



DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

# APPLAUSE

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## LETTER FROM THE PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Happy New Year!

We welcome you back to the Denver Center. 2015 begins with so many exciting events, performances and programs — most of all the 10th annual Colorado New Play Summit and two world premiere productions. For our tenth Summit, we are presenting works by four playwrights: Theresa Rebeck, Tanya Saracho, Catherine Trieschmann and Jason Gray Platt, three of which are commissions. We've added an extra weekend on February 14-15 to accommodate growing demand; it features several new activities including acting classes by Playwright-in-Residence Matthew Lopez and a Playwrights' Slam in which local playwrights will read short passages from plays they are working on. If you want to see plays being created, join us for the Summit.

Centerpieces of the Summit are two world premieres (both Denver Center commissions). First up is James Still's *Appoggiatura*, a lovely, funny and emotionally engaging play about a family travelling to Venice to find connection and closure after the death of a grandfather. Still uses the romance and mystery of Venice to tell this wonder-filled story — with violin music and colorful Italian characters.

At the Denver Center, we all find ourselves deeply saddened by the death of Colorado novelist, Kent Haruf, but also even more dedicated to our second world premiere — Eric Schmied's *Benediction*, based on the novel by Haruf. *Benediction* completes the trilogy that began with *Plainsong* and *Eventide*. We are blessed to produce this wonderful, sad, funny and evocative story, set in the Eastern Plains of Colorado.

February also brings a beloved classic fairy tale to life — as the national tour of the new, gorgeous and imaginative production of *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* delights audiences at The Buell Theatre.

Soon, very soon we will announce the 2015/16 seasons. Broadway will announce first, followed closely by the Theatre Company's list of shows. We believe you will find next year exciting, entertaining, meaningful and invigorating.

Thank you again for participating in these performances. Your presence makes the DCPA come alive.

**Kent Thompson**  
Producing Artistic Director  
Denver Center for the  
Performing Arts

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Reading of *Zenith*, by Kirsten Greenidge. Photo by John Moore.

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# PLAYWRIGHT IN RESIDENCE: Matthew Lopez

BY JOHN MOORE

“There is an aggressive push here toward being seen as a premier theatre for new works. Toward being seen as a playwright’s theatre.”

— MATTHEW LOPEZ



Photo by John Moore

When Producing Artistic Director Kent Thompson asked Matthew Lopez to serve as the Theatre Company’s first-ever Playwriting Fellow, he said yes for one reason:

“The emphasis here on new play development,” said Lopez, who wrote last season’s world premiere comedy *The Legend of Georgia McBride*.

Denver, Lopez says, is a theatre community that appreciates new work. Plus nationally, he added, the DCPA is seen as an industry leader.

Lopez is one of the busiest writers in America. His *The Whipping Man* was the fifth-most produced play in the US in 2014. He is working on his first screenplay — an adaptation of the novel *Your Face Tomorrow* — for producers Brad Pitt and the makers of *12 Years a Slave*. Lopez also has four active play commissions — that’s four new plays for four different theatre companies over the next several years. He will have two new plays produced for the first time in 2015. Additionally he was a staff writer for HBO’s *The Newsroom*.

That he is making time to spend one week in Denver every month through March, he said, is a testament to the DCPA’s growing importance on the American theatre landscape.

“It’s everything,” Lopez said of accepting his appointment. “It’s the Colorado New Play Summit. It’s the fact that four of the plays from the 2013 Summit, including my own, made it into the following season. There is an aggressive push here toward being seen as a premier theatre for new works. Toward being seen as a playwright’s theatre.”

“Writers know the difference between companies that claim to support new work and those that actually do. The DCPA is most decidedly on the right side of that divide. I am excited by the opportunity to deepen my relationship with this wonderful theatre.”

During his six-month fellowship, Lopez is serving as a full member of the Theatre Company’s artistic team. He has brought the playwright’s voice into the development of the new world premiere stagings of *Benediction* and *Appoggiatura*. He is assisting with play selection for the 2015/16 season. He also is the “Playwright Host” for the 2015 Colorado New Play Summit.

“We are thrilled to welcome Matthew back to Denver and add his unique voice to our artistic discussions,” said Thompson. “We know he will help us take the Colorado New Play Summit to new heights.”

Lopez’s busy Fellowship itinerary also includes visits to area schools. He was not only willing to do it. He insisted on it.

“My parents are both teachers, so I value education,” Lopez said. “I would have killed for an opportunity to attend a school like the Denver School of the Arts. If I can be seen in any way as someone who is capable of providing mentorship or inspiration to these kids, then I am happy to play that role.”

*Follow Matthew Lopez’s visit to Denver in our ongoing, six-part monthly series on the DCPA’s online News Center at [denvercenter.org/news-center](http://denvercenter.org/news-center).*



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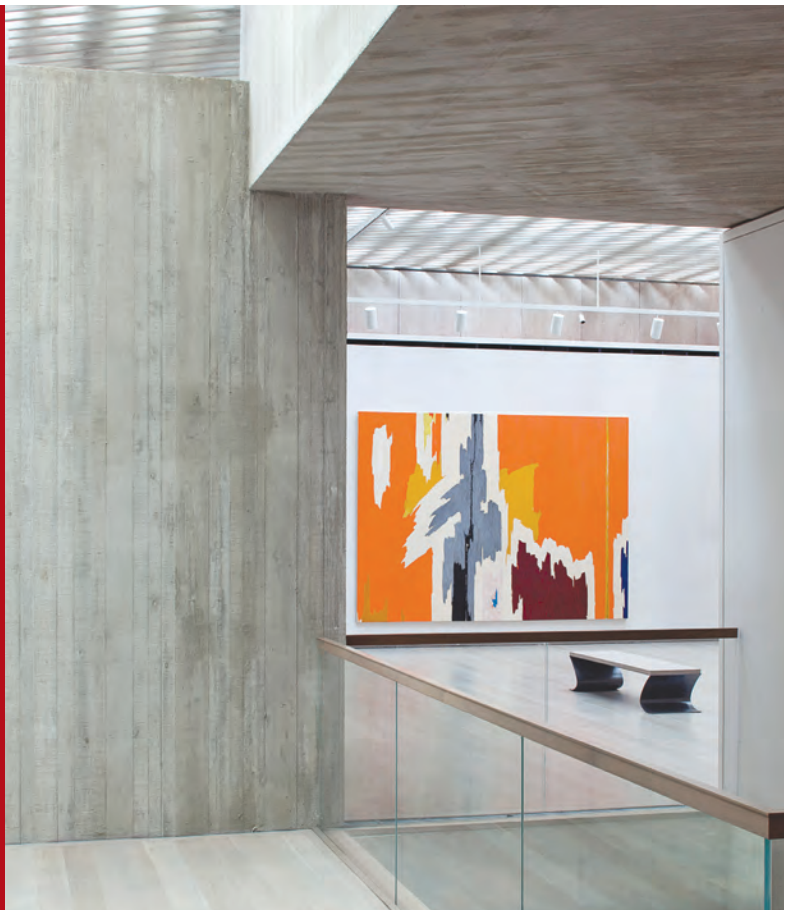
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# APPOGGIATURA

## THE MYSTERY OF LEANING IN

BY SYLVIE DRAKE



ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE MALONE

Two questions I bet you'd like answered when you're about to watch a new play: One: Is it comedy or tragedy? *Appoggiatura* is both and neither. It is bittersweet, funny, troubling, touching.

Two: So what exactly is it? A meditation on love and loss.

Helen and Aunt Chuck (a man), plus Helen's granddaughter Sylvie (in her 20s), are visiting Venice after the death of Gordon, a man they all loved in differing ways. Following an unpromising start, their adventures in that liquid city reward each one of them in wise, disturbing and exquisite ways.

*Appoggiatura* (pronounced Ah-poh-dja-**too**-rah) is a beautiful Italian word that means leaning on or leaning into. In music, it is the name given to a sustained, embellishing and unresolved note, creating dissonance and leaning toward being resolved. In James Still's play, a Theatre Company commission, it suggests the act of seeking out whom to lean on, whom to trust, who has your back.

"It's about this strange bonding by the love of this man, Gordon," Still said about how Helen, Gordon's ex-wife, and Aunt Chuck, a gay man who became Gordon's life partner, find out after his death how much he connects them to each other.

"Obviously, when Helen invited Aunt Chuck to come to Venice with her they didn't think it through. It seemed like a good idea, a generous thing for Helen to offer. So they went and reality set in. 'We're both here, both grieving in this gorgeous place where you should be with someone you love. But I'm here with you and you're not Gordon. You're not my love.' "

*Appoggiatura* also is a riff on time and reality, which has its genesis in Still's inspiration for the play: "I was living in Lucca, Puccini's home town, not far from Florence. One of the few surviving walled cities. No cars. Beautiful. I'd gone there to write."

