



# SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Jennifer Wintzer to Serve as Interim Producing Director of  
Shakespeare Festival St. Louis; Bruce Longworth as Associate Artistic Director**  
*Taibi Magar will direct 2018 Production of Romeo & Juliet*

ST. LOUIS (July 26, 2017) – Jennifer Wintzer will serve as interim producing director of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, and Bruce Longworth will continue on as associate artistic director.

Rick Dildine, artistic and executive director of the festival since 2009, will begin his new post as artistic director at Alabama Shakespeare Festival on August 1. Under Dildine’s dynamic leadership the festival’s attendance and revenue has grown by 30 percent. With his departure, the board is taking the opportunity to examine the current structure of the organization and prepare for a search firm to help select a leader that will guide the festival to a bright and exciting future. Wintzer will lead the organization until the search is complete.

“Jennifer Wintzer is one our region’s finest arts leaders,” said Penny Pennington, board president of the festival. “She joined our team in 2014 from Lincoln Center Theater in New York City and has overseen our dynamic Shakespeare in the Streets program, as well as our education initiatives that span the state.

“As the board considered interim leadership, our immediate and first choice was Jennifer, who has the respect of the organization as well as the local and national theater community. Under her leadership, our patrons and supporters can expect a continuation of the excellence we’ve produced on stage for nearly two decades.”

As Director of Community Engagement and Education, she has produced the Festival's signature community and education programs, which include SHAKE 38, Shakespeare in the Streets, and the Education Tour. Wintzer has developed and presented new work in partnership with local institutions such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the St. Louis Public Library. She will oversee the festival's upcoming Shakespeare in the Streets production, *Blow, Winds* on Sept. 15-17, at the St. Louis Public Library's Central Library (1301 Olive St.), in downtown St. Louis.

Prior to moving to St. Louis, Wintzer was a New York-based arts administrator working with Lincoln Center Theater, Second Stage Theatre, and MCC Theater. She holds a BFA from The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University, an Advanced Training Certificate in Arts Education from Marymount Manhattan College and is a graduate of the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission's Community Arts Training.

Longworth, who most recently directed the festival's production of *The Winter's Tale* this past season, his fourth for the organization, has been a faculty member in the Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University since 1985, and is the head of the performance programs. He will continue in his role as associate artistic director for the festival.

Director Taibi Magar will direct the festival's production of *Romeo and Juliet* next summer. Magar is an Egyptian-American director based in New York and a graduate of the Brown/Trinity MFA program. In New York Taibi has directed and developed work for Ars Nova (*Underground Railroad Game*: NYT Critics Pick, TONY Critics Pick), The Foundry, TFANA, and the Women's Project Theatre. She is the recipient of a Stephen Sondheim Fellowship, an Oregon Shakespeare Festival Fellowship, a Public Theater Shakespeare Fellowship, the TFANA Actors and Director Project Fellowship and is an alumni of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Regionally, she has directed and developed work at The Alley Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, Trinity Repertory Company, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare & Company and Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Casting and creative team announcements will be made at a later date.

### **About Shakespeare Festival St. Louis**

Since its inception in 2001, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis has surpassed the one million mark in attendance through its work In the Schools, In the Streets and In the Park with more than 710,000 people attending the free main stage productions at Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. The organization has reached an additional 300,000 students In the Schools through its educational programming. In 2010, the Festival launched SHAKE 38, a marathon participatory presentation of Shakespeare's entire 38-play canon community wide. Leadership support for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis' 2017 season is provided by the Whitaker Foundation. The Festival is also funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts & Education Council of Greater St. Louis. In 2017, the Festival was named Arts Organization of the Year by the Missouri Arts Council. For more information, please

visit [www.sfstl.com](http://www.sfstl.com) or call 314-531-9800.

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