YOUR THEATRE
Relevant. Intimate. Professional.

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE 2016-17
THE COMPANY

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCES VIBRANT CONTEMPORARY PLAYS THAT EXPLORE THE HEART, HUMOR, AND COMPLEXITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Founded in 1979, Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a professional, non-profit theatre company that has become known for its outstanding productions of mostly regional and world premieres.

Acknowledging that artists are at the core of all creative work, MRT hires the best-available professional directors, designers, and actors from major theatre centers around the country. These artists are attracted to Lowell by MRT’s reputation for its unwavering commitment to the highest artistic standards.
ABOUT MRT

MRT’S MISSION

“To advance the cause of human understanding by creating theatrical productions at the highest level of artistic excellence and making them affordable to the broadest possible community.”

Consistent with its mission, MRT is dedicated to:

- Developing and presenting new plays that address contemporary issues and reflect the community’s diverse heritage with a broad range of topics and styles.
- Ensuring the most expansive reach by subsidizing ticket costs where possible.
- Creating a collaborative environment for artists and staff in order to encourage artistic growth and excellence.
- Maintaining a deep involvement in the community and building a young, diverse audience through a variety of outreach programs and educational initiatives.

MRT is a member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and employs members of the Actors’ Equity Association, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and the United Scenic Artists. MRT is an Associate of the National New Play Network. A recipient of the New England Theatre Award for Excellence, its productions have also received awards from the Independent Reviewers of New England, The Elliot Norton Awards, the Boston Drama Critics Awards, and more. Since 1979, MRT has served over one million theatergoers with 250 productions, including 25 world premieres and 41 regional premieres.

MRT produces seven plays each year from fall through spring. Each production rehearses for three and a half weeks, followed by a four-week run of 27 performances in the Nancy L. Donahue Theatre.

Benjamin Scheuer in The Lion.

The **Nancy L. Donahue Theatre** is located in Liberty Hall, at 50 E. Merrimack St. in Lowell. The 279-seat theatre offers views of its proscenium stage from three tiered sides, without a bad seat in the house. From the hall’s colorful interior, audiences are treated to intimate theatre with world-class production values.
LEADERSHIP

SEAN DANIELS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sean has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club (NYC), Lynn Redgrave (NYC) The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), St. James (West End, London), Actors Theatre of Louisville, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre, Playmakers Rep, Cleveland Play House, Alliance Theatre, California Shakespeare, Dad’s Garage Theatre Company, Swine Palace, Neo-Futurists, Aurora Theatre, Crowded Fire and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

His direction and shows have won: “Best New Musical” in London, The Drama Desk Award in NYC, & “Best Play” and “Best Director” in the Bay Area, Rochester and Atlanta. His shows have also been nominated for the Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Award in NYC. Sean has been named “one of the top fifteen up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America’s stages for decades to come” & “One Of 7 People Reshaping And Revitalizing The American Musical” by American Theatre magazine.

He’s previously served as the Artist-At-Large for Geva Theatre Center and spent four years at the Tony Award-winning Actors Theatre of Louisville as the theatre’s Associate Artistic Director (where he directed 17 productions including five Humana Festivals). Mr. Daniels is the former Associate Artistic Director/ Resident Director of the California Shakespeare Theater and before that spent a decade as the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Dad’s Garage Theater Company in Atlanta.