He jogged every morning and kept crossing paths with a very old man. "He looked exactly like my great-grandfather who died when I was very young." They greeted each other daily, and Still began to wonder if his imagination was playing tricks. He asked his partner to take a photograph of the old man that Still later shared with his mother, asking if she could tell who that was. She replied, "That's grandpa."

"It was like time and space collapsed," said Still. "I came to believe I was seeing my great-grandpa every day. There's wish fulfillment in that, but also I've always been interested in parallel worlds as a way to explain the mystery of how we carry people forward with us when they're gone. All of that collided in *Appoggiatura*."



Photo by Matthew Mitchell

“I always have been interested in parallel worlds, as a way to explain the mystery of how we carry people forward with us when they’re gone.”

—JAMES STILL, PLAYWRIGHT, *APPOGGIATURA*

“Sometimes I’d think, ‘I don’t know how I’ll make all this work,’ and I’d ask myself what would Shakespeare do? How would he handle this? Sounds high-falutin,’ I know, but going to that moment when Helen turns a corner and finds herself in the *campo* and ‘sees’ Gordon.... It’s not a time travel moment, it’s...a different kind of fantastical. It’s personal.”

Can Still define fantastical in this context? Not really.

“So much of *Appoggiatura* is about longing. Yearning. Touching things. As an artist, you must have the confidence to believe that every day, the things that are happening to you, your openness to the experience of just being human will find its way into your work.

“Writing is a verb. It’s about the act of doing it, working on lots of different things with lots of different people, in lots of genres and periods of history and time. Not writing is a blank page,” he reflected. “So is grief. You have to keep filling and turning the pages. When I write, I go somewhere else. That’s renewing to me. I can’t put Venice on stage, but I can put the *feeling* of Venice on stage. I knew Venice would be a place where mystery would happen.

“I love that feeling, when you’re writing, of being *inside* the play, not *outside* looking in. I don’t know how that happens. I don’t understand it. It just does. I think it’s about showing up. Every day. Showing up and doing it.”

*Sylvie Drake* most recently served as *Director of Publications for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts*. She is a former theatre critic and columnist for the Los Angeles Times and a regular contributor to *culturalweekly.com*.

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Chad T. Reagan, photo by Terry Sheapiro

## JUDI WOLF’S COSTUME COLUMN

*Forbidden Broadway: Alive and Kicking!*, now playing through March 1, consists of four actors, 43 wigs and more than 60 costume changes. And in a tiny backstage nook at the Garner Galleria Theatre, there is just one poor, harried assistant stage manager making sure it all comes off — and back on — in place and on time.

Jennifer Schmitz, a graduate of Delta High School and Mesa State University, believes this is the most intensely costumed show in more than 20-plus years of Garner Galleria Theatre history.

Alvin Colt, who has worked on nearly 90 Broadway shows, designed an ingenious array of comic costumes. His collection includes Rafreaky from *The Lion King* that is adorned with floppy discs, telephone cords, insects, a fried egg and a noble head-dress that has Mickey Mouse sitting on a pot atop actor Chad T. Reagan’s head.

That’s for starters. It’s part-parody, part-homage and all impressive. The costume collection includes nods to *once*, *Annie*, *Pippin*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Mary Poppins* (surprisingly, the heaviest of all the costumes) and many more.

While you are watching the show, keep a special eye on the wigs. It takes a spreadsheet for Schmitz to keep more than 40 heads of hair and all of the corresponding costumes straight.

For more on Jennifer Schmitz, visit our “Art and Artist” spotlight at [denvercenter.org/news-center](http://denvercenter.org/news-center).

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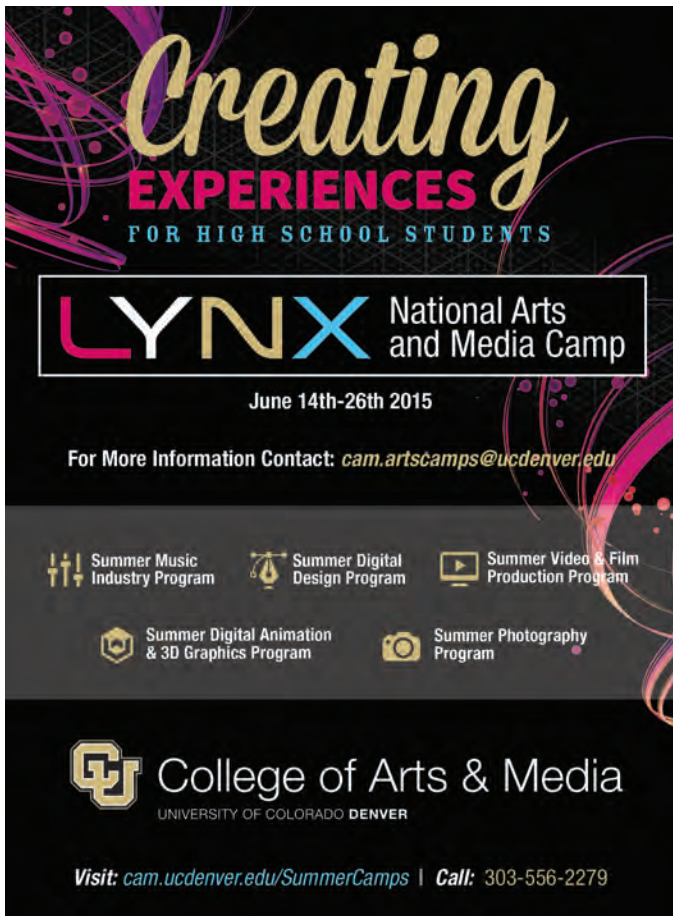
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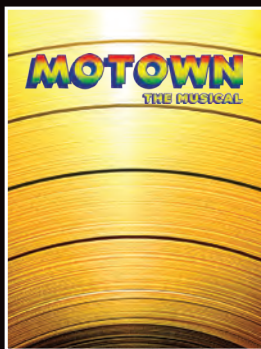
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# CINDERELLA

## A NEW TWIST ON AN OLD FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time, whether you read it in a book, sang along with the Disney cartoon or sat riveted to the television watching Julie Andrews, Lesley Ann Warren or Brandy, you fell in love with *Cinderella*. But it wasn't until 2013 that this classic fairy tale actually graced a Broadway stage.

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's *Cinderella* was the only musical of the legendary duo that was written for television. Largely based on Charles Perrault's 1697 version of the tale, *Cinderella* starring Julie Andrews debuted on March 31, 1957 to an audience of 100 million people — nearly 60% of the US population at the time.

It's no wonder that the show met with instant success. Rodgers and Hammerstein hold one of the most successful legacies in musical theatre history. Their 11 collaborations yielded two Pulitzer Prizes and 35 Tony, 15 Academy, two Grammy and two Emmy awards. Their contributions to what many have called the "golden age" of musical theater include *Oklahoma!*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I* and *The Sound of Music*.

But no amount of public adoration made it an easy transition from a 90-minute television version into a full-length Broadway musical.

"I was approached by producer Robyn Goodman to do a Broadway version of *Cinderella*," said book writer Douglas Carter Beane, "and the first thing I said was, 'There's not enough score to do a full show.' And then I

went home for the holidays, with all my sisters and my nieces and my nephews and my kids. We were looking to do a little project together and I just went online and I typed in "Cinderella." And from that was the Charles Perrault, the original French version. And I read it and I was knocked out. It's only, like, a page and a half! But it already had so much stuff in it that Americans and English people had just taken out.

"First was that the court was overwhelmed with ridicule and sarcasm yet Cinderella was kind. Second was that she didn't just see the Prince once; she saw him a number of times and actually saved him from the viciousness of the court. And the third was that one of the evil stepsisters turned out to be okay.

"So, I went back to Robyn and I said, 'I found it. I found the way in.' It is a perfect mesh of Rodgers and Hammerstein and their bigger shows, which always had big themes about kindness and responsibility."

"When I read the book," said director Mark Brokaw, "the first thing I thought was that Doug had done a fantastic job of taking the traditional story of *Cinderella* that everybody knows, but upending our expectations of who the characters were and how the story unraveled.

"In this telling, Cinderella's got backbone! It's like those clown dummies that go down when they get punched, but come right back up! She's able to absorb and then come back and keep

going forward. And I think that's at the heart of Doug's tale — charity, generosity and kindness will triumph, ultimately. Those are the greatest qualities; better than beauty, better than wealth; that if you have those other three things, you have everything."

And the show, too, has everything. "The glass slipper is there and he has to find her, and the fairy godmother and the wicked stepmother are there," said producer Robyn Goodman. "It just has a slight modern spin on it, so that girls feel that princesses can save the world; that they are proactive, they're compassionate and that the basic theme of the show is kindness."

