



KANSAS CITY REPERTORY THEATRE

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Artistic Director Eric Rosen Recognized for his Leadership in Transforming Regional Theater in the Central United States

Eric Rosen is one of three finalists for the 2016 Zelda Fichandler Award which honors directors at the center of their creative lives who have made significant contributions to the theatre field in a region outside of New York.

KC Rep artistic director Eric Rosen was named one of three finalists for the 2016 Zelda Fichandler Award which honors accomplished directors whose visionary work is impacting theatre communities outside of New York.

The founding artistic director of About Face Theatre in Chicago from 1995-2008, Rosen built on his growing profile as a director, playwright, and producer when he took the helm as artistic director at KC Rep in 2008. In the nine seasons since, Rosen has built a major national profile for the company, programming a robust lineup of new and classic works that resonate deeply for Kansas City audiences and connect to the national discourse around contemporary life and politics. During his tenure Rosen has produced over a dozen world premiere productions by playwrights including Rinne Groff, Daniel Beaty, Michael Benjamin Washington, David Cale, Nick Blaemire, Lydia Diamond, the Civilians, Matt Sax, and Mellon Foundation playwright in residence Nathan Louis Jackson; created national partnerships with theatres like La Jolla Playhouse, Center Theater Group, Arena Stage, Baltimore Centerstage, Lincoln

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Center Theater/LCT3, and The Public Theatre; and produced the world premiere of *A Christmas Story, The Musical!*, which went on to be a Broadway hit that received three Tony nominations, including Best Musical. Rosen is most well-known for his original plays and musicals that include the acclaimed hip hop musical *Venice*, which was named best musical of the year by TIME in 2010 and was produced off-Broadway at the Public Theater, *Lot's Wife*, a musical adaptation of *Winesburg Ohio* that won awards as Best New Musical in Chicago and Philadelphia, and *Dream Boy*, which continues to be produced around the country. Rosen has earned a reputation for creating gorgeous revivals of classic plays and musicals, energizing audiences by offering a contemporary lens on canonical plays. Recent projects include *HAIR: RETROSPECTION*, featuring six members of the original Broadway cast; *Sunday in the Park with George* staged in Kansas City's renowned Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; and *Evita*, performed against the backdrop of stunning archival video footage of Eva Perón.

"Eric has deeply engaged with the Kansas City community, celebrating local artists on and off our stages" says KC Rep director of new works/artistic associate Marissa Wolf. "Last season more than 80% of the actors on KC Rep stages were local. Eric's championship of local talent, diversity, and inclusion contributes to our city's flourishing arts ecosystem."

"To receive this recognition is one of the highest honors a director working outside of New York can receive, and it is especially meaningful to share this recognition with two women I admire tremendously: Aimee Hayes of Southern Rep and Chicago director Lisa Portes, this year's winner" Rosen said. "It is especially meaningful this year, in which the field lost one of its most visionary leaders. Zelda Fichandler paved the way for theater across the US, and I am so proud for our work in Kansas City to be a small part of her legacy."

The Zelda Fichandler Award is made by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the nonprofit foundation of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). According to the SDCF website, "the Zelda Fichandler Award recognizes directors and choreographers who are in the center of their creative lives; who demonstrate great accomplishment to-date and promise for the future; and who have made prominent achievements in the field with singular creativity and artistry, and deep investment in a particular place outside of the New York arena." The award is given annually to honorees selected on a rotating basis from different regions in the United States.

Zelda Fichandler was the founding visionary behind Arena Stage in Washington D.C. Established in the early 1950s, Fichandler's brainchild quickly joined the vanguard of America's nonprofit theatre movement (a trend which KC Rep's own founder, Dr. Patricia McIlrath, joined in 1964 when she founded the theatre that would become KC Rep and herself became a leader in the blossoming movement). Zelda Fichandler retired as producing artistic director of Arena Stage in 1990 and died in July 2016 at the age of 91.

Rosen will receive this recognition at a ceremony at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago on October 30, along with fellow nominee Aimee Hayes of Southern Rep and the winner, Lisa Portes.

About Eric Rosen

Eric was the founding artistic director of Chicago's About Face Theatre (AFT) from 1995 to 2008, and is a writer, director, and producer. Original projects include *Venice* (KC Rep, Center Theatre Group-LA, Public Theater-NYC, "Best Musical of 2010" – TIME Magazine); *Wedding Play* (Steppenwolf/AFT, Jefferson

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nomination); *Winesburg, Ohio* (Steppenwolf/AFT-Jeff Award, Philadelphia's Arden Theatre Company—Barrymore Award, KC Rep); *Clay* (AFT, Lookingglass Theatre-Chicago, Center Theatre Group, KC Rep, Lincoln Center/,CT3-Drama Desk Nomination, Jeff Award); *Undone*; *Whitman*; and *Dream Boy* (Jeff Award, several productions across the country). In addition to *Venice*, other KC Rep directing credits include: *Clay*; *Winesburg, Ohio*; the world premiere of *A Christmas Story, The Musical!* (a hit musical on Broadway—three Tony nominations, including Best Musical); *Cabaret*; *August: Osage County*; *The Whipping Man*; *Pippin*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; *The Who & the What*; *Sunday in the Park with George*; and *The Santaland Diaries*.

General KC Rep Information

About Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Kansas City Repertory Theatre, one of the oldest and most respected regional theaters, is the center of a great theatre town. KC Rep produces theatrical excellence, creating and sharing stories at the center of our nation's creative crossroads. KC Rep's mission is to advance the art form while cultivating passionate audiences, artists, and advocates to invest in our region's creative future. We build community by connecting people through productions and outreach that educate, entertain, challenge and inspire. Lauded by *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME magazine*, *Variety*, and *The Toronto Sun*, KC Rep produces mainstage plays and special events at Spencer Theatre, where it serves as the professional theatre in residence at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), and Copaken Stage located in downtown Kansas City. KC Rep employs more than 230 professional artists, technicians and administrators, and serves more than 60,000 patrons and 10,500 school children annually. Kansas City Repertory Theatre is led by Artistic Director Eric Rosen and Executive Director Angela Lee Gieras.

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High resolution photos can be downloaded at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kcrep/sets/>.

B-roll is available upon request.

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Please direct all media inquiries to Tammy Cunningham at publicity@kcrep.org.

For further information, please visit our website at www.kcrep.org.

For Tickets: 816.235.2700 or www.kcrep.org.

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