ELIZABETH KEGLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth joined MRT as Executive Director in 2013. She previously served as Managing Director of Kitchen Dog Theater in Dallas, TX. Elizabeth received her MBA from Southern Methodist University’s Cox School of Business and her Master of Arts in Arts Management from Meadows School of the Arts where she worked with The Dallas Opera, Dallas Business Council for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. She spent a semester at Bocconi University in Milan studying cultural policy and international arts funding systems. An AEA Stage Manager for 10 years, Elizabeth worked with nationally-renowned companies including SITI Company, Signature Theatre, Atlantic Theater Company, Public Theatre/New York Shakespeare Festival and celebrated artists such as Anne Bogart, Bill Irwin, Philip Glass and David Henry Hwang. Elizabeth lives in downtown Lowell with her tiny dog, Paco.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nancy L. Donahue, Chair
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Judith Benson, Vice-President
Dennis P. Jones, Treasurer
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John H. Pearson, Jr.
Brian J. Stafford, CPA
Nicola Tsongas
45 PLAYS FOR 45 PRESIDENTS
September 7 – October 2, 2016
Written by Andy Bayiates, Sean Benjamins, Genevra Gallo-Bayiates, Chloe Johnston, and Karen Weinberg
Directed by Sean Daniels
Hail to the Chief!
A hilarious-yet-thoughtful celebration of our nation’s great story—one we continue to write with every election season. 45 Plays for 45 Presidents sets us on the roller coaster ride of American history, with each Commander in Chief getting two minutes in the spotlight. And fittingly, it ends with You the Audience choosing the 45th play! Spanning 227 years of triumph and adversity, it’s a joyous American civic lesson in just two hours.

AGIBAIL/1702
October 12 – November 6, 2016
Written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa
Directed by Tiáloc Rivas
Old demons and new beginnings.
Ten years after the Salem witch trials, a notorious young accuser seeks salvation in Boston, only to find her new life haunted by terrors of the past. She’ll face pirates, the devil, and worse in this eerie and quintessentially New England tale from one of America’s master horror writers. For Abigail, forgiveness is everything—but it may come at an unthinkible price.

GOING TO SEE THE KID
November 30 – December 24, 2016
Written by Steven Drukman
Directed by Alexander Greenfield
Holiday Spirit, from Fenway to Florida.
On the assignment of a lifetime, two reporters head for Florida at Christmastime, trying to land a final interview with aging Red Sox legend Ted Williams. One’s a rookie; the other, a seasoned pro. And both will learn the inestimable value of teammates—on and off the field. A loving testament to the light that shines on long after the last pitch is thrown, and the holiday spirit that overcomes any distance.

THE MAKING OF A GREAT MOMENT
January 4 - January 29, 2017
Written by Peter Sinn Nachtrieb
Directed by Sean Daniels
Big dreams travel best on two wheels.
Actors Mona and Terry are on an ambitious quest: tour their play Great Moments in Human Achievement across the country... by bicycle. Surely they’ll bring inspiration to millions! But as they pedal across the nation reenacting history’s high points, finding laundry facilities proves just as tough as their unruly audiences. When the day is done, can our heroes manage a great moment of their own? An exuberant comedy about all the potholes on the road to sheer brilliance.

WOMEN IN JEOPARDY!
February 15 - March 12, 2017
Written by Wendy MacLeod
Directed by Sean Daniels
Screw the mid-life crisis; let’s solve some crimes.
Middle-aged mom Liz has a new man. And let’s face it... he’s just plain creepy. When a mysterious disappearance sets the community on edge, Liz’s best friends leap to the rescue as the zany caper flings them from the ‘burbs to the wilds of Utah; because there’s no danger great enough to stop women from solving crimes if they want to! A riotous comedy about trading in wine glasses for spy glasses when the mid-life crisis just isn’t your speed.

CHILL
March 22 – April 16, 2017
Written by Eleanor Burgess
Directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian
For all life throws you between 18 and 28.
Brookline Massachusetts, 2001: With graduation on the horizon, four high schoolers assemble for an epic hangout, laying bare their dreams for life ahead. Ten years later, they gather to do it all again—but find that in a world swept by change, friendship is hardly as simple as it once seemed. Their story boldly captures the joy and heartache of becoming a grownup in the America that no one saw coming.

MY 80-YEAR-OLD BOYFRIEND
April 26 – May 21, 2017
Conceived and Performed by Charissa Bertels
Book and Lyrics by Christian Duhamel
Music and Lyrics by Edward Bell
Directed by Sean Daniels
Time goes fast. Say “Yes.”
In this delightful new musical, Charissa, a quirky, twenty-something actress, meets Robert, a quick-witted, eighty-something millionaire who loves Schubert, Shakespeare, and Dallas BBQ. From a chance encounter to the unlikeliest of friendships, Charissa discovers there’s much she can learn from her surprising new companion. Based on the true story of performer Charissa Bertels, My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend reveals the thrill of chasing a dream, the power of living in the now, and all that can happen when we let ourselves say “yes.” (Pictured: Charissa Bertels)
THE PATRIOT PROGRAM

The Patriot Program is MRT’s unique approach to establishing a network of artists associated with the theatre. The program is designed to benefit playwrights, directors, actors, designers, and others from across the theatre field, as well as enhance MRT’s network of collaborators.