"It's a wonderful introduction to classic Broadway for kids," said Doug Beane. "We knew that we had a contract with a lot of audience members that it was their first show and if we didn't do this right, they would never come back!"

Lucky for us, the glass slipper — and the modernization of this classic fairy tale — is a perfect fit.

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**CINDERELLA**  
FEB 3 - 15 | BUELL THEATRE

ASL, Audio described & Open Captioning:  
Feb 15, 2pm

Tickets: 303.893.4100 | denvercenter.org  
800.641.1222 | TTY: 303.893.9582  
Groups (10+): 303.446.4829

Article compiled by Suzanne Yoe from  
*Cinderella publicity materials.*



# CINDERELLA

## AN ABBREVIATED TIMELINE:



1697

Charles Perrault publishes *Cendrillon*

1893

*Cinderella* (ballet) by Baron Boris Vietinghoff-Scheel

1904

*Cinderella* (stage pantomime) at Drury Lane Theatre, London

1957

"Cinderella" (TV) starring Julie Andrews



1965

"Cinderella" (TV) starring Lesley Ann Warren

1997

"Cinderella" (TV) starring Brandy



2013

Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (musical) opens on Broadway



1810

*Cendrillon* (opera) by Nicolas Isouard, Libretto by Charles-Cuillaume Étienne

1899

*Cinderella* (film) directed by Georges Méliès

1950

*Cinderella* (cartoon) by Disney



1958

*Cinderella* (stage) opens in London

1996

*Cinderella Monogatari* (anime TV series) co-produced by Mondo TV and Tatsunoko Production

1998

*Ever After* starring Drew Barrymore

2015

*Cinderella* (film) to be released March 13



The Cast of STOMP. Photo by Steve McNicholas.

## COMING UP FROM BROADWAY:

### STOMP

STOMP, the high-energy percussive sensation that's been touring the nation since 1995, returns to The Buell Theatre March 10 - 15. Creators Luke Cresswell (LC) and Steve McNicholas (SM) give a little insight into the inspiration behind the beat.

**APPLAUSE (APP):** How would you describe STOMP?

**SM:** It's a piece of theatre that's been created by musicians. It doesn't have narrative and it doesn't have dialogue and it doesn't have melody particularly, but it is totally rhythmically based.

**APP:** Where do you get your ideas?

**SM:** Most ideas come from everyday life. But when we put a routine together we are thinking not just in terms of the rhythmic qualities, the sound qualities of the instruments, but also visual impact.

**APP:** Is there anything you can't use to make music?

**SM:** You can make music out of absolutely anything. But it's got to have some sort of logic to it; otherwise we can just tap away forever. So yes you can. The question is why would you want to.

**APP:** Does STOMP have a message?

**SM:** If there is a message, it's that you can make something out of nothing. Beyond that, it is really down to the attitude of the group. We want to amuse, uplift and inspire.

**APP:** What do you expect your audience to leave with?

**SM:** It leaves an audience with the sense of "I had an idea I've never done. I'm going to go and try it." I hope it's a positive injection of "go and do it. Get up, get off your bum and do it."



The Cast of the National Tour of Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Photo © Carol Rosegg



**DENVER CENTER** FOR THE  
PERFORMING ARTS

# Westin Denver Downtown

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“We are pleased to partner with the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and will donate 10% of a wedding or special event held in 2015 to its arts and education outreach efforts.”

## WESTIN DONATES 10% OF WEDDING & SPECIAL EVENT PROCEEDS TO DCPA

BY SUSAN STIFF

The Westin Denver Downtown's opening party, held 30 years ago, was a gala fundraiser for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. The relationship between the hotel and the DCPA still continues after three decades.

Since opening, The Westin hotel offers packaging and special room rates for resident companies of downtown's Arts Complex including DCPA Theatre Company, Colorado Ballet and Opera Colorado. In addition, the hotel partners with the Broadway series and this year is the sponsor of *Cinderella*. The hotel also is a long-time supporter of Saturday Night Alive, the DCPA's mega-fundraiser that annually nets more than \$700,000 to benefit youth education and outreach for 58,000 Colorado youth in nearly 300 schools.

The Westin Denver Downtown is well known in the hospitality community as an elite venue for social events, conferences, meetings, business travel and for weekend theatre, arts and sports packaging. The hotel also is becoming well-known for its best-kept secret, the fourth floor pool deck with magnificent views of the 16th Street Mall, Sports Authority Field at Mile High, Larimer Square and the entire Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. “The pool deck is probably the most spectacular event space in downtown Denver,” states Tom Curley, The Westin's General Manager and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Area Managing Director. “The pool deck is now available for evening special events for up to 300 guests.”

“The Denver Center customer is truly our customer,” states Janine Anderson, The Westin's Director of Catering and Conference Services. “We are pleased to partner with the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and will donate 10% of a wedding or special event held in 2015 to its arts and education outreach efforts.” To generate the donation to the DCPA, the wedding or special event must be booked by March 31 and consumed in 2015. The offer is for new events only, not good on previously booked events.

The Westin Denver Downtown is located at 1672 Lawrence Street. For additional information, contact [janine.anderson@westin.com](mailto:janine.anderson@westin.com) or at 303.572.7208.

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APPOGGIATURA

**Kent Thompson**, Producing Artistic Director

A DENVER CENTER WORLD PREMIERE

# *Appoggiatura*

BY James Still

With

**Paul Bentzen\***, **Mehry Eslaminia**, **Lenne Klingaman\***,  
**Darrie Lawrence\***, **Nick Mills\***, **Rob Nagle\***, **Julian Remulla**

SET DESIGN BY  
**David M. Barber**

COSTUME DESIGN BY  
**Meghan Anderson Doyle**

LIGHTING DESIGN BY  
**Charles R. MacLeod**

SOUND DESIGN BY  
**Tyler Nelson**

MUSICAL DIRECTION AND  
ARRANGEMENTS BY  
**Michael G. Keck**

PROJECTION DESIGN BY  
**Charlie I. Miller**

DRAMATURGY BY  
**Douglas Langworthy**

VOICE AND DIALECT COACHING BY  
**Kathryn G. Maes Ph.D**

MOVEMENT COACHING BY  
**Robert Davidson**

CASTING BY  
**Elissa Myers Casting /**  
**Paul Foquet, CSA**

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION  
**Jeff Gifford**

STAGE MANAGER  
**Rachel Ducat\***

DIRECTED BY  
**Risa Brainin**

Presented by: **The Joan and Phill Berger Charitable Fund**

Special thanks to the **Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust** for its continued support of new play development at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Producing Partners: **Terry & Noel HEFTY** **Diana & Mike KINSEY** **Karolynn LESTRUD**

*Appoggiatura* was developed through the **LAUNCH PAD** program at the University of California, Santa Barbara - Department of Theater and Dance in March 2013, Risa Brainin, Director.

*Appoggiatura* was developed at the **Perry-Mansfield New Works Festival**, June 2013.

*Appoggiatura* is a commission of the **Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company** and was developed at the Colorado New Play Summit in February 2014.

THE RICKETSON THEATRE | JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 22, 2015

# CAST

(in order of appearance)

Helen .....	DARRIE LAWRENCE*
Aunt Chuck .....	ROB NAGLE*
Sylvie .....	LENNE KLINGAMAN*
Marco .....	NICK MILLS*
Young Helen .....	LENNE KLINGAMAN*
Gordon .....	NICK MILLS*

And a trio of Venetian Street Musicians who also play all the other characters including:

Vivaldi / Tour Guide / Gondolier .....	JULIAN REMULLA
Old Italian Man / Tour Guide / Older Gordon .....	PAUL BENTZEN*
Kate / Tour Guide / Waitress .....	MEHRY ESLAMINIA

## PLACE

A makeshift guest room in a crumbling Venetian hotel.  
And various spots around Venice.

## TIME

June, recently.  
And another June, not so recently.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Assistant Director .....	NABRASHAA NELSON
Assistant Projection Designer .....	TOPHER BLAIR
Original Music and Arrangements .....	CHRISTOPHER CONSTANZO, DAVID POTTER, JULIAN REMULLA
Stage Manager .....	RACHEL DUCAT*
Production Assistant .....	D. LYNN REILAND
Production Intern .....	ELIZA CAPLITZ

\*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

# WHO'S WHO

## ACTING COMPANY



**PAUL BENTZEN** (Old Man/Ensemble). At the Theatre Company: Debut. Other Theatres: American Players Theatre- Core Company Emeritus,

retired in 2014 after 32 Seasons. Other Wisconsin credits include work with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Madison Rep, Next Act, Chamber Theatre, and Great American Children's Theatre (two West Coast tours). Several feature films. Member SAG-AFTRA and AEA.



