



PRESS RELEASE

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Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre Hires Kelly Kerwin for New Artistic Director after National Search

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, May 14, 2021 - The Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre (OKC Rep) and its Board of Directors are proud to announce the selection of its new Artistic Director Kelly Kerwin. Ms. Kerwin will succeed the founding Artistic Director Donald Jordan who will be transitioning to Artistic Director Emeritus after June 2021.

“The vigorous national search resulted in more than 65 highly qualified candidates from across the United States. We are impressed by Ms. Kerwin’s experience and vision and are excited to have her lead OKC Rep into the next generation,” said Search Committee Chair Max Weitzenhoffer, Chairman, Nimax Theaters, Philanthropist and OKC Rep Board member.

“My vision is to produce powerful and innovative works of theater that will help us better understand our own humanity.” Kerwin said in a statement. “I am honored to lead OKC Rep into the future, and I see this next phase as one that will be an expression of Oklahoma City’s ambition, creativity, and generosity of spirit. I’m so excited to be immersed in Oklahoma City’s thriving arts community.”

Ms. Kerwin will be starting July 6 and is relocating from New York City where she currently serves as the Associate Producer for The Public’s Under the Radar Festival, where she is also a Line Producer for plays and musicals in The Public’s five performance spaces. She also co-leads The Public’s Devised Theater Working Group, and she is an Adjunct Professor at Connecticut College, where she teaches Theater and Culture. Ms. Kerwin earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Theatre School at DePaul University and a Master of Fine Arts in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama, where she received The Pierre-André Salim Prize--awarded to the graduating student who shows distinct promise of raising the standard of practice in the field.

Ms. Kerwin has worked as an artistic leader, performance curator, director, dramaturg and producer. She has been on the artistic staff at Yale Repertory Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, The House Theatre of Chicago, Chicago's Collaboraction, and she was the Co-Artistic Director for the Yale Cabaret's 46th Season. She also helped establish, with Jane Beachy, Chicago's Salonathon, a weekly series specializing in underground performance. As a dramaturg, she has worked on world premieres with playwrights Ike Holter, Phillip Howze, Carly Mensch, Amelia Roper, and Emily Zemba.

"Kelly Kerwin is an extraordinary, sparkling jewel of a leader: brilliant, passionate, with exquisite taste and with inspiring gifts for both listening and leadership," said Public Theater Artistic Director Oskar Eustis in a statement. "In her years at the Public, she made herself invaluable; I can only reconcile myself to her leaving by knowing that she is going to make great theater in Oklahoma, and that her success there will be good for the entire field. (And good for the wonderful state where my great-grandparents and grandparents were born!) There is no leader in the American theater who has more potential, or a brighter future."

At The Public, she line produced *Girl from The North Country* (Conor McPherson); *A Bright Room Called Day* (Tony Kushner, Oskar Eustis); *Soft Power* (David Henry Hwang, Jeanine Tesori, Leigh Silverman, Sam Pinkleton); *The Line* (Jessica Blank & Erik Jensen); *We're Only Alive for A Short Amount of Time* (David Cale, Robert Falls); *M'lima's Tale* (Lynn Nottage, Jo Bonney). She also produced three Under the Radar Festivals featuring work by Whitney White + Peter Mark Kendall; Manual Cinema; Tania El Khoury; Inua Ellams; New Saloon; Lola Arias; Rude Mechs; Ifeoma Fafunwa; 600 Highwaymen, Choir! Choir! Choir! with David Byrne, and many other internationally acclaimed artists.

"Kelly is an artist and thinker who is always building new pathways— she is innovative, generous, and always puts the artists first," said Obie Award winning director Whitney White, in a statement. "When I am working with her, I know that the work will be supported, and that my team will succeed."

The national search for a new artistic director was conducted by a broad-based committee of Oklahoma City community leaders and was chaired by Max Weitzenhoffer and assisted by Seth Gordon, Director-Helmerich School of Drama at the University of Oklahoma (OU) and OKC Rep board president Cliff Hudson.

Founding Artistic Director Donald Jordan spoke highly of Ms. Kerwin, “In my time with her, she has shown the sense of service, commitment, artistic vision, professional excellence and dedication needed to build upon our foundation and continue to lead the organization forward. I think the Rep and Oklahoma City are very lucky to have her!”

An award-winning, nationally recognized professional regional theatre, OKC Rep produced its first play in 2002 and has produced more than 85 productions since then. Numerous achievements for the organization include becoming the first theatre in Oklahoma City history to be given membership in The Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national association of leading professional theatres, in 2011; being awarded the American Theatre Wing’s National Theatre Award in 2012 and earning an EMMY Award in 2015 with the co-production of BACK IN TIME with OETA.

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