

Matt M. Morrow

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Artistic, Management & Production Experience

Artistic Director, Center Repertory Company, Walnut Creek, CA 2023-present

Produce and program a season of five productions in three theaters (capacity 800, 300 & 130, LORT D LOA), plus add-on events, Young Rep, and a summer cultural festival. Subscriptions increased by 12%, and its most recent season concluded by earning 120% of its box office goal. The mission and vision of Center REP is to develop and produce engaging new work alongside re-envisioning classic work that speaks to the current moment.

Executive Artistic Director, Diversionary Theatre, San Diego, CA 2014-2023

Nominated for 35 San Diego Critics Circle Craig Noel Awards in seven years, winning Outstanding New Play twice, and the Don Braunagel Award for Outstanding Work. Program and produce a Mainstage season of plays and musicals in an intimate 106 seat theatre. Inaugurated a new Cabaret performance venue open five nights a week, as well as a flexible Black Box Theatre to support the development of new work. Developed significant new foundation support and strategies in fundraising via individuals and institutions to grow the annual budget 150%, and launched a successful \$2.7 million Comprehensive Campaign to renovate the facility and render the theatre debt free. Collaborate with the the Board of Trustees to meet all fundraising and organizational goals, and completed a successful re-branding effort. Expanded arts education offerings from one to nine free programs serving thousands annually. Maintained and developed new artistic alliances with playwrights and theaters locally and nationally.

Associate Artistic Director, City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh, PA 2011-2014

Produced and programmed a season of six new plays in two theaters (LORT D), plus three add-on events, The Young Playwrights Festival and the Momentum Festival of New Plays. Duties included line producing, new play coverage, relationship management with playwrights, casting of locally, in NYC, and other regions, engaging design staff, and coordinating efforts with development, marketing and production offices. Annually directed one show in the subscription season, the Young Playwrights Festival and one workshop production in the Momentum Festival.

Development Manager, The Play Company, NYC 2008-2011

Expanded and maintained donor relations in corporate, government, foundation and individual support. Worked with the Board of Directors and Ambassadors in planning and executing major annual gala event and special events throughout the season. Generated significant new programmatic support in line with the company's international mission.

Literary & Development Director, Amas Musical Theatre, NYC 1997-2004

Programmed and produced The SIX O'CLOCK MUSICAL LAB, a concert staged reading series of new musicals, including publicity, casting and management. Plays developed, commissioned and/or produced during my tenure include ZANNA, DON'T!, THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE, LITTLE HAM, and the Richard Rodgers Award-winning BARRIO BABIES, among others.

Teaching Experience

Professor of Directing, University of California San Diego, Graduate Directing program

Taught Directing Process and Directing New Work in Production; Advised MFA Directing candidates on directing new work with Graduate Playwrights in the Wagner New Play Festival.

The John Wells Professor in Directing, Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama, Graduate & Undergraduate Directing programs

Composed syllabus and taught Directing III: Forms & Formats for Junior BFA Directing candidates; Advised MFA candidates on New Work in Production and Final Thesis Productions.

Directing Credits (partial list)