**MEHRY ESLAMINIA** (Kate/Ensemble). At the Theatre Company: *Appoggiatura* (Colorado New Play Summit). Other Theatres: *MATH-*

*Stronaut* (Young Audience Outreach Tours), *Viva Agua!* (Creede Repertory Theatre), *Frozen* (Equinox Theatre), *Cabaret* (Ignite Theatre), *Motherhood Out Loud* (Avenue Theatre). Training: BA Acting, University of Northern Colorado.



**DARRIE LAWRENCE** (Helen). At the Theatre Company: Highlights: *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Inaugural Production), *Learned Ladies*, *Wings*, *Three*

*Sisters*, *Night of the Iguana*. Darrie joyfully returns to the DCPA Theatre Company. Other Theatres: *Grapes of Wrath*, *Noises Off*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Seascape*, *Our Town*, *Over the Tavern*, *Trip to Bountiful*, *Retreat from Moscow*, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Angels in America*, *Road to Mecca*. Broadway: *Dead Accounts*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Buried Child*. National tours: *Doubt*, *Great Expectations*, *Quilters*. Off-Broadway premieres: *The Other Side*, *Portraits*, *Long Island Sound*. Worked in Cincinnati, Kansas City, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, etc. Film: *Hitch*, *August Rush*, *Kettle of Fish*. Member: AEA, TACT. Training: Penn State, UNC-G.



**LENNE KLINGAMAN** (Sylvie/Young Helen). At the Theatre Company: Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet*. Other Theatres: Anna in *Anna Karenina*

(Capital Stage); Mariane in *Tartuffe* (South Coast Rep); Viola in *Twelfth Night*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Henry IV: Part 1*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Santa Cruz); *Elvis' Toenail* (Sidewalk Theatre); *Richard III* (Intiman Theatre); *Flight* (P3/East); *The Rehearsal*, *Richard III*, *Noises Off* (A Noise Within); *Measure For Measure*, *The Fantasticks* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival). TV/Film: "Cold Case," *Dear White People*, "Welcome To Sanditon," "Twenties," "Love: As You Like It," "The Exchange." Upcoming: *Tartuffe* (Berkeley Rep, Shakespeare Theatre, DC). Training: MFA, University Of Washington.



**NICK MILLS** (Marco/Young Gordon). At the Theatre Company: *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Henry Award nomination, Best Supporting

Actor). Off-Broadway: *The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin* (Roundabout), *The Steadfast* (Slant Theatre Project). Regional: *Lombardi* (Cleveland PlayHouse / Arizona Theatre Co.), *Back Back Back* (Old Globe). TV/Film: recurring on the upcoming David Simon HBO miniseries "Show Me A Hero," "Law and Order: SVU," "Person of Interest," "Rickover: The Birth of Nuclear Power." Training: MFA, NYU. BFA, University of Evansville. [www.nickmosesmills.com](http://www.nickmosesmills.com).



**ROB NAGLE** (Aunt Chuck). At Theatre Company: *The 39 Steps*. Recent theatre: Samuel D. Hunter's *Rest*, Itamar Moses' *Completeness*,

James Still's *I Love to Eat*, James Joyce's *The Dead*. Other Theatres: Portland Center Stage, South Coast Repertory, Mark Taper Forum, Old Globe Theatre, Centerstage, San Jose Repertory, Shakespeare Theatre Company. TV/Film: "Grey's Anatomy," "CSI," "Criminal Minds," "Castle,"

"Major Crimes," "NCIS," *New Year's Eve*, *Life as We Know It*, "Mad Men," *The Soloist*, "Eli Stone," "Cold Case," "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip," *Fun with Dick and Jane*, "Without a Trace," *American Wedding*, "Everwood," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "The West Wing," "Dawson's Creek." Training: Northwestern University. [www.rob nagle.com](http://www.rob nagle.com).



**JULIAN REMULLA** (Vivaldi/Ensemble). At the Theatre Company: *Appoggiatura* (Colorado New Play Summit). Other Theatres: UCSB

Theater and Dance credits include *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, *Anowa*, *These Shining Lives*, *Appoggiatura*, *Eurydice*, *The Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda*, and *The Arabian Nights*. Training: BFA, UCSB.

## PLAYWRIGHT

**JAMES STILL.** James Still's plays have been produced throughout the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, South Africa, China and Japan. Recent premieres include *The House That Jack Built* (Indiana Rep) and *Illegal Use Of Hands* (American Blues in Chicago). New plays include *Appoggiatura* commissioned by the DCPA Theatre Company, *The Widow Lincoln* commissioned by Ford's Theatre, *April 4, 1968* commissioned by Indiana Rep, and *Miranda* commissioned by Illusion Theater. Other plays include *A Long Bridge Over Deep Waters* for Cornerstone's Faith-Based Cycle in Los Angeles and at many theaters *I Love To Eat*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *The Velvet Rut*, *And Then They Came For Me*, *Iron Kisses*, *Searching For Eden*, *Looking Over The President's Shoulder* and *Amber Waves*. Still is a three-time Pulitzer Prize nominee, an elected member of the National Theatre Conference in New York and the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the Kennedy Center, and a five-time Emmy nominee for his work in television. He is a past recipient of the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award from the William Inge Festival. He is the Playwright in Residence at Indiana Repertory Theatre and lives in Los Angeles.

## DIRECTOR

**RISA BRAININ.** At the Theatre Company: *Appoggiatura* (Colorado New Play Summit). Artistic Posts: Artistic Director, Shakespeare Santa Cruz; Associate Artistic Director, Indiana Rep and Kansas City Rep; Resident Director, Guthrie Theater. Current: Chair of the Department of Theater and Dance and Artistic Director of LAUNCH PAD at UC Santa Barbara and Board President of the National Theatre Conference.. Other Theatres: Milwaukee Rep, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Portland Stage Co., Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Training: Carnegie-Mellon University.

## ARTISTIC STAFF

**DAVID M. BARBER** (Set Designer). At the Theatre Company: *Richard III*, *Map of Heaven*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Most Deserving*. Off Broadway: Signature Theater, The Women's Project Theater, Red Bull Theater, The Flea. Other Theatres: Hartford Stage, Center Stage, Pittsburgh Public, Cleveland Public, Idaho Shakespeare, Great Lakes Theater, Alabama Shakespeare, Barrington Stage, Contemporary American Theater Festival, A.R.T., Jacob's Pillow, etc. TV/Film: Art Director for E! Entertainment, "The TODAY Show", "Football Night in America". Production Designer for the feature film *All Relative*. Awards: Drama Desk, Henry Hewes, Denver Ovation Award.

**ROBERT DAVIDSON** (Movement Coach). At the Theatre Company: *black odyssey*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, and many more. Other Theatres: National Theatre Conservatory 1997-2012, *Angels in America* (Intiman Theatre, Seattle), *Airborne: Meister Eckhart* national tour with Robert Davidson Dance Company. Awards/Training: Vice President, Skinner Releasing Institute Board of Directors; Master Teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique.

**MEGHAN ANDERSON DOYLE** (Costume Designer). At the Theatre Company: *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Jackie & Me*, *The Giver*, *Superior Donuts*, *Well*, and *Ed*,

*Downloaded*. Other Theatres: Off-Center (CULT FOLLOWING seasons 1-4), DCPA Cabaret (*I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change!* and *Five Course Love*), Curious Theatre Company (*Good People*, *The Brothers Size*, *A Number*, *Up*, *tempOdyssey*), The Aurora Fox (*Metamorphoses*), National Theatre Conservatory Rep (16 productions). Special/Awards/Training: Theatre Company Costume Design Associate 2006-present; BA in Theatre, University of Denver; MFA in Costume Design, University of Florida.

**MICHAEL G. KECK** (Music Director and Arranger). At the Theatre Company: Debut. National: Arena Stage, Alliance Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Indiana Rep, Idaho Shakespeare, McCarter Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Milwaukee Rep, Oregon Shakespeare, Portland Center Stage, Primary Stages, Seattle Rep, Syracuse Stage. International: Market Theatre Johannesburg S.A, National Theater of Croatia-Zagreb, Barbican Theatre Center, and Bristol Old Vic. AEA, SAG-AFTRA, ASCAP, PEN and the Dramatists Guild.

**DOUGLAS LANGWORTHY** (Dramaturg). At the Theatre Company: *Lord of the Flies*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, *Shadowlands*, *Hamlet*, *Just Like Us*, *Sense & Sensibility The Musical*, *The Three Musketeers*, *When We Are Married*. Other Theatres: The Oregon Shakespeare Festival produced his adaptation (with Linda Alper and Penny Metropulos) of Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* and his translation of Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechuan*. Target Margin Theatre produced his translations/adaptations: *Medea* by Hans Henry Jahn, Goethe's *Faust*, and the opera *The Sandman* with David Herskovits and Thomas Cabanis. Awards/Training: Elliot Hayes Award for Dramaturgy, National Theatre Translation Fund Award, John Gassner Award in Critical Writing. Yale School of Drama.

