

# Kent Thompson

Theatre Producer | Director | Consultant | Writer | Educator

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## Organizational leadership

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### Producing Artistic Director, Denver Center Theatre Company, 2005 –2017

Artistic & executive leader of the Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC), a division of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA). With an annual budget of \$17.3 million, DCTC produced in four theatres (LORT B, C2 & D). In 12 seasons, I produced 124 mainstage productions of classics, modern & contemporary plays, musicals, and new plays, and directed 21 productions. DCTC programming included Mainstage Subscription Season, Off-Center, Colorado New Play Summit, and DCPA Education Department (from 2005 to 2013, this also included the National Theatre Conservatory, MFA Professional Actor Training Program).

Duties included:

- Articulate the artistic vision and strategic vision of the DCTC and, in collaboration with the DCPA, lead the theatre company to achieve that vision (both short-term and long-term).
- Select season, oversee development of rehearsal/performance schedules, expense budgets, and, working with DCPA Marketing and Development departments, forecast earned and unearned income.
- Deliver engaging and relevant productions of highest artistic quality possible, while maintaining budgetary control of expenses, revenue and human resources.
- Hire and manage TC senior staff leaders in production, management, literary, artistic and education departments. Select all creative teams and guest artists (e.g., playwrights, directors, designers, actors, teaching artists, faculty, etc.).
- Serve as a member of the DCPA Executive Team which manages the entire DCPA, including the Broadway touring division & its Cabaret series, and Event Services.
- Executive leader of the National Theatre Conservatory & DCPA Education Department
- Provide active leadership & participation in the creation of partnerships with potential audiences, supporters, foundations, educational institutions, community organizations and governmental agencies, etc. Active role in fundraising and multiple development and marketing events.

- Serve as local, regional, and national spokesperson for DCTC/DCPA.
- Maintain active participation in national theatre field service organizations, national media and foundations in order to advance national awareness and media coverage and to increase national funding for DCTC/DCPA.

## Notable Accomplishments

- Creation of Colorado New Play Summit/New Play Commissioning and Development Program in 2005. Over 12 seasons, DCTC commissioned 39 new plays, workshopped 48 new plays and musicals and produced 29 world premieres, which resulted in 85+ follow-on professional productions across the U.S. In 2015, the Summit expanded to two weeks, and DCTC appointed its first Playwriting Fellow, Matthew Lopez.
- Creation of Women's Voices Fund. The first of its kind in the nation, the WVF supports the commissioning, development and world premieres of plays by women.
- Creation of Off-Center, dedicated to nurturing the next generation of artists, audiences and theatrical performances. Focused on creating innovative, immersive, and interactive programming for millennial audiences.
- Continuous growth of Education Department to serve more than 95,000 students of all ages.
- Creation of Colorado HS Playwright Residency & Competition Program and Shakespeare In the Parking Lot
- Continued annual productions of African-American plays, added annual productions by Latinx playwrights, increased productions by female playwrights, and increased commissions of playwrights of color. Begun by my predecessor, Donovan Marley, I completed August Wilson's American Century Cycle with all ten productions were directed by the late Israel Hicks. Expanded the hiring of diverse artists, staff and craftspeople. Led DCPA's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in programming, staff, artists, audiences, and Trustees. DCPA is now a member of the TCG's EDI Institute.

## World Premieres / Denver Center Theatre Company

\* = *commissioned play*

***The Book of Will***\* by Lauren Gunderson, ***Two Degrees*** by Tira Palmquist, ***Fade***\* by Tanya Saracho, ***The Nest***\* by Theresa Rebeck, ***Appoggiatura***\* by James Still, ***Benediction***\* by Eric Schmiedl based on the novel by Kent Haruf, ***The Twelve***\* music & lyrics by Neil Berg, book & lyrics by Robert Schenkkan; ***The Legend of Georgia McBride*** by Matthew Lopez; ***black odyssey***\* by Marcus Gardley; ***Grace or the Art of Climbing*** by Lauren Feldman; ***Just Like Us***\* by Karen Zacarias from Helen Thorpe's book; ***Ed, Downloaded***\* by Michael Mitnick; ***The Most Deserving***\* by Catherine Treischman; ***Sense & Sensibility The Musical***, book & lyrics by Jeffrey Haddow, music by Neal Hampton; ***The Whale*** by Samuel Hunter; ***Two Things You Don't Talk About at Dinner*** by Lisa Loomer; ***Great Wall Story*** by Lloyd Suh; ***The Catch*** by Ken Weitzman; ***Map of Heaven***\* by Michele Lowe; ***Eventide***\* by Eric Schmiedl based on the novel by Kent Haruf; ***When Tang Met Laika***\* by Rogelio Martinez; ***Mama Hated Diesels*** by Randal Myler and Dan Wheetman; ***Dusty & the Big Bad World***\* by Cusi Cram; ***Inana***\* by Michele Lowe; ***Sunsets & Margaritas***\* by José Cruz González; ***Lydia***\* by Octavio Solis; ***Plainsong***\* by Eric Schmiedl based on the novel by Kent Haruf; ***Our House***\* by Theresa Rebeck; ***1001***\* by Jason Grote; and ***Jesus Hates Me*** by Wayne Lemon

