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Southern Writers Festival of New Plays: October 19 - 21

ASF invites community to join the creative process and explore Southern identity

MONTGOMERY, Ala., (October 8, 2018) — In July 2018, Artistic Director Rick Dildine and four Southern playwrights embarked on a tour to reassess how Southern identity is defined in today's society. The tour, titled *State of the South*, was the first step in reinvigorating Alabama Shakespeare Festival's new play development program, Southern Writers' Project. Dildine is taking the project back to its roots (and giving it a new name in the process). The Southern Writers Festival of New Plays will be a lively three-day weekend featuring play readings, stimulating conversation, delicious food, and plenty of hospitality.

"This summer, I went on a road trip with four playwrights to discover what it means to be Southern today. It was my goal to interview 100 people—we ended up speaking with more than 350 folks from communities all over the South," said Dildine. "We're assessing what we learned and are developing a new vision statement for the Southern Writers Festival. On Saturday, October 20, we will present some of our discoveries and debut a short film that documents our time on the road."

Along with the *State of the South* report, the weekend will feature the following new works by Southern playwrights:

The Light of the World: *In the window of a church is a small Confederate flag. When a violent incident in the community occurs, the presence of the flag is called into question, forcing the congregation to choose between the past they elect to honor and the future they dare to envision.*

The debut of *The Light of the World* by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder will be directed by former ASF artistic director Kent Thompson and will feature ASF favorites, Greg Thornton and Greta Lambert.

A Sudden Spontaneous Event: *Carole's life is just the way she likes it. Until, that is, she wakes confused and in a strange place. A Sudden Spontaneous Event is a hilarious and heartbreaking look at what happens when the life you thought you had is over in an instant.*

Adam Knight will direct *A Sudden Spontaneous Event* by ASF MFA graduate David Lee Nelson. The reading will feature another graduate of the MFA program, Sarah Thornton (who currently serves as artistic director at the Cloverdale Playhouse, Montgomery's community theatre), as well as community artist and AUM Director of Performance Studies Neil David Seibel.

Singles in Agriculture: *At an annual dating convention for farmers, a South Carolina army widow (who loves Modern Family and talks to her pygmy goats) angles for romance with an Oklahoma fundamentalist who has some weird ideas about sex.*

The three-person cast of *Singles in Agriculture*—Alex Grubbs, Madalena Provo, and Ginger Eckert—will be making their ASF debut. This lighthearted comedy is written by Abby Rosebrock and directed by Mikhaela Mahony.

In the Southern Breeze: When a runaway slave gets lost in a mysterious forest, an Absurdist drama ensues. *In the Southern Breeze* offers a challenging look at how our society has treated and continues to treat African American men.

Alabama State University alum and New York-based director LA Williams returns to Montgomery to direct Jiréh Breon Holder's *In the Southern Breeze*. This powerful reading will feature Rob Karma Robinson, who starred in ASF's recent production of *Fly*.

A weekend pass to the Southern Writers Festival of New Plays is \$125, which includes all readings, events (including the State of the South report), and meals. Individual tickets to readings and events are also available. To purchase, stop by the ASF Box Office (located at 1 Festival Drive in Montgomery), call 1.800.841.4273, or visit asf.net/southernwritersfestival.

21 Dreams: Arts & Culture Collective is hosting the 3rd annual Flight of Arts in Blount Cultural Park during the Southern Writers Festival weekend. This celebration of National Arts and Humanities Month is presented in collaboration with ASF and the MMFA Junior Executive Board. For the full schedule of events, visit <http://flightofartsmgm.com>.

The Southern Writers Festival of New Plays is endowed by an anonymous donor. This program is made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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. Designated as The State Theatre of Alabama, ASF is a leader in education and outreach, serving more than 40,000 students annually with artistic programming. ASF is supported by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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