



Leadership Transition Announcement

Village Theatre Executive Producer Robb Hunt to Retire

ISSAQUAH, WA (October 1, 2021) -- With profound respect and gratitude, Village Theatre's Board of Directors today announced that after 43 years of leadership, Village Theatre legacy founder and longtime Executive Producer Robb Hunt will retire at the conclusion of the 2021-2022 season.

"The Board of Directors joins the entire Village Theatre community in expressing our deepest gratitude and respect for Robb Hunt and all he has created over the last 43 years. Robb's dedication, work ethic, commitment to the community, passion for Village Theatre, and deep connection and friendship with all of us is irreplaceable. His leadership will be sorely missed. With Robb's help, the Board has begun a robust search for exceptional new leadership that will carry on Robb's legacy of providing excellent, professional musical theater to our area," Village Theatre Board of Directors President, Jill Klinge said.

During his 43-years, Robb Hunt built the nonprofit from a community theatre to a nationally recognized theatre institution whose industry impact can be felt by countless artists, theatergoers, and community members around the world. As Executive Producer, Robb Hunt oversees all aspects of the organization, leading the artistic and business operations, and driving the financial stability of the company forward. During his tenure, Robb Hunt has guided the organization to incredible financial stability, having led the successful acquisition of five properties it operates from, including owning the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre, First Stage Theatre, and the Craig & Joan Watjen Technical Studios in Issaquah, as well as partnering with the City of Everett to manage the Everett Performing Arts Center and Cope Gillette Theatre in Everett. Prior to the pandemic, Village Theatre commanded a \$15 million operating budget, hosted 220,000 guests a year between its Mainstage, Village Originals, and KIDSTAGE programming, and reached the incredible milestone of serving 20,000 season ticket holders for its Mainstage season.

Artistically, Robb has been a life-long lover of musicals. As Village Theatre grew throughout the years, so did his commitment to the development of the art form, and that commitment came to life with the creation of the Village Originals program. Now one of the most comprehensive new musical programs in the Nation, Village Originals has had a hand in the development of countless musicals, included among them are the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning *Next To Normal* as well as the Tony Award-winning *Million Dollar Quartet*. Due in large part to his hand in the 1985 establishment of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT) in



New York City, Village Theatre also began the annual tradition of producing The Festival of New Musicals in Issaquah, Washington each August. The Festival attracts the who's who of musical writers and directors from around the world for one special long weekend of theatre development and celebration.

Robb has always been an incredible advocate for the next generation, consistently placing a high value on young people and their growth. Early on, Robb led a small but mighty team whose mission was to create opportunities for young people to manifest their own productions, and this work became the foundation of KIDSTAGE. Today, KIDSTAGE is one of the largest, most in-depth youth theatre programs in the country. With his leadership at the helm, the KIDSTAGE team and thus its reach throughout the region has grown exponentially, creating innumerable opportunities for tens of thousands of young people from Issaquah to Everett, Washington to gain *skills for theatre... skills for life*, a life-long program mission.

"When the founders of Village Theatre and I took our first steps toward the creation and establishment of this organization, we had dreams of what it could be and what our hard work would bring to the stage and our community. As Executive Producer, I have had the privilege to lead this incredible theatre into the future, and what a joy. The innumerable patrons who have entered our doors, the incredible artists who have shared their talent, the students who have learned with us and brought those lessons with them throughout their lives, the shows we have brought from page to stage for the first time, and the stories we have told only begin to encapsulate my time with Village Theatre. It is a legacy I am grateful to be part of, largely because we have built something truly wonderful together. As I begin this new chapter of my life, I am grateful to have been able to build an organization with the ability to dream and leave it to you all to continue the quest. Thank you for dreaming along with me and standing alongside Village Theatre," Robb Hunt said.

Village Theatre has also announced that, after three years as Artistic Director, Jerry Dixon is transitioning to an Artistic Consultant role for this season. Jerry will be directing the season-closing production of *Raisin* in spring 2022, as well as continuing to advise the artistic team members throughout the year.

"I am grateful for Jerry's leadership, artistic voice, and contributions to Village Theatre," Robb Hunt said. "I look forward to following his future artistic endeavors. We are fortunate to have an outstanding team of Associate Artistic Directors to shepherd the 2022 season as we build our transition plans. There will be more to come about the transition and the search for our new leadership in the coming months and I will support our Board of Directors in this search and transition throughout the season."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Village Theatre has engaged the experts at Management Consultants for the Arts to collaborate on the search to fill two new leadership roles in place of Robb's position: artistic director and a managing director. When ready, the job descriptions will be available online at <https://mcaonline.com/> and <https://villagetheatre.org/>.

ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE

Based in Issaquah, WA, with operations in Everett, WA, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of over 175 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving thousands of young people and their families annually.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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