## Additional Commissions

***Blind Date*** by Rogelio Martinez (Goodman Theater premiere, 2018)

*The Great Leap* by Lauren Yee (DCTC premiere, 2018)

*Zoey's Perfect Wedding* by Matthew Lopez (DCTC premiere, 2018)

*American Mariachi\** by José Cruz González (DCTC/The Old Globe co-production/premiere, 2018)

*Human Error* by Eric Pfeffinger (DCPA Cabaret premiere, 2018)

## **Representative Major Grants**

- The Doris Duke Foundation (multiple grants) to support the planning, creation, and the first two seasons of Off-Center production and projects. EMCArts, Inc.
- The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for new play program and the Steinberg Commission in American Playwriting at the Denver Center Theatre Company (4-year grants of \$500K)
- The Wallace Foundation Building Audiences for Sustainability (1 of 25 performing arts organizations nationwide), 2015-2018. To support Off-Center in data research into millennials living in Denver (1/3rd of our population) to inform artistic decisions, create new work and engage larger audiences. \$1.2M+ over four years
- The Edgerton Foundation. Eleven grants to support world premiere productions of New Plays.
- National Endowment for the Arts. Multiple grants for Mainstage shows, world premieres and Arts Education.
- NEA/ArtsWest “Shakespeare in American Communities.” Multiple grants for Shakespeare productions and Arts Education workshops in schools.

## **Producing Artistic Director, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, 1989-2005**

Artistic Director, then Producing Artistic Director of Alabama Shakespeare Festival. During my tenure, annual budget increased from \$4.6 million to \$10+ million, and ASF broadened its geographic reach to attract audiences from 19 states. In two theatres, I produced 176 LORT productions (LORT C & D), including 5 national tours, 13 Theatre for Youth Audiences production, and 35 fully produced shows by the MFA program. This included 50 productions of Shakespeare plays. I directed more than 40 productions at ASF.

## **Notable Accomplishments:**

- ASF began national tours of a Shakespeare production every three years, including a production of Macbeth that toured 13 military bases in the U.S., funded by a unique partnership between the Department of Defense and the National Endowment for the Arts. \$1M+
- Creation of the Southern Writer's Project (SWP) to support new plays by Southern writers and/or African-American writers. During my tenure, ASF produced 19 world premieres. Several of these plays went on to follow-on productions at professional theatres. Highlights: Commissioned by ASF, Dennis Covington wrote a play, based upon his popular young adult novel, Lizard. I directed the world premiere at ASF which led to invitation to re-mount the production in Atlanta as part of the Cultural Celebration at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Commissioned Romulus Linney to adapt Ernest Gaines novel, A Lesson Before Dying. I directed world premiere at ASF and the follow-on production at Signature Theatre Company (NYC) for its 10th Anniversary Season.

- ASF's The Festival Forever Endowment grew from \$345,000 in 1989 to \$18.5 million in 2006 with additional pledges of more than \$25 million.

## World Premieres / Alabama Shakespeare Festival

\* = *commissioned play*

*Pure Confidence*\* by Carlyle Brown, (Co-commission with Actor's Theatre of Louisville); *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove*\* by Regina Taylor; *Disguises* by Craig Warner; *Fula from America* by Carlyle Brown; *Venus de Milo is Armed*\* by Kia Cothron; *Iago* by James McLure; *Aaronville Dawning*\* by Linda Byrd Kilian; *The Negro of Peter the Great*\* by Carlyle Brown; *Shiloh Rules*\* by Doris Baizley; *A Lesson Before Dying*\* by Romulus Linney, adapted from Ernest Gaines' novel; *A Night in Tunisia*\* by Regina Taylor; *Vernon Early* by Horton Foote; *Sockdology*\* by Jeffrey Hatcher; *Lurleen*\* by Barbara Lebow; *Fair & Tender Ladies*\* adapted from the novel by Lee Smith, script by Eric Schmiedl, music & lyrics by Tommy Goldsmith, Tom House & Karren Pell; *The Coming of Rain*\* by Richard Marius, adapted from his novel; *Thunder Knocking on the Door*\* by Keith Glover (Premiere co-production with Dallas Theatre Center & Baltimore Center Stage); *Ain't Got Long to Stay Here*\* by Barry Scott; *The Moving of Lilla Barton*\* by John MacNicholas; *Lizard*\* by Dennis Covington, adapted from his novel of the same name; Grover by Randy Hall

