

# NEW JERSEY Stage

## **Todd Schmidt Appointed Chair of the Board of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance; Michael Hurst Joins Board**



**Todd Schmidt**



**Michael Hurst**

(West Orange, NJ) -- On July 1st, Todd Schmidt, Managing Director of Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ, began his appointment as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, the service organization for the state's professional theatres. Also on that date, Michael Hurst, Managing Director of Two River Theater in Red Bank, NJ, began his three-year term on the Board.

Todd Schmidt of Union City, NJ, is in his fifth season at Paper Mill Playhouse, having previously worked for George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick. Prior to George Street Playhouse, he served as 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. Schmidt had previously worked in Chicago with Chicago Shakespeare, Goodman, and Apple Tree Theatre, and he directed and produced *The Woman in Black*, which earned a Jefferson Award nomination for best production.

"Since I arrived in New Jersey," Schmidt noted, "the Alliance has been a great resource for experiencing New Jersey theatre, meeting my fellow professionals in the State, and better understanding our artistic community."

He looks forward to leading the NJTA through its newly launched strategic planning initiative. "We just finished the strategic planning process," he said. "I'm excited to be putting new policies in place—to be helping the Alliance take a new look at itself and following up on recommendations."

Schmidt is an advisory board member of Investors Bank, and he currently serves on the boards of ArtPride New Jersey (a coalition of arts organizations and individuals that advocates for public funding, support, and recognition of the arts) and the Downtown Millburn Development Alliance. He holds an MFA degree from DePaul University and a BA from Auburn University.

John McEwen, Executive Director of the NJTA, remarked, "I am thrilled that Todd Schmidt will serve as Chair of the Alliance. His commitment to our work and his exceptional business and leadership skills will be an asset as we launch our new three-year strategic plan."

Michael Hurst of Asbury Park, NJ, joined Two River Theater as Managing Director in 2011, bringing with him 20 years of theatre and non-profit experience, including 16 years at The Public Theater in New York City. At The Public, where he served as General Manager for four years and Managing Director for six years, Hurst was responsible for all financial aspects of the productions at The Public Theater and Central Park's Delacorte Theater, and he was part of all the strategic planning initiatives for the theater, including its artistic leadership transition and the opening of Joe's Pub.

Hurst also served as Chief Operating Officer of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents the New York Film Festival. At the Film Society, he oversaw the building of a new three-theater, \$40-million facility that opened in June 2011, and he managed the organizational growth necessary to support the facility.

Under Hurst's joint leadership with Artistic Director John Dias, Two River Theater has experienced ambitious growth and the launch of many new initiatives including a new strategic plan, the production of subscription shows on two stages for the first time, the theatre's first commissioning program for original plays, and numerous new community and education programs.

Hurst is a member of The Broadway League and served as Vice President for the League of Off-Broadway Theatres & Producers for six years. He is a graduate of Rutgers University.

"I have long admired the Alliance's passion for promoting professional theater in New Jersey, and am honored to join such a vital organization," said Hurst. "I look forward to working with Todd Schmidt, John McEwen, and the Board of Trustees as we continue to support the continued growth and future both of the Alliance and New Jersey's diverse theater community."

"Michael Hurst is an excellent addition to our board," said McEwen. "His creativity and years of arts management experience will be of great benefit to the Alliance and our membership. Todd and

Michael's spirit of collaboration and interest in the health of our entire field will help us accomplish our mission of strengthening our member theatres, advocating for the arts, and educating New Jersey residents that the state is home to 35 vibrant, diverse, and professional theatre companies."

Founded in 1981, the New Jersey Theatre Alliance is the first statewide organization for professional, not-for-profit theatre companies in the United States, and is a leader in developing model programs that foster collaboration, cooperation and audience development. NJTA provides member theatres, artist members, and arts patrons with a wide range of supportive services and programs. NJTA assists member theatres and artist members in their growth and development, helping them reach their full potential. For arts patrons, NJTA provides a variety of services to enhance their theatre-going experience.

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