The Patriot Program is revolutionary in its approach to the artistic associate programs that are typical at many theatre companies. It differs in scope – MRT’s program is larger than most both in the number of participants and the diversity of roles represented. Patriots can make use of MRT’s physical resources, including the rehearsal hall, theatre, and artist housing. In addition to space, the Patriots will also have access to a community of fellow theatre-makers, both those on staff at MRT and the other members of the program.

MRT’s Artistic Director Sean Daniels developed the program as he thought about ways to incorporate his large national network into the work he’s doing at MRT and his future goals for the company. “As we talked to these artists - we kept hearing ‘I’d love to just have a place to come write’, or ‘I’d love to be writing when other writers are there so we gather for dinner for each night and compare notes’ or ‘I’d love to just start with some designers and dream up a project’. This program aims to provide those generative opportunities.”

Daniels aims to put Merrimack Repertory Theatre and Lowell on the national radar by originating work here that goes on to have future life in the American Theatre.

THE COMPLETE LIST OF THE MRT PATRIOTS

James Albrecht, Creative Director, St. James Theatre (London)
May Adrales, Director
Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Playwright/Writer
("Spiderman" “American Psycho”, “Glee”, “Big Love”, Marvel Comics) Chief Creative Officer for Archie Comics
Jill A. Anderson, General Manager O’Neill Theatre Center
Charissa Bertels, Singer and actor currently on the national tour of “If/Then”, conceiver and performer of MRT’s 2016-17 “My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend”
Ilana Brownstein, Dramaturg, Director of New Work at Company One
Eleanor Burgess, Boston-native, currently New York-based playwright whose production of “Chill” will be featured in MRT’s 2016-17 Season. Winner of the Alliance/ Kenededa National Graduate Playwriting Award
Monica Byrne, Novelist, Playwright
Jen Caprio, Costume Designer
Aysan Celik, Actor, Educator, NYU Abu Dhabi, Founding Member Theatre Mitu
Jeremy Cohen, Artistic Director, Playwrights Center
Jennifer Cody, Actor
Joel Colodner, Boston-based actor who appeared in “It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play”
Mark Cuddy, Artistic Director, Geva Theatre & Cape Playhouse
Celina Dean, Actor
Kristoffer Diaz, Playwright, Pulitzer Prize Finalist
Julie Dubinur, Dramaturg
Veronika Duerr, Actor, Director, Producer
Steve Drukan, Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright whose world premiere production of “Going to See the Kid” will be MRT’s holiday production next season
Reginald Edmund, Playwright
Jessica Ford, Costume Designer whose work was recently seen at New York’s Atlantic Theatre Company and at MRT in “Home of the Brave.” She is also on the faculty at UMass Amherst.
Nick Gandiello, Playwright
Michael John Garces, Director and playwright, artistic director of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles
Wendy Goldberg, Artistic Director, O’Neill Playwright’s Conference
Idris Goodwin, Playwright
John Gregorio, Actor
Lauren Gunderson, Playwright, Steinberg/ATCA Award winner
Leah Hamos, Agent, Gersh Agency
Jon Jory, Artistic Founding Director of Long Warf Theatre, Former Artistic Director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, Creator of the Humana Festival of New American Plays, Winner of the Special Tony Award for Regional Achievement
Lila Rose Kaplan, Playwright
Tom Kirdahy, Five-time Tony Award-nominated Producer
Greg Kotis, Two-time Tony Award-winning Playwright (“Urinetown”)
Victor Lesniewski, Playwright
Brian J Lilienthal, Lighting Designer
Karen MacDonald, Actor
Wendy MacLeod, Playwright
Kristin Marting, Artistic Director, HERE Art Center
Cheryl McMahon, Boston-based actor appearing in MRT’s “Home of the Brave”
Lisa McNulty, Producing Artistic Director, Women’s Project Theater
Kristen Mengelkoch, Actor
Kelly Miller, Dramaturg/Producer
Allison Moore, Playwright, currently a Core Member of the The Playwrights’ Center, Television writer for “Powers”, “Da Vinci’s Demons”, “Beauty and the Beast”.
Aaron Munoz, Actor
Nael Nacer, Boston-based actor who appeared in MRT’s “It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play”
Peter Sinn Nachtrieb, Playwright
Stowe Nelson, Sound designer whose work was heard at MRT during “Tinker to Evers to Chance.” Drama Desk Award-nominee. Company member of the award winning theatre company the Mad Ones and Wingspan Theatrical Design.
Celeste Oliva, Boston-based actress who appeared in MRT’S “It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play”
A. Rey Pamatmat, Playwright
Topher Payne, Playwright
christopher oscar peña, Playwright
Heather Provost, Tony Award-nominated Producer
David Remedios, Sound Designer
Tlaloc Rivas, Director, Educator
Leon Rothenberg, Tony Award-winning sound designer (“The Nance”) whose credits also include Cirque du Soleil and MRT’S “The Lion” and “The White Chip”
Mike Sabline, Dramaturg
KJ Sanchez, Director
Megan Sandberg-Zakian, Director
Benjamin Scheuer, Writer/Composer— Drama Desk and New Theatre World Award Winner
Wendy Seyb, Choreographer
Mat Smart, Playwright
Niegel Smith, Artistic Director, The Flea Theatre
Molly Smith Metzler, Playwright
Justin Townsend, Lighting and set designer whose work can currently be seen on Broadway in “American Psycho” and “The Humans”, and was seen by MRT audiences in “The White Chip”
Sam Willmott, Composer, Kleban Award Winner
Reggie D. White, Actor who appeared the Lowell and New York runs of MRT’S “I and You”
Jessica Wortham, Actor
Lucky Yates, Actor (“Archer”), Puppeteer
Karen Zacarias, Playwright
Merrimack Repertory Theatre’s Student Matinees provide many students with their first exposure to professional theatre. It gives them the opportunity to experience literature in a different way, often resulting in a deeper connection to the story and characters. Attending MRT meets many MCAS and NHCF requirements.

