

Artistic Director
Artists Repertory Theatre
Portland, Oregon

Overview

On the threshold of our 30th year of challenging artists and audiences with provocative, adventurous plays staged in intimate environments, Artists Repertory Theatre is poised for another period of dynamic growth. For 24 of our 29 years, Artistic Director Allen Nause has guided the theater with a clear focus on bringing Portland new, challenging scripts and nurturing our community of theater artists to create a highly-regarded mid-sized theater that attracts Portland's most enthusiastic theater audiences, and artists of the highest caliber from the region, nation, and around the world. We are Portland's oldest professional theater, and the third largest professional theater in Oregon, after Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Ashland) and Portland Center Stage.

The Artistic Director is responsible for conceiving, developing, and implementing the artistic vision and focus of Artists Repertory Theatre. The Artistic Director reports to the Board of Directors, as does the Managing Director of the company.

Facility

Artists Rep owns its newly-renovated facility, which encompasses a full city block and includes two theater venues: The Alder Street Theater (220 seats) and the Morrison Street Theater (164 seats); two beautiful lobbies, including new bars and catering facilities; an on-site scene shop; administrative and production offices; 5,000 square feet of rentable office space; and patron parking.

Our Work

Challenging artists and audiences with adventurous and provocative plays staged in an intimate environment has been at the heart of Artists Rep's mission for 30 years. That challenge has recently manifested on stage in David Harrower's raw and unsettling *Blackbird* (2008); Martin McDonagh's sharp, hilarious and very bloody *Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2011); the acrobatic stagecraft of Alan Ayckbourn's *House and Garden* (2007); the twisted-tot world of Noah Haidle's *Mr. Marmalade* (2006); and the tense paranoia of Tracy Letts' *Bug* (2005).

Season selection is driven in part by finding substantive, challenging roles for the four members of our acting company, whose work becomes known intimately to our audience as they transform from role to role throughout the seasons. Audiences are asked to examine assumptions, biases, and comfort zones, and be open to a theatrical experience that illuminates the human condition, in all its beauty and difficulty.

The challenge extends to our technical efforts as well – our intimate three-quarter thrust stages demand creativity and resourcefulness in design and production, as every element is scrutinized from multiple angles at a maximum distance of six rows back. Production facilities are limited, and our designers and staff are skilled in getting the maximum impact out of minimal budgets, space, and time.

Intimacy is a key component in our work and identity. With such close physical proximity, the emotional and intellectual divide between the audience and the play narrows, and the experience becomes all the more rewarding. The nuances of a performance are clearer, as is the feeling of a shared experience both on stage and in the seats. It's what our patrons cite again and again as their favorite thing about Artists Rep: the opportunity to experience top-caliber stagecraft up close. That sense extends to our "extracurricular" activities too: Artists Rep audiences enjoy an access to our artists unparalleled in the regional theater world. Actors, directors and designers participate enthusiastically in small educational and social gatherings from pre-show chats to post-

show receptions and panel discussions, and they often can be found having conversations with patrons in the lobby.

Artists Rep is deeply committed to nurturing the development of new plays and emerging writers. Most of our plays are Portland premieres, and we've given 12 scripts world premieres in the last 10 years. The 2011/2012 season is a fine example of this effort, with the world premiere of (*I Am Still*) *The Duchess of Malfi* by Joe Fisher and the West Coast regional premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *Next to Normal*. Even though Pinter's *No Man's Land* couldn't be considered new, it has never before been performed professionally in Portland. Classics will occasionally come alive on our stages as adaptations, such as the three plays in our "Chekhov Project," in which we commissioned three original adaptations of *Three Sisters* (Tracy Letts), *Vanya* (Tom Wood), and *The Cherry Orchard* (Richard Kramer). Artists Rep actively works with playwrights to develop new scripts, submitting staged readings to the city-wide Fertile Ground Festival and mounting our own Play Lab series each year. This year we commissioned a new script by Andrea Stolowitz for the 2012/2013 season, sponsored by two generous donors.

International collaboration has also been an important part of our work, most recently in Allen Nause's 2011 State Department-sponsored trip to Pakistan to direct a Pakistani company's production of *The Odd Couple*, and the 2010 co-production with Australia's renowned Sydney Theatre Company of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Artists Rep has toured productions throughout the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa and has participated in two intensive exchange programs with Vietnam. (Please see our website under "Learn About Us/International Work" for more.)