## Representative Major Grants

- TCG/Pew Charitable Trust, "National Theatre Artists Residency Program" (Received twice. Keith Glover & Carlyle Brown)
- Department of Defense/National Endowment for the Arts co-grant to fund 2000 Macbeth Tour to U.S. Military Bases. \$1 million+.
- Ford Foundation, New Directions/New Donors for the Arts Initiative (to fund a feasibility study, create a campaign plan, and provide the first \$1 million gift to the newly re-named "Festival Forever" endowment). \$1.3 million.
- The Lila Wallace Fund (grant to advance efforts to diversify ASF programming, audiences, leadership, staff, artists and trustees to better reflect the city, state and region that ASF served. \$1.2 million.
- Trustee Laurie Weil, \$1 million lead gift to "Festival Forever" Endowment in support of the Southern Writer's Project
- The Walter Annenberg Foundation, \$1 million gift to "Festival Forever" Endowment.

## Artistic Director, Virginia Shakespeare Festival, 1979-1981

1st Artistic Director of a summer Shakespeare located at William & Mary. Produced three-show season. Annual audiences and budget tripled during my tenure.

## Sun Valley Center for the Arts/Company of Fools, ID, 2018

- Evaluate artistic, organizational, and business operations, including relationship with Company of Fools' parent organization, Sun Valley Center for the Arts.
- Served as Interim Producing Director.
- Searched for new producing artistic director.

## National Theatre of D.C., Inc.

- Programming Expansion Plan

## Professional Stage Directing Credits

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\* = world premiere

Productions	Company
<i>Woody Guthrie's American Song</i>	Company of Fools, ID
<i>The Alamo*</i> by Ian MacRae	Ruskin Group Theatre, LA
<i>The Christians, Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street</i> (arr. DeVotchKa), <i>As You Like It, Plainsong*</i> , <i>Eventide*</i> , <i>Benediction*</i> by Eric Schmiedl, adapt. from the Kent Haruf trilogy, <i>Hamlet, Just Like Us*</i> by Karen Zacarias from Helen Thorpe's book, <i>Other Desert Cities, The Taming of the Shrew, The Liar</i> by David Ives from Corneille, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream, Othello, Dusty &amp; the Big Bad World*</i> by Cusi Cram, <i>Noises Off, King Lear, Measure for Measure, Amadeus</i>	Denver Center Theatre Company
<i>Irving Berlin's White Christmas</i> [twice]	Denver Center Broadway
<i>Amahl &amp; the Night Visitors</i>	Central City Opera & St. Luke's United Methodist Church, CO
<i>Cymbeline, The Comedy of Errors, The Imaginary Invalid, Scapin</i>	Utah Shakespeare Festival

# Professional Stage Directing Credits, continued

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\* = world premiere

Productions	Company
<i>King Lear; Iago*</i> by James McLure; <i>Richard II; Big River; Heartbreak House; Henry IV, Part 1; Hamlet; The Merchant of Venice; Grover*</i> by Randy Hall; <i>On The Verge; Twelfth Night; Tartuffe; The Immigrant; Lizard;*</i> ; <i>Aaronville Dawning*</i> by Linda Byrd Killian; <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona; The Immigrant; Inherit the Wind; Lurleen*</i> by Barbara Lebow; <i>The Cherry Orchard; Peter Pan; The Little Foxes; Disguises*</i> by Craig Warner	Alabama Shakespeare Festival
<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i> by Romulus Linney adapt. from Ernest Gaines' novel.	Signature Theatre, NYC
<i>Great Expectations: The Musical</i> (Mel Marvin, John Jakes)	Goodspeed Musicals
<i>Lend Me A Tenor</i> by Ken Ludwig	Geva Theatre Company & StageWest
<i>Crimes of the Heart</i> by Beth Henley (Young Company Project)	The Stratford Festival, Canada
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Boston Shakespeare Company
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	North Carolina Shakespeare Festival
<i>Fallen Angels</i> by Noel Coward	Delaware Theatre Company
<i>Season's Greetings</i> by Alan Ayckbourn	The Whole Theatre, NJ
<i>As You Like It</i>	New Stage Theatre, Jackson, MS
<i>The Comedy of Errors, The Men's Group*</i>	Equity Library Theatre, NYC
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	Virginia Shakespeare Festival

# Writing

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## Book (To Be Published)

Directing Professionally: A Practical Guide to Developing a Successful Career in Today's Theatre. Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama (UK & US), publication date: January 10, 2019.