Student Matinees start at 10:30 am, allowing plenty of time for the students to be bussed to MRT and back to school again by the end of the day. Student Matinee tickets are $8.50 each. Teachers are provided with copies of the script and our PlayGuides, which contain background material so that the play may be easily integrated into the classroom curriculum. Following each performance there is a Post-Show Discussion with members of the cast.

Each year, Merrimack Repertory Theatre receive generous support that allows MRT to provide student tickets to schools facing economic hardships. Through the PIE program, students attend a matinee at low or no cost. The program may even cover the cost of transportation.

YOUNG COMPANY

MRT’s Young Company is a unique year-long program for young people in grades 6-12 interested in theatre. The experience begins with an intensive two-week summer program working with leading theatre artists from around the country and continues through the following spring with access to rehearsals, master classes, and workshops with MRT’s staff and visiting artists.

**MRT’s Young Company:**

- Provides opportunities for young people to communicate their ideas, define their unique voice, and build community through theatre creation.

- Offers fun, fully-immersive opportunities for students to better understand the inner workings of a professional theatre.

- Builds strong connections between the next generation of theatre artists and leaders in the American theatre.

- Brings together a broad range of students with a variety of interests and varying degrees of theatrical experience.

**In the Summer:**

Students receive instruction from professional theatre artists in acting, improvisation, playmaking, writing, movement, design, and dramaturgy. Students then create their own play. Each session concludes with a showcase of the students’ original work, open to the public, on the final day of the session.
FALL-SPRING PROGRAM
The Young Company regularly meets during MRT’s producing season to fully understand the inner workings of a professional theatre company and increase their skill sets. Access is limited to students who participated in the summer Young Company program.