Education and community outreach have taken many forms at Artists Rep over the years. Recent economic realities have curbed the more school-intensive programs, but this has also afforded us the opportunity to examine what we do best in terms of education and how to integrate that into our mission. We are currently engaged in fundamental strategic work in defining how best to promote theater appreciation throughout the diverse communities of Portland, connect our audiences with the art and artists, and make Artists Rep a valued resource for lifelong joy and learning.

As the owner of one of the city's premier performing arts facilities, and as a company of artists and administrators with a commitment to our local theater community, Artists Rep serves as a resource for numerous smaller companies. Many regularly perform in our performance spaces, including Portland Shakespeare Project and Hand 2 Mouth Theatre, and many have used our performance, rehearsal, and public spaces for performances, readings, benefits, auditions, and more, including Portland Theater Alliance, Coho Theater, Triangle Productions, Fuse Theater, and many others.

For more information about our current season, our history and other aspects of Artists Rep, including a complete list of all our productions since 1982, visit www.artistsrep.org.

Organization/Infrastructure

Artists Rep has a year-round staff of 20 (of whom nine are artistic/production staff), an acting company of four, and an annual budget of \$2.2 million. The 2012 production budget for seven shows is \$630,000 (not including year-round production staff). We operate under a Small Professional Theatre 8 contract with Actors Equity Association. The theater is governed by a Board of Directors of 15. The Artistic Director and Managing Director are co-equal partners in the management of the theater and both report directly to the Board of Directors.

The Transition

After 24 years, Allen Nause has announced that his final season as Artistic Director of Artists Rep will be the 2012/2013 season. This momentous upcoming change has prompted Artists Rep and its stakeholders to

evaluate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the theater and the key attributes desired in our next artistic leader:

Opportunities and Strengths:

- The theater owns its own facility, which is full of potential for expanding our programs, being a community asset, and strengthening revenue streams.
- After a period of economic and programmatic contraction, we are once again enjoying growth in our audience base and are in an intensive period of focus on audience development. An outreach coordinator position has been added to strengthen the theater's network among other organizations whose constituencies may have an affinity for theater, and to create educational and social events that engage new audiences and deepen existing relationships. The 2011/12 Season in particular is demonstrating our success in these areas, with the first three shows of the season beating budgeted income goals and setting new records for sales.
- For a relatively small market, Artists Rep's family of donors is highly committed to the theater's success and individual giving has remained strong over the past several years.
- Artists Rep's administrative and production staff of 20 is long-tenured, highly committed to the theater, and enjoys an access to the artistic process and inclusion in administrative decision-making that transcends departmental lines.
- Artists Rep has a reputation for championing new work and local artists unlike any other theater in Portland. In particular, the establishment of our acting company in 2008 has created opportunities for those artists to enjoy consistent work and develop their craft through a variety of roles from season to season, and has created a sense of an artistic family that our audience has connected with enthusiastically.
- Artists Rep has become a magnet for top-tier acting, directing, writing and design talent from around the region and across the country, thanks to our outstanding track record for premiering new, challenging work and providing a challenging, nurturing and invigorating artistic home for all who work here.

Challenges:

- Artists Rep's facility was purchased in 2004 and renovated through a series of capital campaigns between 2004 and 2010. The facility has yet to fulfill its potential to generate enough revenue through non-theater related activities (parking, theater rentals, office rentals) to mitigate the impact of mortgage and maintenance expenses on the bottom line. In addition, Artists Rep experienced a sharp drop in our audience base after 2006, largely due to increased local competition. These combined factors have led to intense pressures on our budget, which we have answered by increasing focus and resources on audience building, other earned revenue and a facilities plan.
- Portland is currently experiencing something of a Golden Age for theater. In addition to our major LORT regional theater and Artists Rep, there are dozens upon dozens of smaller theaters of exceptional quality that one wouldn't normally expect in a market our size (500,000 residents in Portland proper; 2 million in the metro area). While this creates a rich cultural community, it also puts pressure on us, artistically and financially, from above and below. We are held to the same standard of production

values and guest experience as an institution with four times the budget, but must continue to maintain the scrappy, risk taking authenticity that has been at the root of our success. Maintaining our identity as distinct from the LORT flagship theater and from the smaller theaters, and continuing to build audience share, is an ongoing challenge.