Jagged Little Pill by Morissette, Ballard, Cody	Center REP, Walnut Creek, CA 2026
FROGGY by Jennifer Haley	Center REP, Walnut Creek, CA 2025
Arsenic & Old Lace by Joseph Kesselring	Center REP, Walnut Creek, CA 2024
South Side Stories Revisited by Tami Dixon	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '24
⚡ Head Over Heels by Whitty, Magruder & The Go-Go's	Diversions Theatre, San Diego, 2023
* ⚡ The Mystery of Irma Vep by Charles Ludlam	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2022
The Skin of Our Teeth by Thornton Wilder	Old Globe & USD MFA Acting, SD 2022
* ⚡ Hedwig & the Angry Inch by Mitchell & Trask	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2019
This Beautiful City by The Civilians/Michael Friedman	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2018
* The Loneliest Girl in the World by Meinwald & Leary	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2018
Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill	Old Globe & USD MFA Acting, SD 2018
Homos, Or Everyone in America	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2017
* ⚡ Ballast by Georgette Kelly	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2017
* The Mystery of Love & Sex by Bathseba Doran	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2016
Now Or Later by Christopher Shinn	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2016
Amazons and Their Men by Jordan Harrison	Diversions Theatre, San Diego 2015
The Mystery of Irma Vep by Charles Ludlam	Penobscot Theatre, Bangor, ME 2014
A Feminine Ending by Sarah Treem	Off the Wall Theatre, Pittsburgh 2014
Charles Ives Take Me Home by Jessica Dickey	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '13
**South Side Stories by Tami Dixon	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '12
Tigers Be Still by Kim Rosenstock	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '12
Froggy by Jennifer Haley (workshop)	La Jolla Playhouse, '18, Banff Centre, '11-14, Sundance Theatre Institute '11, A.C.T., CA 2011-14, P73 @ Yale Drama '10
Don't You F**king Say A Word by Andy Bragen (workshop)	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '13
The Shadow Sparrow	
by Anton Dudley, Keith Gordon & Charlie Sohne (workshop)	City Theatre Company, Pittsburgh '12
***Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom by Jennifer Haley	Bricolage Theatre, Pittsburgh 2009
2.5 Minute Ride by Lisa Kron	Altered Stages, NYC 2008
Only Children	
by Michael R. Jackson & Rachel Peters (workshop)	Lincoln Center Director's Lab 2007
Urinetown The Musical by Mark Hollman and Greg Kotis	St. John's University, NYC 2006
The Exception and the Rule by Bertolt Brecht	The Tank, NYC 2003
The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told by Paul Rudnick	Theatre @ St. Clements, NYC 2002
john & jen by Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald	The Studio @ Playwrights Horizons 1999

*Best of the Year: San Diego Union-Tribune

⚡ Nomination: Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Resident Musical & Outstanding Director of a Musical

⚡ Winner: Craig Noel Award for Outstanding New Play

* *Top Ten of 2012: Pittsburgh Post Gazette & Tribune Review

***Top Ten of 2010: Pittsburgh Tribune Review

Residencies to Develop New Work

Creative Catalyst Fellowship, La Jolla Playhouse & The San Diego Foundation, San Diego, CA

PlayPenn, Philadelphia, PA

The Sundance Theatre Lab, The Sundance Theatre Institute

The Banff Centre, Theatre Arts Department, I.D.E.A. Summit, Composition & Production Residencies, Banff, Canada

3-Legged Dog Art & Technology Center, New York, NY

Lincoln Center Theatre Director's Lab, New York, NY

Page 73 Productions in Residence at The Yale School of Drama, New Haven, CT

Affiliations

National Alliance for Musical Theatre, Board Member, 2023-2026

Stage Directors and Choreographers, Associate Member, recipient of the SDC Foundation Observership with Lonny Price on KISMET on Broadway with Encores! @ City Center

The Lincoln Center Director's Lab, Member

Education

Carnegie Mellon University, BFA in Drama, Major: Directing, Minor: Film and Media Studies

Lois Cowles Harrison School for the Arts, Diploma, Theatre Major graduate

New York Bar Association, Certified Arts Mediator, New York Arts Resolution Services

The San Diego Union-Tribune

How San Diego's Diversionary Theatre became the people's stage



With an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, Matt Morrow has turned Diversionary Theatre into a place for everyone.

By DAVID L. CODDON, JUNE 28, 2020

The theater is called Diversionary, but under the executive artistic directorship of Matt Morrow, it could just as well be called Diversity. Morrow, who in November will mark

six years at the helm of the 34-year-old University Heights-based theater, recalls the perception of Diversionary Theatre when he arrived from Pittsburgh.

“There was a notion that ‘Diversionary does the drag shows.’ The word on the street (became) ‘Wow, we didn’t know that this could be LGBTQ theater.’ It was really important to me that diversity and inclusion were at the forefront of everything we were doing. That meant diversifying the playwrights that we produce, producing more female playwrights and playwrights of color, and diversifying the presentation of characters on stage. And also diversifying the kinds of stories that are being told.

“When I got here, by and large, what I heard in the community was that Diversionary wasn’t a place for women. It wasn’t a place for people who are trans or gender-non-conforming. Now it’s about making sure that everyone feels welcome at Diversionary. Our table is big enough for everyone.”

