

Eric Rosen



[Wikipedia](#)

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Eric Rosen's academic background includes a PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and a BA in Performance Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a director, playwright, and producer who was the Artistic Director of The Cape Playhouse, and previously worked at Kansas City Repertory Theatre and co-founded About Face Theatre. He is known for his work in theater, directing productions such as *Clay* and *Eleven Rooms of Proust*, and for writing musicals including *Winesburg, Ohio* and *Dream Boy*.

Education

Northwestern University:

Holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Performance Studies.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

Holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Communications/Performance Studies.

Career Highlights

The Cape Playhouse:

Served as Artistic Director, leading the historic theater.

Kansas City Repertory Theatre:

Former Artistic Director.

About Face Theatre:

Co-founded and served as Artistic Director from 1995 to 2008.

Producer/Director:

Directed various productions for organizations including the Kansas City Rep, About Face, Steppenwolf, and Goodman Theatres.

Playwright:

His original projects include the musicals Winesburg, Ohio, Undone, and Whitman, and the plays Dream Boy, Dancer from the Dance, and Wedding Play.

Awards and Recognition

Received Joseph Jefferson and Barrymore Awards.

Work at About Face Theatre earned awards from the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Illinois.

Inducted into Chicago's LGBTQ Hall of Fame

Director Eric Rosen Takes Over the Cape Playhouse (with a Little Help from Husband, 'The Gilded Age's' Claybourne Elder)

Director, Playwright, and Producer Eric Rosen Named New Artistic Leader of Historic Cape Playhouse

<https://www.steppenwolf.org/artists/eric--rosen/>

<https://www.goodmantheatre.org/artists/eric-rosen/>

EDGE: Who's your audience?

Eric Rosen: June audience is diehard locals and people who come early for the summer. It's subscription heavy. In July and August, there's ten weeks when it's constant churn. We could run one show all summer if we wanted to, because the audience changes every week. The reason we're dark on Sundays is because that's the changeover day for vacation weeks. If you have shows that are drawing entirely tourists you can run things longer. This year I've changed up the whole schedule, so we do a two-week run, then three-week, four-week, three-week again and back to two-week. It follows the demographics and the population.

Knock on wood, the audience for the Playhouse is in great shape. Last year was the highest grossing season ever, and we're ahead of that so far for this year by healthy double-digit percentage. Everything is selling. We're really healthy.

Eric Rosen: I knew I wanted to make a big impression, but I also knew the first rule of being a new artistic director is don't break anything. So I studied everything we'd been doing for the last 10 to 15 years, looked at what sold, what the audience responded to. I sent out a survey in order to get to know the audience without actually knowing the audience. Another part of the choices is just the artists that I want to work with. We're doing "39 Steps" because Kimberly Senior wanted to direct it. And there are some things I just wanted to do. I love "Waitress" and I wanted to see what I could make of it. I had already done "tick, tick...BOOM!" at Bucks County (Playhouse) and I knew I wanted to bring it back. And then there were some things like "Million Dollar Quartet" and "Beautiful" that were already well into the planning phase before I started.

EDGE: How do you pick your season?

Eric Rosen: I knew I wanted to make a big impression, but I also knew the first rule of being a new artistic director is don't break anything. So I studied everything we'd been doing for the last 10 to 15 years, looked at what sold, what the audience responded to. I sent out a survey in order to get to know the audience without actually knowing the audience. Another part of the choices is just the artists that I want to work with. We're doing "39 Steps" because Kimberly Senior wanted to direct it. And there are some things I just wanted to do. I love "Waitress" and I wanted to see what I could make of it. I had already done "tick, tick...BOOM!" at Bucks County (Playhouse) and I knew I wanted to bring it back. And then there were some things like "Million Dollar Quartet" and "Beautiful" that were already well into the planning phase before I started.

It's a challenge to find a season that will get people off the beach in the summer and be something that I want to do and know will work. I believe we've got five shows that will serve the community and get people excited this year.

Eric Rosen: It's crazy. I wander around the building and everywhere backstage there are posters from 100 years of shows. I look at the walls and there's Tallulah Bankhead, Thornton Wilder, Jane Fonda and Henry Fonda on the same bill. It's the sense of history in that room, both for the audience and the artists. I've never experienced anything like it. It's haunted in the best way. As a theater nerd I get choked up thinking that we're actually here where it happened.