- Artists Rep has been closely identified with Allen Nause for over twenty years, and many of our supporters and artists are passionate about the company because of their trust in and respect for him. His departure will be a loss for the organization, and our challenge is to embrace the future while keeping the connection alive for those who value his legacy so deeply.

Key Attributes of the next Artistic Leader:

- We are seeking an artistic leader who sees their future here, with an appreciation for and commitment to supporting and nourishing the artists and audiences of Portland and the Northwest.
- A spirit of curiosity and adventurousness toward a diversity of theatrical genres and artistic voices.
- A proven ability and desire to be the public face of Artists Rep and cultivate genuine relationships with donors, artists, funders, civic leaders and the general public to ensure that the theater is a well-integrated and vital part of our neighborhood, our city, our region and the national theater scene.
- A leader who values the collaborative nature of theater and extends that approach to work with staff, board, artists and other stakeholders.
- The ability to honor and preserve Artists Rep's well-established mission, *and* develop an individual approach to moving that mission forward into the future with relevance, vitality, and creativity.
- Must appreciate a workplace with dogs and children.

Position and Responsibilities

The Artistic Director reports to the Board of Directors through its Chair, working in a co-equal partnership with the Managing Director. The Artistic Director's primary focus and top priority will be work at Artists Rep or on the theater's behalf.

The most important roles are:

- Collaborate with the Managing Director and Board of Directors to identify and fulfill the strategic goals for the theater.
- Lead season planning by selecting plays and lead artists in keeping with the theater's artistic mission.
- Direct at least two regular season productions each season.
- Manage artistic and production staff (the Literary Manager, Associate Artistic Director and Production Manager report directly to the Artistic Director). Work closely with production staff to achieve the vision of resident and visiting designers within Artists Rep's resources, and help shape future goals for Artists Rep's production capacity.

- Continue to develop Artists Rep's identity as an institution that champions new work and challenging plays by emerging and established playwrights.
- Imagine and lead innovative programming that creates new opportunities for people to engage with Artists Rep beyond the traditional subscriber/ticket-buyer relationship.
- Participate actively in the solicitation of major gifts and collaborate with the development team to create new opportunities to strengthen relationships with existing donors and attract new supporters to the theater.
- Seek out opportunities to collaborate with artists and organizations in the local, national and international theater scene to further Artists Rep's mission and stature in the theater community.
- Strategize with the marketing team to inspire messaging about the plays, the seasons, and the Artists Rep brand, and to help realize Artists Rep's goals for audience development.
- Take a leading role in shaping a new direction for Artists Rep's theater education and outreach programming that is sustainable, has real impact and supports our central mission.

Qualifications

- Significant experience directing and producing theatrical productions of outstanding quality, collaborating with playwrights and developing new work.
- Demonstrated ability to play an ongoing role within an artistic organization, preferably in a leadership position.
- Proven ability to articulate a compelling artistic vision to diverse internal and external audiences.
- A strong local, national and international network of artists and theater professionals.
- A strong track record in building relationships with audiences, funders and other arts leaders.
- An understanding of professional regional theater finances and a demonstrated ability to create top-caliber work within the limits of an organization's budget. Familiarity with Actors Equity Association's operating agreements and practices is helpful.

Timeline

The search committee intends to make its announcement of the next Artistic Director in December 2012, but is primarily committed to taking as much time as is needed to find the theater's next artistic leader. It is our hope that the new Artistic Director will be able to participate as much as possible in play selection for the 2013/2014 Season. The new Artistic Director ideally will be on site in Portland as often as possible during a transition period of some months, getting to know our organization and our community while taking on appropriate roles in oversight of the upcoming season, with full time employment potentially beginning in the first quarter of 2013. This will provide the new director an opportunity to overlap time with Allen Nause and benefit from his assistance in the transition. Final timing will be mutually determined with the chosen candidate.

Procedure to Apply

Please send a letter of interest, current resume, and any supporting materials you feel would be helpful BY APRIL 2 to:

adsearch@artistsrep.org