The Fall-Spring Program includes:
- Rehearsal and tech observation throughout MRT’s producing season.
- Attendance at MRT’s workshops of plays in development with a variety of nationally-renowned playwrights and artists.
- Master Classes and Artist Talks with guest artists and MRT staff.

2016-17 YOUNG COMPANY PARTICIPANTS
MRT is deeply committed to pursuing eye-opening and fruitful relationships in the Greater Lowell community. With its Community Conversations series, co-sponsored events with local organizations, open houses, and visits to the theatre from nearby youth groups, MRT enthusiastically fills its role as a cultural anchor for the city of Lowell and the Merrimack Valley.

In the last two years, MRT has:

- Hosted speakers from local youth poetry groups, cancer survivors organizations, animal shelters, addiction recovery centers, and more.
- Joined forces with UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College to workshop world premieres Home of the Brave (2015-16 Season) and Chill (2016-17 Season)
- Co-presented film screenings, music performances, and more with local businesses and nonprofits.
- Welcomed hundreds of people in recovery from addiction to a performance of The White Chip for free.
- Become the regular home of the Angkor Dance Troupe, Lowell’s Cambodian classical dance group
- Opened its doors for backstage tours, celebrations, and open houses, free and open to the community.

MRT’s community partners have included:
The Angkor Dance Troupe
Community Family Day Health
D’Youville Life & Wellness Center
FreeVerse Girls, Inc.
The Improbable Players
Juvenile Court Restorative Justice Coalition
Lowell Community Health Center
Lowell General Hospital
Lowell House, Inc.
Lowell Humane Society
The Lowell Spinners
The Luna Theatre
Mass Poetry
The Megan House
Merrimack College
Middlesex Community College
Right Turn
Therapy Dogs International
University of Massachusetts Lowell
UTEC Lowell (United Teen Equality Center)

Community Conversations in the Nancy L. Donahue Theatre. Following a performance of Year Zero.
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT EVENTS
Merrimack Repertory Theatre hosts a number of events during the run of its shows. Audience members can enhance their theatre experience with:

**Ask the Artists**
Following every Thursday performance, stick around after the performance for a Q&A with members of the cast or creative team.

**Community Conversations**
On most Wednesday nights, join leaders of local organizations for an insightful discussion that explores the play’s relevance to the Greater Lowell community.

**Wine Down Fridays/Opening Nights**
Stick around for a complimentary glass of wine after the Friday night preview; join the artists and staff for a party with food and drinks after the Saturday night opening.

**Cookie Matinees**
Join us for complimentary cookies and coffee in the lobby before the Wednesday Matinee performance. Courtesy of Brew’d Awakening Coffeehaus.

**Ladies Nights**
Enjoy a pre-show reception with wine and sweet treats from local confectioner Sweet Lydia’s. Stay after the performance for the Post-Show Discussion.
On select Thursdays during *Abigail/1702* (October 27), *Women in Jeopardy!* (February 23), and *My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend* (May 11).
THE COHORT CLUB

The Cohort Club is a group of 15-20 people from around the Lowell community and the Merrimack Valley—people of all types and interests. Cohort Club members are a part of the creation of professional theater, through observations of the rehearsal and production process, and conversations with the artistic team.

THE 2016-17 COHORTS FOLLOW FOUR SHOWS FROM START (FIRST REHEARSAL) TO FINISH (OPENING NIGHT)

45 Plays for 45 Presidents
The Making of a Great Moment
Women in Jeopardy!
My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend

MRT provides the Cohorts with unprecedented access to the artistic process – and access to learning opportunities (chats with staff, tours, behind-the-scenes events, etc). They're welcome at all rehearsals (including technical rehearsals and preview performances), “Meet and Greets” where the actors meet each other for the first time, and other events. They have opportunities to chat with the directors, playwrights, designers and actors to gain a deeper level of understanding.

As part of their Cohort responsibilities, all members write about their experience in whatever medium they find the most exciting (blog, pen and paper, Twitter, Facebook), and MRT spreads their writing by posting it on its own blog.