So, Morrow said, is San Diego’s.

“One of the beautiful things about living in San Diego is that over a long period of time, this community has cultivated an appreciation and an appetite for theater of all types and sizes,” he said. “One of the reasons why I was really attracted to Diversionary is because it allows me to combine my political and social activism with my art, and there is a really healthy theater ecology that exists in San Diego.”

Morrow joined Diversionary from City Theatre Company of Pittsburgh, where he was associate artistic director. He remembers the first production he personally directed at Diversionary, Jordan Harrison's metaphorical "Amazons and Their Men," in 2015.

"That will always have a soft spot in my heart," he said. "I'd been waiting my entire professional career to do something that rests on Leni Riefenstahl (known for making the Nazi propaganda film 'The Triumph of The Will'). That production was successful in breaking people's expectations of what they would have when they came to Diversionary. You knew that something different was going to be happening."

About the works he's directed at Diversionary, Morrow said that "I love all of my babies equally," but he did single out last year's 20th-anniversary staging of Stephen Trask and John Cameron Mitchell's "Hedwig and the Angry Inch." The Diversionary production starred Jeremy Wilson and Cashae Monya.

"'Hedwig' was a landmark for us," said Morrow, "not just because I felt like as a director I was firing on all cylinders, but I felt great about it financially. Those things usually don't go hand in hand together. That was a special moment for us."

A little more than a year later, Diversionary, like theaters around the globe, is closed for safety reasons in the wake of COVID-19 restrictions. At the time of the shutdown, the theater was preparing to present the West Coast premiere of Miranda Rose Hall's "Plot Points in Our Sexual Development," part of Diversionary's 2020 "Gender Series" of works.

"We're still in the process of working out whether we can bring 'Plot Points' back," Morrow said. "The tricky part with this moment in time is that you want to honor what you programmed, to usher them into a full and complete life. You have high hopes for the experience your community will have. But as an organization you have to make sure that you're forward-looking and responding to the needs of the community."

Another work previously planned for the season was a production of the 2018 jukebox musical “Head Over Heels,” which features songs by the ‘80s band the Go-Go’s.

“‘Head Over Heels’ will be, if we’re able to produce it, the biggest show we’ve ever produced,” Morrow said. “Economically, it just might not be feasible. But it’s a perfect sort of coming-out-of-a-crisis celebration because it is just a big fun party. It’s really silly and high energy, but it has a lot on its mind as well.”

On Morrow’s mind, as with other theater artists in San Diego and around the world, are the intertwined issues of racial injustice, civil unrest and inclusion.

“For me, as a theater leader, there’s a lot of soul-searching going on internally and with my staff,” Morrow said, “and I’ve also started a listening tour with a lot of our Black theater makers in San Diego, to check in on them and also hear about their experiences and what can be done going forward.” (Last Thursday, it hosted “Intersectionality and Justice: A Discussion” via Zoom.)

“This isn’t a problem that we can solve tomorrow, or next season. It’s going to take a lifetime of undoing the embedded racism in all of our systems, including how we make theater. The enormity of that cannot be expressed enough.”

Like his professional peers, Morrow is also thoughtful about the present and the future of the theatrical world and the world in general when it comes to the COVID-19 crisis and its eventual aftermath. He believes artists will want and need to address what we all went through when the time comes.

“I think we’re going to have to make sense of this,” he said. “There’s a sense of bewilderment and confusion among the theater community because we’re so powerless right now. We’ve been asked to sit on our hands for an indeterminate amount of time. It’s excruciating. But there’s no doubt in my mind that once we get back to work, we’re going to have

to reflect on this moment and how it's changed us and how it's going to change the world.”

True to his personality, however, Morrow is upbeat.

“You know what I love about this moment? It does bring out the best in everyone. My community, my board, my staff, my family, my friends — they're all bringing their best and their most kind and their most loving selves to the table.”

“I've seen on display in the circles I've trafficked in and in our community love and care and gentleness. All of us in the theater community are connecting and communicating like we've never done before. I think that that can be seen in other segments of our world as well.”