**KATHRYN G. MAES Ph.D** (Voice and Dialect Coach). At the Theatre Company: *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, *Animal Crackers*, *Shadowlands*, *Hamlet*, *black odyssey*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Jackie & Me*, *The Most Deserving*, *Just Like Us*, *Death of a Salesman*, *When We Are Married*, *Fences*, *The Three Musketeers*,

*Heartbreak House*, *Great Wall Story*. Other Theatres: Royal Shakespeare Company, Royal National Theatre (Arthur Miller's *American Clock*). Special/Training: Voice and Dialect Coach for numerous professional theatre companies in the United States, Head of Voice at DCPA Theatre Company and the National Theatre Conservatory 1989 to 1992. Ph.D. in Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh; Advanced Diploma in Voice Studies, Central School of Speech and Drama, London, England.

**CHARLES R. MACLEOD** (Lighting Designer). At the Theatre Company: (300+ productions/32 seasons). *Shadowlands*, *black odyssey*, *Jackie & Me*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The 39 Steps*, *Reckless*, *When Tang Met Laika*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Lydia*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *1001*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *All My Sons*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Lost Highway: The Music and Legend of Hank Williams*, *My Way*, *Forbidden Broadway*, *Always...Patsy Cline*; *Love, Janis and Girls Only*, *The Secret Comedy of Women*.

**CHARLIE I. MILLER** (Projection Designer). At the Theatre Company: 7 seasons, 28 productions. Highlights include: *Lord of the Flies*, *black odyssey*, *Just Like Us*, *The Giver*, *American Night*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Reckless*, *Mama Hated Diesels*, *When Tang Met Laika*, and *Ed*, *Downloaded*. Off-Center: *Lived/Re-Lived*, *Wheel of Misfortune*, *Cult Following*, *Drag Machine*, *DATE\**. Other Theatres: *Ed*, *Downloaded* workshop (Roundabout, NYC); *username: FAUST* (Boston). Special Awards/Training: BA from Harvard, 2010 and 2011 *Denver Post* Ovation Awards, 2012 Henry Award, 2013 Best of *Westword* Awards. Co-Curator of Off-Center @ The Jones.

**ELISSA MYERS CASTING, Paul Foquet, CSA** (Casting). For PBS "Poisoner's Handbook," "Becoming Helen Keller" and the mini-series *Mystery of Matter*. Other PBS projects include "The Abolitionists," "Dolly Madison," "Alexander Hamilton," "John and Abigail Adams," "Benjamin Franklin" (Emmy Award), "Liberty" (Peabody Award), "God in America," "People vs. Leo Frank," "Louisa May Alcott," as well as PBS "Great Performances" (Artois Award for Outstanding Achievement in Casting). Additionally three "Movies of the Week," as well as five pilots.

Feature films include *Hank and Asha* (Audience Award at Slamdance 2013) and *The Union*. Theatre includes seven Broadway shows, including Tony nominated *Having Our Say*, as well as 25 Off-Broadway shows. Regional casting in the past few years includes the Theatre Company, Geva Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, Arena Stage, Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, and Arizona Theatre Company. The office has so far received 16 nominations and has won three Artois awards for Outstanding Achievement in Casting.

**NABRASHAA NELSON** (Assistant Director). At the Theatre Company: Debut. Nabrashaa is in her senior year at UC Santa Barbara, receiving a B.A. in Theatre Directing and a minor in Physics. Directing credits include *Hamlet's First Quarto*, *Degas C'est Moi*, *The Vagina Monologues*, as well as devised and student-written work. She recently assisted Risa Brainin in the Launch Pad Summer Workshop at UCSB. This production marks her professional debut.

#### STAGE MANAGEMENT

**RACHEL DUCAT** (Stage Manager). At the Theatre Company: *Shadowlands*, *black odyssey*, *The Most Deserving*, *A Weekend with Pablo Picasso*, *The Giver*, *Heartbreak House*, *Two Things You Don't Talk About At Dinner*, *The Liar*, *Superior Donuts*, *The Catch*, *The House of the Spirits* and *Grace, or the Art of Climbing*. Other Theatres: *Twelfth Night*, *Treasure Island*, *Richard III* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); Curious Theatre Company; *Jersey Boys*, *Wicked*, *Dirty Dancing* (Broadway in Chicago); Chicago Shakespeare Theatre; Cleveland Play House, Hope Summer Repertory Theatre. Training; BA Theatre Production, University of Delaware.

#### EXECUTIVE STAFF

**KENT THOMPSON** (Producing Artistic Director) is in his tenth season as Producing Artistic Director of the Theatre Company. In Denver he directed productions of *Hamlet*, *Just Like Us*, *Other Desert Cities*, Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Plainsong*, *Eventide*, *Amadeus*, *The Liar* and *Measure for Measure*, among others.

Two of Kent's major accomplishments since moving to Denver have been the establishment of the Colorado New Play Summit, a premier national festival for new American plays, and the Women's Voices Fund, an endowment that supports the development of new plays by women.

Prior to moving to Denver he was Producing Artistic Director of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival for 16 years. In 1991 Kent created the Southern Writers' Project (SWP), designed to commission and develop new plays that presented 16 world premieres during his tenure.

He served for eight years on the Board of Directors for Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and as its president for three years. He has served on peer review panels for the NEA (also chair), TCG, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Fulbright Scholars Program, The Wallace Funds, The Doris Duke Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, among others.

**CHARLES VARIN** (Managing Director) and his team are responsible for administrative, financial and business operations related to producing the Theatre Company's season of productions and other artistic and educational initiatives. Prior to DCPA, Charles was General Manager for Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, NY and also has worked at Glimmerglass Opera, Asolo Repertory Theatre and Florida Studio Theatre. Charles serves on the board of the Mile High Freedom Band and plays tuba with the organization.

**BRUCE K. SEVY** (Associate Artistic Director and Director of New Play Development) has directed such memorable Theatre Company productions as *Animal Crackers*, *When We Are Married*, *Heartbreak House*, *Mariela in the Desert*, *The Voyage Inheritance*, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, *Doubt*, *All My Sons*, *Master Class*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Little Foxes*, *Molly Sweeney*, *Amy's View*, *Valley Song*, *Pierre*, *Dinner With Friends* and *The Cripple of Inishmaan*.

As Director of New Play Development, he oversees both the artistic and practical components of the Theatre Company's successful Colorado New Play Summit, including commissions from outstanding American playwrights.

He has directed for Arizona Theatre Company, Cleveland Play House, Lark Play Development Center, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Northlight Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Pioneer Theatre Company, A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Empty Space and Intiman Theatre in Seattle, the Kimo Theatre in Albuquerque, and Utah Shakespearean Festival. His popular production of *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* has been seen at more than 20 theatres nationally, including the Theatre Company's successful 2003 production.

**JEFF GIFFORD** (Director of Production) is in his second season at the DCPA and oversees everything you see on stage except the actors. Guiding world premieres to their first opening night is especially gratifying and Jeff has worked on more than 35 of them. Among his favorites are *Dinner with Friends*, *The Violet Hour*, *The Beard of Avon*, *Mr. Marmalade*, and the new musical *FLY*. Jeff holds an MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

**MATTHEW LOPEZ** (Denver Center Playwriting Fellow) is the author of *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, which premiered last season at the Denver Center, and *The Whipping Man*, also seen last season at Curious Theatre Company. Since its debut at Luna Stage Company and its New York premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club, *The Whipping Man* has become one of the most widely produced new American plays of the last several years, with productions in over 50 U.S. cities and abroad. His play *Somewhere* premiered at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego and recently completed a successful run at Hartford Stage, where his newest work, *Reverberation*, is set to premiere in the winter of 2015. Other plays include *Zoey's Perfect Wedding* and *The Sentinels*, which premiered in London. Matthew currently holds new play commissions from Hartford Stage, Manhattan Theatre Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, and South Coast Rep. He was a staff writer on the HBO series "The Newsroom" and is currently adapting Javier Marias' "Your Face Tomorrow" trilogy for Brad Pitt's Plan B film company.



