

## NEWS RELEASE

### Media & Public Relations contacts:

Layne Holley, [lholley@asf.net](mailto:lholley@asf.net)

Perri Hubbard, [phubbard@asf.net](mailto:p Hubbard@asf.net)

334.271.5300, ext. 326 (Layne); 332 (Perri)

[ASF.net](http://ASF.net)



**PHOTOS:** The online press kit for THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER can be found [here](#). For access to ASF's full digital media kit, visit [ASF.net/media-kit](http://ASF.net/media-kit).

## ASF embraces community and education with holiday classic

### ***THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER* features local actors and Fellowship Company**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.,** (December 3, 2019) — Alabama Shakespeare Festival presents *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, on stage December 5 – 29, 2019. Directed by ASF Associate Artistic Director **Greta Lambert**, the hilarious holiday classic will delight audiences of all ages.

In the production, a mother struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant is faced with casting the Herdman kids — probably the most mischievous and troublesome kids in history. Audiences won't believe the mayhem — and the fun — that occurs when the Herdmans collide head-on with Christmas.

"*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is one of the most beloved children's stories of the past generation," said ASF Artistic Director Rick Dildine. "To produce this play, we sought to bring together young people from across the River Region. The culmination is an act of generosity, love, and compassion. And lots of laughs!"

Montgomery-based actor/director **Sarah Adkins** portrays Grace Bradley, the mother tasked with putting on the pageant when strong-minded pageant director Mrs. Armstrong (played by ASF Fellow **John Cencio Burgos**) has to back out from her duties. Grace, with the help of her husband (ASF Fellow **George Lamar**) and children, Beth (**Gerrisyn Shipman**, last seen in ASF's production of *Annie*) and Charlie (**Lannom Bowman**, making his ASF debut), is determined to make this the best Christmas pageant ever.

Six young actors join the cast as the rambunctious Herdmans: **Ann Welch Hilyer** (last seen in *Annie* at ASF) as Imogene, **Timothy Brannon** as Ralph, **J'Kai Foster** as Leroy, **Jason Grinstead** as Ollie, **William Miller** as Claude, and **Eva Kate Mason** as Gretchen. Rounding out the cast of kids is **Dalton Adair**, **Sarah Kate Barton**, **Breanna Bennett**, **Amia Nycole Curry**, **Angelina Xu Dong** (recent ASF credits include *The Sound of Music* and *Annie*), **Piper Doyle**, **Faith Gatson** (who appeared in 2019's *Four Little Girls*), **Madalyn Milledge**, **Claude Newsome**, **Mary Grace Parsons** (last seen on stage at ASF in *The Sound of Music*), **Claire Poundstone** (previous credits include ASF's *A Christmas Carol*), **Chloe Surles**, **Jace White** (last seen in *Four Little Girls*), and **Ryley Tate Wilson**.

The ensemble is made complete with the addition of actors from ASF's Fellowship Company, including **Andrew Greiche**, **Sania Hyatt**, **Vivienne Claire Luthin** (who also serves as fight choreographer), **Kira Player**, **Jeremy Sapadin**, and **Matthew Zimmerman**.

The creative team includes Assistant Director **Delaney Burlingame**, Scenic Designers **Moriah and Isabel Curley-Clay**, Costume Designer **Jeffrey Todhunter**, Lighting Designer **Tom Rodman**, Sound Designer **Russell Thomas Bush**, Wig Master **Angie Wright**, Musical Director **Joel Jones**, Young Artist Supervisors **Lexi Tippett** and **Kalicia DuBose**, Stage Manager **Katie An Siegel**, and Production Assistant **Izzy French**.

*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is presented on the Festival Stage, and tickets start at \$29. To purchase, call 334.271.5353, visit the ASF Box Office (open Monday – Saturday, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.), or go online:

[ASF.net/bestchristmas](http://ASF.net/bestchristmas). Evening performances begin at 7:00 p.m.; matinees start at 2:00 p.m.

### **About Alabama Shakespeare Festival**

Alabama Shakespeare Festival is a not-for-profit organization under the direction of Artistic Director Rick Dildine and Executive Director Todd Schmidt. As a beloved Alabama arts institution, ASF broadens the cultural identity of the South by producing the classics, Shakespeare, contemporary plays, musicals, theatre for young audiences, and exciting new works. A leader in education and outreach, ASF serves 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.

###