THE 2016-17 COHORTS

Lisa Arnold  Susan Elberger  Ann Kazer  Richard Pitkin
Brenda Boomhower  Aurora Erickson  Jack Malnati  James Ravan
Christa Brown  Paul Galinis  Terri Munson
Geoff Bryant  Tim Greenwood  Nancy Weber
Mindy Dopler Nelson  Marianne Gries  Timna Nwokeji

(Pictured: Charissa Bertels)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>MRT founders John R. Briggs, Mark Kaufman, and Barbara and Al Abrahamian meet at a summer stock theatre in Salem, NH and form the “Committee for Legitimate Theatre in Lowell.” Nancy L. Donahue becomes the first Board President.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Opens first production: Bob Hall and David Richmond’s <em>The Passion of Dracula</em>. The company is named “Merrimack Regional Theatre” and housed in Mahoney Hall at the University of Lowell. Without heat in the theatre, patrons keep warm around trash barrel fires outside.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Presents free summer theatre on Mack Plaza, including Stephen Sondheim’s <em>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</em>. During one performance a passing storm drenches props, and an attempt to remedy the situation with a hair dryer causes a power outage.</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>Moves to its current home at Liberty Hall (now called the Nancy L. Donahue Theatre), changing its name to “Merrimack Repertory Theatre.”</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Stages its first world premiere: Jack Neary’s <em>First Night</em>.</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Launches “Partners in Education” program, offering free and subsidized tickets for middle and high school students, with a donation from Robert M. Ansin.</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Opens children’s summer theatre program, now called MRT Young Company.</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>As part of its outreach surrounding Michael Golamco’s <em>Year Zero</em>, MRT establishes partnership with the Angkor Dance Troupe, Lowell’s Cambodian classical dance organization.</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Charles Towers hired as Artistic Director.</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>On MRT’s 25th anniversary, Mayor Rita Mercier presents the theatre a key to the City of Lowell.</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kegley hired as Executive Director.</td>
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<td>2015-16</td>
<td>Benjamin Scheuer’s solo musical <em>The Lion</em> launches national tour from MRT. Acclaimed production of <em>I and You</em> makes Off-Broadway transfer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>MRT to produce record number of world premieres tour – in 2016-17 Season.</td>
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**PRODUCTION HISTORY**

*World Premiere
+Regional Premiere

**2015-16**
+The Lion Written and performed by Benjamin Scheuer
  Directed by Sean Daniels
+I and You by Lauren Gunderson
  Directed by Sean Daniels
It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play Adapted by Joe Landry
  Directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian
* The White Chip by Sean Daniels
  Directed by Sheryl Kaller
+Tinker to Evers to Chance by Mat Smart
  Directed by Sean Daniels
* The Realness: a break beat play by Idris Goodwin
  Directed by Wendy C. Goldberg
*Home of the Brave by Lila Rose Kaplan
  Directed by Sean Daniels

**2014-15**
+ Year Zero by Michael Golamco
  Directed by Michael Bloom
+Dusk Rings a Bell by Stephen Belber
  Directed by Michael Bloom
+ 13 Things About Ed Carpolotti Book, music, and lyrics by Barry Kleinbort
  Based on a play by Jeffrey Hatcher
+ The Best Brothers by Daniel MacIvor
  Directed by Barry Kleinbort
+Oceanside by Nick Gandiello
  Directed by Melia Bensussen
+Out of the City by Leslie Ayvazian
  Directed by Christian Parker
+ The Outgoing Tide by Bruce Graham
  Directed by Charles Towers

**2013-14**
God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza, Translated by Christopher Hampton
Mrs. Mannerly by Jeffrey Hatcher
  Directed by Mark Shanahan
+Stella and Lou by Bruce Graham
  Directed by Charles Towers
+The Devil’s Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith by Angelo Parra
  Direction, Concept, and Musical Staging by Joe Brancato
+Equally Divided by Ronald Harwood
  Directed by Charles Towers
Talley’s Folly by Lanford Wilson
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
+The Complete History of Comedy (abridged) by Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor
  Directed by Kyle Fabel and Austin Tichenor