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Theatre Company

# STAFF

## EXECUTIVE

Kent Thompson, Producing Artistic Director  
Charles Varin, Managing Director  
Bruce K. Sevy, Associate Artistic Director  
Jeff Gifford, Director of Production

## ARTISTIC

### New Play Development:

Bruce K. Sevy, Director of New Play Development  
Douglas Langworthy, Literary Manager/  
Dramaturg  
Chad Henry, Literary Associate  
Emily Tarquin, Artistic Associate/  
New Play Coordinator  
Grady Soapes, Artistic Coordinator  
Matthew Lopez, Denver Center  
Playwriting Fellow

### Commissioned Playwrights:

Jose Cruz Gonzalez, Lauren Gunderson,  
Kimber Lee, Theresa Rebeck, Tanya Saracho,  
Robert Schenkkan, Eric Schmiedl, Mat Smart,  
James Still, Catherine Trieschmann,  
Paula Vogel

### Directors:

Risa Brainin, Kathleen Marshall,  
Anthony Powell, Bruce K. Sevy,  
Jenn Thompson, Kent Thompson

### Assistant Directors:

Geoffrey Kent, James Will McBride,  
Nabrashaa Nelson, Rommy Sandhu

### Dramaturgs:

Allison Horsley, Doug Langworthy

### Music Directors:

Gregg Coffin, Michael G. Keck, Michael Rafter

### Composers:

Gary Grundei

### Acting Company:

David Abeles, Cameron Adams, Colin  
Alexander, Leslie Alexander, Whitney Bashor,  
Paul Bentzen, Leonard E. Barrett Jr., Benjamin  
Bonenfant, Michael Bouchard, Courtney  
Capek, Karl Josef Co, Joyce Cohen, Anne  
Marie Corrada, Jonathan Crombie, Stephanie

Cozart, Jesmille Darbouze, Jack DiFalco, Allen  
Dorsey, Adrian Egolf, Donna English, Mehry  
Eslaminia, Alex Finke, Michael Fitzpatrick,  
Charlie Franklin, Ella Galaty, Skyler Gallun,  
Jason Lee Garrett, Constantine Germanacos,  
Patty Goble, Gregg Goodbrod, Sam Gregory,  
Benjamin Griffin, Matthew Gumley, Michael  
Halling, Elias Harger, Edwin Harris, Mike  
Hartman, Lawrence Hecht, Ben W. Heil,  
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John Scherer, Tracy Shaffer, Lesley Shires,  
Zoe Delaney Stahlhut, Shannan Steele,  
Gregory Isaac Stone, Olivia Sullivent, David  
Tomczak, Jackie Vanderbeck, Amelia White,  
Nance Williamson, Erin Willis

### Designers

#### Scenic Designers

David M. Barber, James Kronzer,  
Derek McLane, Lisa Orzolek, Vicki Smith

#### Costume Designers

Kevin Copenhaver, Meghan Anderson Doyle,  
Wade LaBoissonniere, Paul Tazewell

#### Lighting Designers

Don Darnutzer, Donald Holder,  
Charles R. MacLeod, Shannon McKinney

#### Sound Designers

Craig Breitenbach, Tyler Nelson

#### Projection Designer:

Charlie I. Miller

#### Coaches:

Laurence Curry (Movement), Robert Davidson  
(Movement), Geoffrey Kent (Fight),  
Kathryn G. Maes Ph.D. (Voice/Dialect),  
Christine Rowan (Movement)

### Casting:

Bruce K. Sevy, Emily Tarquin

### New York Casting:

Elyssa Myers Casting/ Paul Fouquet, CSA  
Jim Carnahan, CSA and Stephen Kopel, CSA

### LA Casting:

Flores Casting/Julia Flores, CSA

## PRODUCTION

Jeff Gifford, Director of Production  
Melissa Cashion, Associate Production  
Manager  
Julie Brou, Production and Artistic  
Office Manager

### Scenic Design

Lisa M. Orzolek, Director of Scenic Design  
Scenic Design Assistants:  
Matthew Plamp, Nicholas Renaud

### Lighting Design

Charles R. MacLeod, Director of Lighting  
Lighting Design Assistant: Lily Bradford

### Multimedia:

Charlie I. Miller, Resident Multimedia Specialist  
Multimedia Assistant/Operator: Topher Blair

### Sound Design

John E. Pryor, Director of Sound  
Sound Designers: Craig Breitenbach,  
Jason Ducat, Tyler Nelson  
Sound Intern: Elizabeth Jamison

### Stage Management

Christopher C. Ewing,  
Production Stage Manager  
Stage Managers: Paul Behrhorst,  
Matthew Campbell, Rachel Ducat,  
A. Phoebe Sacks, Kurt Van Raden  
Production Assistant: D. Lynn Reiland  
Stage Management Interns:  
Eliza Caplitz, Natalie Kratochvil

### Scene Shop

Eric Rouse, Technical Director  
Robert L. Orzolek, Associate Technical  
Director



Josh Prues, Assistant Technical Director  
 Lead Technicians: Albert "Stub" Allison, Louis Fernandez III  
 Scenic Technicians: Justin Hicks, Brian "Marco" Markiewicz, Keli Sequoia, Mike VanAartsen, Ross Wick

**Prop Shop**

Robin Lu Payne, Properties Director  
 Eileen Garcia, Assistant Properties Director  
 Props Artisans: Jamie Stewart Curl, Charles Dallas, Georgina Kayes, David Hoth, Katie Webster

**Paint Shop**

Jana L. Mitchell, Charge Scenic Artist  
 Lead Scenic Artist: Melanie Rentschler  
 Scenic Artists: Brian Proud  
 Paint Intern: Wren Nunns

**Costume Shop**

Janet S. MacLeod, Costume Director/  
 Costume Design Associate  
 Costume Design Associate: Meghan Anderson Doyle  
 Drapers: Stephanie Cooper, Carolyn Plemitscher, Louise Powers, Jackie Scott  
 First Hand: Cathie Gagnon  
 Tailor: Sheila P. Morris  
 Stitchers: Kelly Jones, Teresia Larsen

**Costume Crafts**

Kevin Copenhaver, Costume Crafts Director  
 Costume Crafts Artisans: Judy Craigo-Robb

**Wigs**

Diana Ben-Kiki, Wig Master

**House Crew**

Doug Taylor\*, Supervising Stagehand  
 Stagehands: Mariah Becerra\*, Jim Berman\*, Nina Bluewaters, Jennifer Guethlein\*, Frank Haas, Andrew Hamer, Stephen D. Mazzeno\*, Dana Nelson, Miles Stasica\*, Tyler Stauffer, Matt Wagner\* (\*IATSE Local 7 Stagehands)  
 Production Electrician: Reid Tennis

**Wardrobe**

Brenda Lawson, Director  
 Wig Assistants: Jocelen Barnett, Maria Y. Davis  
 Dressers: Robin Appleton, Amber Donner, Amoreena Kissel, Tim Nelson, Alan Richards, Brooke Vlasich

**ADMINISTRATION**

Charles Varin, Managing Director  
 Ryan Meisheid, Associate Managing Director  
 Alyssa Stock, Company Manager  
 Allison Taylor, Assistant Company Manager

**MARKETING**

Brianna Firestone, Director of Marketing  
 Hope Grandon, PR & Events Manager  
 Emily Kent, Marketing Associate



The Directors and Choreographers are members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union.



The actors and stage managers employed in these productions are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



Backstage and Ticket Services Employees are represented by the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States and Canada. (or I.A.T.S.E.)



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The costumes, wigs, lighting, props, furniture, scenic construction, scenic painting, sound and special effects used in connection with this production were constructed and coordinated by the Theatre Company's Production Staff.

The Theatre Company is grateful for the funds provided by the **Scientific and Cultural Facilities District**. Special thanks also to grants from **Arts & Venues Denver**; the **Helen G. Bonfils Foundation**; and contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals.

The Theatre Company is a division of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts, a not-for-profit organization serving the public through the performing arts.

The Theatre Company operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States; and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. The Theatre Company also operates under an agreement with Denver Theatrical Stage Employees Union, Local No. 7 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States and Canada.

The Theatre Company is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.

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Illustration by Kyle Malone

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# DANCING PROS: LIVE

## YOU BE THE JUDGE

BY SHERYL FLATOW



Photo provided by *Dancing Pros: LIVE*

With a blend of artistry and athleticism, ten of the world's most remarkable dancers are heating up The Buell Theatre in *Dancing Pros: Live*, a high-octane dance competition now touring the country. And you get to vote for the best of the best.

Hosted by Alan Thicke, *Dancing Pros: Live* is the brainchild of Edyta Sliwiska and Alec Mazo, two gifted "Dancing With the Stars" (DWTS) alumni. "We had the idea to marry two things: the art of dance, which we love, and audience interaction, which is so 'in' right now," says Sliwiska. "What better way to engage the audience than to give everyone in the theater electronic devices and have them vote for their favorite couple."

