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**Alabama Shakespeare Festival
The State Theatre of Alabama**

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Alabama Shakespeare Festival appoints Executive Director

The Alabama Shakespeare Festival Board of Directors has announced the appointment of Todd Schmidt as ASF's Executive Director. Todd joins the recently appointed Artistic Director, Rick Dildine, as co-leader of the State Theatre of Alabama.

Schmidt is currently the Managing Director of Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey, where he has served for the past eight seasons. During his tenure, Paper Mill staged world premieres of *Newsies*, *Honeymoon in Vegas*, *Ever After*, *Bandstand*, *The Honeymooners*, *The Sting* and *A Bronx Tale*, and the U.S. premieres of the 25th Anniversary Production of *Les Misérables*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *The Bodyguard*. Paper Mill Playhouse cemented its status as one of America's premier musical theaters and one of New Jersey's most celebrated cultural institutions, receiving the Regional Theater Tony Award in 2016.

"The Board and Staff of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival are delighted to welcome Todd Schmidt as our Executive Director. Todd returns to his home state of Alabama with over twenty-five years' experience leading the business side of not-for-profit theatres. His award-winning expertise and experience in finance, fundraising, and marketing will enable our Artistic Director, Rick Dildine, to work his magic on stages both within the magnificent ASF facilities and beyond its walls," said Laurie Weil, Chairman of the ASF Board.

Schmidt grew up in Jackson and Vestavia Hills, Alabama and graduated from Vestavia Hills High School. He received a BS in Business Administration from Auburn University, where he was elected student president of the School of Business. He went on to complete an MFA at the prestigious Theatre School at DePaul University.

"I am honored and excited to return to Alabama and help guide the Alabama Shakespeare Festival," said Schmidt. "As a teenager, I vividly remember attending the Festival in Anniston, AL. Those wonderful productions were inspirational and fueled my desire to pursue a career in theater."

Todd previously served as Managing Director of George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and prior to that he was Executive Producer of Peninsula Players Theatre in Wisconsin, where he produced 70 plays and led the theater through a remarkable period of growth, culminating in the opening of a state-of-the-art performance space.

In Chicago, Todd worked with Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman Theater, and Apple Tree Theatre, and he directed and produced *The Woman in Black* (Jeff Award nomination for best production). He serves on the board of ArtPride New Jersey and is chairman of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance. He was named one of the 101 Most Influential People in New Jersey by New Jersey Monthly magazine.

“Todd Schmidt has a track record as a dynamic executive leader,” said Rick Dildine, Artistic Director. “I am excited to partner with him as we seek to make Alabama Shakespeare Festival a vibrant, transformative theater company where all our communities feel welcomed, engaged, entertained, and inspired.”

Schmidt will begin his new duties in June 2018.

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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 as a result of Mr. and Mrs. Wynton Blount's gift of a performing arts complex in the 250-acre Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park.