## Plays (Produced)

*Hanzel & Gretel* adapt. from The Grimm Brothers' story, Alabama Shakespeare Festival

*Buyin' Freedom*, Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of American History

*When the War Ends: Cornwallis & Washington*, Colonial National Historic Park, Yorktown, VA (Augustine Moore House)

*Defending Yorktown to the Signing the Declaration of Independence*, Colonial National Historic Park, Yorktown, VA (Thomas Nelson House)

## Plays (Unproduced)

*Jesus & The Sweetwater Pilgrim Baptist Church*, adapt. from Clayton Sullivan novel, Southern Writers' Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival (Adapt. from novel by Clayton Sullivan)

## Industry Service, Peer Panels

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### Current

Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Fund Distinguished Playwright Award, 2016-2019

### Prior

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Theatre Commissioning and Production Initiative; TCG/Doris Duke Foundation/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Future Leaders/Future Audiences; Edgerton Foundation; TCG/Pew Charitable Trust, National Theatre Artists Residency Program; National Endowment for the Arts (Theatre & Musicals) Panel (also Chair); Pew Center for Arts & Heritage; Herb Alpert Foundation; Fulbright Scholars Discipline Panel (Theatre Arts), 5 years: Theatre Forward (formerly National Corporate Theatre Fund) Advisory Task Force, "Advancing Strong Theatre."

## **National Performing Arts Conference, Denver, CO, 2008**

- Member, Denver Host Committee
- Host, Theatre Communications Group National Conference
- Producer, NATC

## **Theatre Communications Group. Member, Board of Directors, 1995-2002**

- President, Board of Directors, 1998-2001.
- Vice President, Board of Directors, 1997-1998
- Strategic Planning Committee, 1997-2001.
- Co-chair, Executive Director Search Committee (for Ben Cameron), 1997

## **Non-Traditional Casting Project (now Inclusion in the Arts), NYC**

- AEA/LORT Diversity Panel
- AEA/LORT Non-Traditional Casting Task Force

## **National Endowment for the Arts, Site Evaluator, 1989-2008**

- More than 45 evaluations, for a wide variety of professional theatre companies, including Alley Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Pittsburgh Public, American Southwest Theatre Company, Long Wharf Theatre, etc.

## **Conservatory Leadership & Teaching**

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- **Co-Director**, Alabama Shakespeare Festival/University of Alabama Professional Theatre Training Program. Shared Leadership of MFA Programs in Acting, Arts Administration, Playwriting, Literary Management/Dramaturgy, and Stage Management. 1989-2005.
- **Executive leader** of National Theatre Conservatory at DCPA. Professional Conservatory Program that offered MFA degrees in Professional Acting. 2005-2013.

## **Seminars & Classes Taught**

- “Acting Shakespeare,” “Text Analysis & Character Creation in the Classics,” “Professional Industry Expectations” and “Directing for Actors.” National Theatre Conservatory, Denver Center
- “Directing Shakespeare,” “Text Analysis & Character Creation in the Classics,” “Script Analysis” “Profes-



sional Industry Expectations,” and “Audition Preparation.” ASF/University of Alabama Professional Acting, MFA

- “Shakespeare for Actors,” The DePaul Theatre School (for BFA & MFA actors)
- “Professional Expectations for MFA Actors & Stage Managers,” The Juilliard School
- “Voice & Speech,” and “Beginning Acting.” The College of William and Mary
- “Script Analysis for Actors,” The Actors Center (NYC)

## Conservatory/Academic Stage Directing Credits

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\* = world premiere

Productions	Company
<i>The Rover</i> by Aphra Behn, <i>Cymbeline</i>	Alabama Shakespeare Festival / University of Alabama MFA Program
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Boston University
<i>Macbeth</i> , <i>The Country Wife</i> [2nd Year project]	North Carolina School of the Arts
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , <i>The Lower Depths</i> [2nd Year project]	The Juilliard School
<i>We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!</i> by Dario Fo	Temple University
<i>As You Like It</i>	University of Washington
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	State University of New York at Purchase
<i>As You Like It</i>	Barnard College/Columbia University
<i>Holy Ghosts</i> by Romulus Linney	University of New Orleans
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Guildhall School of Music & Drama

## Education

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- William & Mary, BA, Theatre & Speech, Phi Beta Kappa
- Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, UK, AGSM. Professional Acting as Draper's Company of London Scholar. The Drama division was operated by the Royal Shakespeare Company.