The format of the show is both reminiscent of but quite distinct from DWTS. Like the popular TV show, the stage show features a witty host, a three-judge panel, video about the participants and competitive dancing. But that's where the similarities end. In the *Dancing Pros: Live*, all the dancers are elite professionals. Each couple is showcased in two very different duets that they co-choreograph; the judges comment on all the performances, but do not give a numerical score — the voting is left strictly to the audience.

"The judges are only there to guide the audience," says Sliwiska, who is a guest performer while DWTS's Karina Smirnoff is the head judge on stage with two other judges, actor and dancer Oscar Orosco and a local celebrity. "They give their opinions, but the audience drives the results. If the judges gave scores, I think they would influence the audience, even sublimi-

nally. It's the power of suggestion: 'Oh, this couple has the highest score, so maybe they are the best.' They want to avoid that."

In addition to the duets, the dancers also participate in a dozen group numbers that highlight their range and breadth. "We wanted the entire show to be spectacular," says Sliwiska. "We have a variety of music and dance styles. Ballroom is the major style, but we also have everything from hip hop to break dancing, from lyrical to contemporary. The show is packed with action and energy and changes of mood and atmosphere."

Performing on a large stage, rather than in the confines of a television studio, enables the dancers to cover more space. And the audience, not limited by the eye of a camera, gets a more visceral experience.

"I think that seeing this show live, onstage, will give audiences a really good look at how rigorous, intense, and demanding dance is," says Chelsie Hightower, familiar to audiences from DWTS and "So You Think You Can Dance" (SYTYCD). "We're not taking camera breaks, we're not taking commercial breaks. We go from one dance to the next, which requires a tremendous amount of stamina and endurance every night."

Thicke adds, "What most impresses me is the dancers' athleticism. I'm not what you'd call a dancer of note, but I've played every sport and I know what goes into a two-minute shift in hockey. And I watch these people dance for two and three minutes at a time, then run out and change their costumes and come back and do it

again. They're really like professional athletes on the highest international level."

The person responsible for keeping the evening running smoothly and for communicating with the audience is Thicke, who serves as guide and comic relief. "He has a way of connecting with the audience that's quite incredible," says Sliwiska. "The show has a format and a script, and there are certain things he has to stick to, like explaining the rules and doing the introductions. But other than that, he has the freedom to say and do pretty much anything because he has a wonderful sense of humor and is very quick and entertaining. And he adjusts to the audience that he's speaking to, which is fascinating to watch."

Part of the excitement of live theatre is, in fact, its changeability: no performance is precisely the same, even though the same words are said or, in the case of *Dancing Pros: Live*, the same steps are danced, every night. That's one of the reasons why it's impossible to predict the winner of each performance. "The energy level is different from night to night," says Sliwiska. "If you would watch each performance on tape, you wouldn't see a difference. But when you're in the room and someone has an amazing day, the audience feels it."

---

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# CELEBRATING WOMEN

Little known fact — there were fewer Broadway productions by women playwrights in 2009 than in 1908. Only 18% of plays produced nationwide in 2008 were by women, and only one of eight new plays produced on Broadway were by a female playwright.

Theatre Company Producing Artistic Director Kent Thompson recognized the absence of the female voice in American theatre. As a result, he established the Women's Voices Fund (WVF) in 2005 to commission, develop and produce new plays by women, thereby providing a pipeline of new work by female playwrights for theatres nationwide.

Now, nearly 10 years later, the Fund has surpassed \$1 million and enabled the Theatre Company to:

- Produce 26 plays by women, including six world premieres
- Employ 20 female directors
- Commission 16 female playwrights

Additionally, three of the four 2015 Colorado New Play Summit playwrights are women, all of whom have received a Theatre Company commission.

Recognized as the first of its kind in the nation, the Women's Voices Fund makes a significant statement about the Theatre Company's long-term commitment to women who tell stories.

"There's nothing like this anywhere in America. There is nothing like this in the world," says Michele Lowe, WVF recipient and author of the Theatre Company's commis-

"A theatre that is missing the work of women is missing half the story, half the canon, half the life of our time."

—MARSHA NORMAN, PLAYWRIGHT & ACTIVIST

sioned plays *Inana* (2009) and *Map of Heaven* (2011). "The Women's Voices Fund is a miracle, a living breathing American theatre miracle."

Director Wendy Goldberg adds, "Creating funding for the development and production of new work is a struggle.... This unique fund makes it possible to support the most gifted storytellers of our time."

Funding comes from generous individuals and the Denver Center for the Performing Arts' annual Women with Hattitude luncheon. Held May 7 in the Seawell Grand Ballroom, this event draws more than 600 women — and gentlemen — who don a stunning array of hats in this joyous celebration of women in theatre.

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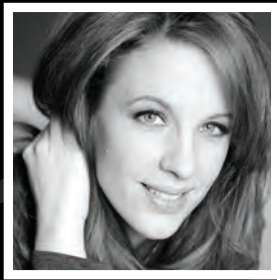
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2014 Tony nominee for Best Featured Actor in a Musical, Jarrod Spector

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Epicurean Group continues to blaze new trails, staying two steps ahead of the latest trends.

Just as a Matisse painting is much more than a collection of brush strokes, Epicurean Group at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA) delivers far more than the work of skilled chefs. With its broadly talented team and vast experience, Epicurean Group is an event unto itself.

For 28 years, Epicurean Group has treated Denver socialites to expertly cultivated evenings that create memories of a lifetime. The team goes above and beyond to ensure that no detail gets overlooked, from visionary event design to professionally managed event operations. Many of the team members have dedicated their talents to Epicurean Group for a full two decades, and since 2007, have deepened their commitment to excellence under the passionate direction of President Greg Karl and General Manager Austin Pelster.

Of course, some of these efforts result in the award-winning cuisine for which Epicurean Group is known. As Denver's culinary scene evolves into one of the nation's best, Epicurean Group continues to blaze new trails, staying two steps ahead of the latest trends. The city's up-and-coming culinary masters have a habit of finding Epicurean Group, creating a mix of fresh, passionate individuals with the seasoned professionals who orchestrate each event's fine details.

It's exactly in those details that Epicurean Group thrives, bringing an eye for design and a palate for fine flavor that perfectly complement the stunning urban architecture of the Seawell Grand Ballroom and its unparalleled views. From a swath of red to match a sunset over the Rocky Mountains to a sparkling glass of wine served as the lights of the downtown skyline begin to sparkle, Epicurean Group imbues each event with a unique and zestful spirit.

Individual elements, however, are not what make attendees rave. Rather, the Epicurean Group staff makes sure that every brush stroke falls into exactly the right place, so that attendees instead experience something much richer and more memorable: an evening that transforms into a seamless work of art.

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# BENEDICTION

## A MEANINGFUL FAREWELL TO AUTHOR KENT HARUF

BY JOHN MOORE

ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE MALONE



“Kent (Haruf) wrote about a fundamental question of our time: Is your family your blood relatives, or those who choose to love and care for you?”

**DCPA THEATRE COMPANY  
PRODUCING ARTISTIC  
DIRECTOR KENT THOMPSON,  
ON *BENEDICTION* AUTHOR  
KENT HARUF**

A benediction is a blessing at the close of a religious service. A meaningful farewell.

How fitting, then, that the Theatre Company is opening its world premiere staging of *Benediction* just two months after the death of beloved Colorado novelist Kent Haruf. Artists and audiences alike say farewell not only to the plainspoken people of fictional Holt, Colorado, but to the man who imagined them.

“It’s hard to overestimate Kent Haruf’s influence on my life and on the Theatre Company,” said Producing Artistic Director Kent Thompson, who has directed all of Haruf’s novels, including *Plainsong* and *Eventide*. “Kent always wrote with such authenticity, compassion, honesty and lyricism about life in small-town America.”

“Equally important, Kent wrote about a fundamental question of our time: Is your family your blood relatives, or those who choose to love and care for you?”

Haruf gave his final interview last November 24, just five days before he died at age 71 from lung disease. When asked what he hopes Denver audiences have gotten out of seeing his characters’ extraordinarily ordinary lives, he said, “I hope they will see that this is a portrayal

of life as it is,” Haruf said.

Haruf saw life in the town he created as timeless, largely unaffected by the progress and problems that seem to constantly threaten small-town American life.

The Theatre Company’s new stage adaptation of *Benediction* focuses on two disparate neighbors confronting death. An old man named Dad Lewis is dying of cancer with no hope of resolving his deep parenting regrets, while right next door, an eight-year-old named Alice whose mother has just died is moving in with her grandmother.

“In one house, you have this old man who is dying without solving his problems,” Haruf said. “But in the very next house, you have this girl who represents hope and promise and youth and joy.”

“I am wanting people to feel that the beginning and the ending in all of our lives are set side-by-side. They are not distinct from one another. They are joined as neighbors.”

