Shakespeare, directed by Greta Lambert**

One of Shakespeare’s most popular romantic comedies, *As You Like It* is a beguiling game of love, desire, and mistaken identity that revels in the pleasure of life.

**Buzz – Sept. 4 – 15, 2019**

**By Susan Ferrara, directed by Carrie Preston**

Charismatic director Mary Ann “Buzz” Goodbody was one of only five women directing in the UK in the 1970s. In 1975, she famously directed Ben Kingsley in the title role of *Hamlet*. Four days later, she was gone. A world premiere.

**Hamlet – Sept. 5 – Oct. 6, 2019**

**By William Shakespeare, directed by Eric Tucker**

NYC’s Bedlam Theatre in residence at ASF creates Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* with a company of four actors, in a production hailed as “invigorating,” “lively and brisk,” and “masterful” by critics.

**Saint Joan – Sept. 12 – Oct. 5, 2019**

**By George Bernard Shaw, directed by Eric Tucker**

The epic story of a young farm girl who led an army and transformed a nation, staged brilliantly by four actors from Bedlam Theatre.

***EMBRACING OUR COMMUNITY – ONE STORY AT A TIME.***

*Alabama Shakespeare Festival is a not-for-profit organization under the direction of Artistic Director Rick Dildine and Executive Director Todd Schmidt. ASF is the largest professional theatre in Alabama and one of the largest Shakespeare festivals 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/project has been made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

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