



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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Rick Dildine Accepts Position at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts

ST. LOUIS (June 9, 2014) -- Rick Dildine, artistic and executive director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, will join Shakespeare & Company of Lenox, Massachusetts as Executive Director and President. In his new role, Dildine will oversee an operation with three performance venues spread over a 30-acre campus with an annual budget of \$5 million and year-round staff of 30. As with the Festival, Dildine will also be responsible for all administration and programs. He will assume his new responsibilities in September.

"I leave St. Louis with mixed emotions because it is such a great place to call home and make art," Dildine said. "While I am honored to be given the opportunity to preside over one of the largest Shakespeare companies in the country, I know I will be leaving behind an incredibly generous city that gives inspired people the opportunity to lead. St. Louis and its overwhelming support for the arts and culture has provided me with a wonderful foundation with which to elevate awareness of Shakespeare's works, and enhance the Festival's commitment to offer St. Louisans free accessible Shakespeare in the schools, in the streets and in the park. The Festival has become one of St. Louis' arts and cultural crown jewels."

Since his arrival in 2009, the Festival has more than doubled its programming, increased attendance more than 30 percent, and garnered national exposure for its innovative programs and approach to theatre making. For the Festival Dildine directed the 2013 production of *Twelfth Night* and created the highly successful SHAKE38 and "Shakespeare in the Streets" programs. For its impact throughout St. Louis, the Festival was awarded the 2012 Exemplary Community Achievement Award from the Missouri Humanities Council. This year's main stage current repertory production of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* is a rare and epic journey through a good decade of British history with 22 actors performing multiple roles. The season runs through June 15 at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park.

"Rick has achieved an unprecedented level of success with Shakespeare Festival St. Louis these last five years and he will be sorely missed. His focus and care of the broader community has added to the already immense gift SFSTL brings to St.

Louis via free Shakespeare in Forest Park, with his invention and nurturing of Shakespeare in the Streets and SHAKE38," said Jessica Holzer, SFSTL Board Chair. "The organization's accomplishments are a result of his sound financial management and the ability to build upon incremental successes one innovative project at a time. Based on Rick's work here, this institution is strong financially and creatively and we expect it to continue for decades to come."

"We are extremely pleased to have Rick join Shakespeare & Company," said Sarah Hancock, Shakespeare & Company Board Chair. "We see Rick as a high energy-level leader who generates a sense of excitement about our organization's current achievements, as well as our untapped potential for future growth and development—and someone who can communicate his vision to all stakeholders with an infectious, but realistic, optimism."

St. Louis Magazine named Dildine to the city's "A-List" and "Power List" of the top 100 St. Louisans who are re-shaping the city. The *St. Louis Business Journal* named him to its "40 Under 40," and he is a member of the 2013-14 Class of Leadership St. Louis. He's held previous leadership positions at Chicago's About Face Theatre, Brown University, and Trinity Repertory Company. He is a past member of the Board of Directors of the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis and the Advisory Board of St. Louis Fringe. In addition to his duties at the Festival, Dildine serves as the Director of the MFA Arts Management & Leadership Program at Webster University. He's participated in grant panels nationally and traveled internationally with Theatre Communications Group to China and Cuba. Dildine received his BA from Ouachita Baptist University, his MFA in Acting from Brown University/Trinity Rep and is a member of Actors' Equity Association and the Society of Directors and Choreographers.

In the past 14 years, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has attracted more than 600,000 people to its annual free performances in Forest Park. The organization has reached 250,000 students through its educational programming and, in 2010, launched SHAKE 38, a marathon citywide presentation of Shakespeare's entire 38-play canon. Since 2011, Shakespeare in the Streets has invited St. Louis' neighborhoods to tell their unique community stories, shutting down a street for performances that present the combined talents of professional actors alongside local residents. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Regional Arts Commission, SHAKE38.com, launched on April 23, 2014, Shakespeare's 450th birthday. For more information, please visit www.sfstl.com or call 314/531-9800.

Located in The Berkshires of Western Massachusetts, Shakespeare & Company is one of the largest Shakespeare Festivals in the country, founded in 1978 by Tina Packer. The organization attracts more than 60,000 patrons annually, with a core of over 150 artists and more than 30 full-time staff. The Company develops and performs Shakespeare, classics, contemporary, and new plays of social and political significance, generating opportunities for collaboration between actors, directors and designers of all races, nationalities and backgrounds. Shakespeare & Company embraces the core values of Shakespeare's work: collaboration, commitment to language, visceral experience and classical ideals, expressed with physical prowess and an embodied contemporary voice. The Company offers one of the most extensive actor training

programs by a regional theatre in the country, where professionals from all over the world come to train with the Organization known for its original, in-depth, classical training and performance methods. Shakespeare & Company is also home to an award-winning and nationally recognized theatre-in-education program, one of the largest the Northeast; it reaches more than 45,000 students annually with innovative performances, workshops and residencies. For more information, please visit www.shakespeare.org.

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