Haruf’s terminal diagnosis came last February, long after he had published *Benediction*, but just as playwright Eric Schmierdl’s staged adaptation was being read at the Colorado New Play Summit.

Even up to that point, Haruf said, he had never thought much about his own death.

“Writing about a man who was dying without smoothing things over was an idea I was interested in,” said Haruf.

“What I hope that book is about is not whether Dad Lewis will live or die, but how he lives his last months and days,” Haruf said. “Despite the fact that he has these powerful, profound regrets that he would like to rectify, he cannot realistically see how he would ever be forgiven for the terrible mistakes he has made as a parent.”

Mike Hartman, who has starred in all three chapters of the trilogy and is now playing Dad Lewis, believes Haruf’s books are so universally beloved “because they are such simple, marvelous, touching stories,” he said. “His characters are so earth-bound. Their feet are so well-planted. They are so dependable and so unyielding in principle and in the direction that they are heading.”

When Schmiiedl learned of Haruf’s death, his mind immediately returned to a powerful moment in *Plainsong*, the novel that catapulted Haruf into the international spotlight in 1999. It’s when the two old bachelor ranchers are assessing the powerful impact a young pregnant girl named Victoria had on their lives while she was living with them.

“That girl made a difference out here for us, and we missed her when she was gone,” Raymond said with trademark plainspokenness. “Anyhow,” he added as a poignant afterthought, “...what was we suppose to do with that baby crib of hers?”

That moment made Schmiiedl laugh and cry the first time he read it. “And it makes me do so now. It represents the rawboned, unadorned honesty, as well as the

possibility for goodness found in Kent’s stories.”

It also succinctly describes Haruf’s impact on millions of lives:

He made a difference out here for us, and we miss him now that he is gone.

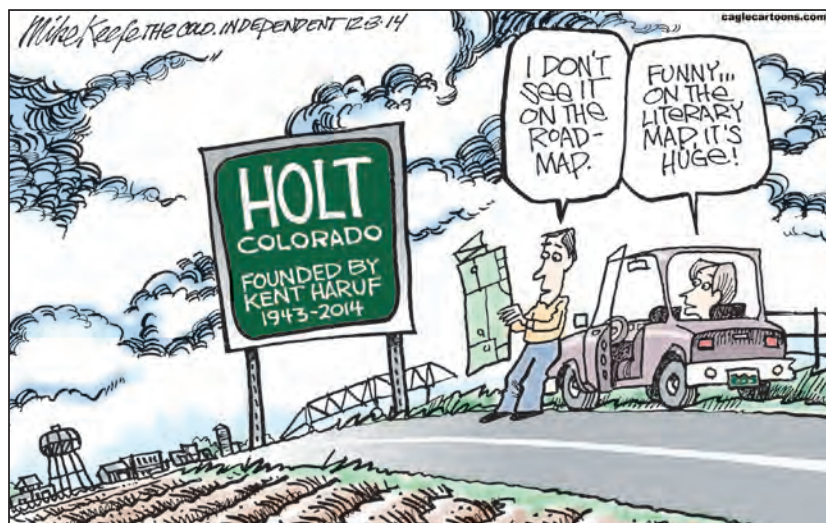
“Now, as we prepare for our production of *Benediction*, we will be missing a key component,” Schmiiedl said. “While heartbroken, we have been given an opportunity to celebrate our dear friend and mentor with our talents in order to touch other people as much as Kent Haruf has touched us.”

*John Moore, named one of the 12 most influential theater critics in the US by American Theatre magazine, is DCPA’s Senior Arts Journalist.*

*To read the complete interview with Kent Haruf, conducted five days before his death, go to [www.denvercenter.org/news-center](http://www.denvercenter.org/news-center).*

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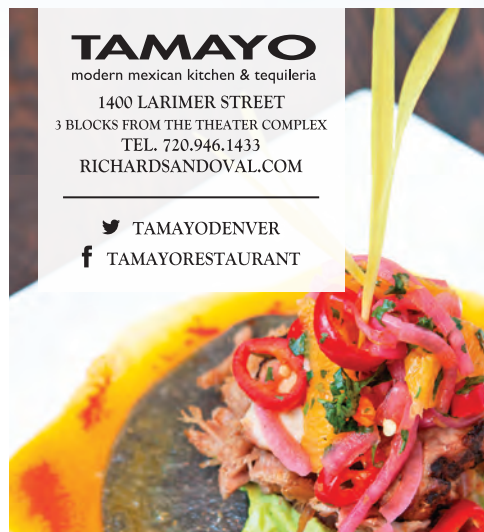
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Many know Microsoft as the brand behind their favorite software, services and devices. But you might not know that the company has a heart as big as its brand, committed to giving back in every region it serves. In fact, an official corporate giving program has been in place since the company went public in 1986.

Microsoft believes that a community is only as strong as its ability to nourish the mind and spirit through excellent, diverse and accessible programming in the visual and performing arts. It is in this vision that the company works with the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA). Since 1996, Microsoft has given the DCPA more than \$2.3 million in software to present exceptional theatre, embrace classics, create new work, and be a center for learning and civic engagement.

Microsoft technology enables more than 300 DCPA employees to innovate and stay competitive in the industry, as they produce 13 plays, present 25 musicals and educate 67,000 students. Through its software donation, the DCPA now has the latest desktop and server operating systems to provide operational improvement and the flexibility to meet patron and user needs.

“Our relationship with the DCPA is something of pride here in the greater Denver area,” said Chris Giblin, Director of Enterprise Sales overseeing Denver. “We are delighted to continue providing donations and software to help great works of art come to life.”

A significant portion of the Microsoft funding is directed through ArtsFund, a federated giving program for local corporations, foundations and individuals. In addition to the arts, Microsoft is committed to serving Denver and other local communities in four key areas: empowering youth, empowering nonprofits, empowering employees, and humanitarian and disaster response.

With these pillars in mind, Microsoft donated more than \$15.5 million to Colorado charities in recent years. More than 400 state employees also have utilized 3,875 volunteer hours to increase their community impact in a way above and beyond dollars and cents.

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**1 THEATRE COMPANY:** *One Night in Miami...* director Carl Cofield led a discussion with members of the Denver African American Philanthropists, The Links, The Denver Foundation and the DCPA during Black Philanthropy Month.

**2** Our DCPA Holiday Box Office was launched by Mayor Michael Hancock, The Grinch, Shaun Taylor-Corbet (*Jersey Boys*), Elias Harger (*A Christmas Carol*), Tamara Door (Downtown Denver Partnership), Dave Dickson (Cherry Creek Shopping Center), Richard Scharf (Visit Denver), Julie Underdahl (Cherry Creek North) and Jeff Hovorka (DCPA). **3 OFF-CENTER:** Anything goes at Off-Center's inventive take on *Lord of the Butterflies...err...Flies*. **4 BROADWAY:** Aurora native Andy Kelso, now starring on Broadway in *Kinky Boots*, came home to sing the national anthem at the Denver Broncos' victory over the San Diego Chargers on Oct. 24. **5 EDUCATION:** Adult Education students rehearsed in the Conservatory Theatre. **6 EVENTS:** The Seawell Grand Ballroom hosted the Adoption Exchange's Fantasy Ball for a tenth straight year.

For complete photo coverage, visit the DCPA's News Center at [denvercenter.org/news-center](http://denvercenter.org/news-center).

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Mar 27 - Apr 26

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### CINDERELLA CLUES

- Rodgers and:
- Peter Pan* author also wrote *A Kiss for Cinderella*: James M.
- She voices Cinderella in 1950 animated film: Ilene
- She sings opener in 1950 *Cinderella* film: Marni
- TV's human Cinderella in 1957: Julie
- Stars as Cinderella in 2015 film: Lily
- The country *Cinderella* takes place in:
- How many times Cinderella loses a shoe in 1950 film:
- In the original, the Prince is never described as:
- Brothers who wrote *Aschenputtel* (*Cinderella* in English):

### APPOGGIATURA CLUES

- Vivaldi was known for playing the:
- "Appoggiatura" is an Italian word meaning to:
- A classic Venetian boat is called a:
- One common mode of transportation you won't find in Venice:

### PLAINSONG TRILOGY CLUES

- Leading actor in all three Kent Haruf plays in Denver:
- Kent Haruf's Colorado birthplace:
- Surname of the two old "Plainsong" brothers:
- He adapted all three Kent Haruf novels for the stage:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Schmiel

### COLORADO NEW PLAY SUMMIT CLUES

- Catherine Trieschmann's 2012 Summit offering:  
*The Most* \_\_\_\_\_
- She wrote the DCPA's *Our House* in 2008: Theresa
- Head of DCPA Theatre Company: Kent

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