**2012-13**
*Homestead Crossing by William Donnelly
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
*Beat Generation (Staged Reading) by Jack Kerouac
  Directed by Charles Towers
Memory House by Kathleen Tolian
  Directed by Melia Bensussen
+Half ‘n Half ‘n Half by John Kolvenbach
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
Shakespeare’s Will by Yern Thiessen
  Directed by Miles Potter
Red by John Logan
  Directed by Charles Towers
Proof by David Auburn
  Directed by Christian Parker
Glengarry Glen Ross by David Mamet
  Directed by Charles Towers

**2011-12**
The Persian Quarter by Kathleen Cahill
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
This Verse Business by A.M. Dolan
  Directed by Gus Kaikkonen
*The Ultimate Christmas Show (abridged) by Reed Martin & Austin Tichenor
  Directed by Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor
The Voice of the Turtle by John Van Druten

**2010-11**
*The Complete World of Sports (abridged) by Reed Martin and Austin Tichenor
  Directed by Reed Martin & Austin Tichenor
Four Places by Joel Drake Johnson
  Directed by Charles Towers
+Beasley’s Christmas Party by C.W. Munger
  Directed by Charles Towers
Tryst by Karoline Leach
  Directed by Joe Brancato
*The Exceptionals by Bob Clyman
  Directed by Charles Towers
+Two Jews Walk into A War... by Seth Rozin
  Directed by Melia Bensussen
+A Picasso by Jeffrey Hatcher
  Directed by Charles Towers

**2009-10**
*Flings & Eros by The Flying Karamazov Brothers
  Directed by Paul Magid
The Seafarer by Conor McPherson
  Directed by Charles Towers
+Heroes by Gerald Sibley as, adapted by Tom Stoppard
  Directed by Carl Forsman
Fabuloso by John Kolvenbach
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
+Black Pearl Sing! by Frank Higgin
  Directed by Benny Ambush
*The Last Days of Mickey & Jean by Richard Dresser
  Directed by Charles Towers
+The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead by Robert Hewett
  Directed by Melia Bensussen

**2008-09**
The Fantasticks by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt
  Directed by Jonathan Silverstein and John Bell
Skylight by David Hare
  Direction, Concept, and Musical Staging by Joe Brancato
+A View of the Harbor by Richard Dresser
  Directed by Charles Towers
+Tranced by Bob Clyman
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
Bad Dates by Theresa Rebeck
  Directed by Adrianna Krsnansky
A Moon for the Misbegotten by Eugene O’Neill
  Directed by Edward Morgan

**2007-08**
+The Pursuit of Happiness by Richard Dresser
  Directed by Charles Towers
+Tunney/Shakespeare in Six Rounds by David E. Lane
  Directed by Charles Towers
Secret Order by Bob Clyman
  Directed by Charles Towers
2 Pianos 4 Hands by Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt
  Directed by Richard Greenblatt
+The Missionary Position by Keith Reddin
  Directed by Tracy Brigden
A Delicate Balance by Edward Albee
  Directed by Charles Towers
*The Four of Us by Itamar Moses
  Directed by Kyle Fabel

**2006-07**
+Augusta by Richard Dresser
  Directed by Charles Towers
Aunt Dan & Lemon by Wallace Shawn
  Directed by Melia Bensussen
Completely Hollywood (abridged) by Reed Martin, Austin Tichenor
  Directed by the Reduced Shakespeare Company
Trying by Joanna McClelland Glass
  Directed by Kyle Fabel
Dinah Was by Oliver Goldsticd
Directed by Charles Towers

Syncopation by Allan Knee
Directed by Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill

Secret Order by Bob Clyman
Directed by Charles Towers

2005-06
The Breadwinner by W. Somerset Maugham
Directed by Carl Forsman

*The Art of Sacrifice by Anthony Clarvoe
Directed by Charles Towers

Squeeze Box by Ann Randolph
Directed by Alan Bailey

Intimate Apparel by Lynn Nottage
Directed by Jane Page

Auntie and Me by Morris Panych
Directed by Munson Hicks

Real Hush Hush by John Corwin
Directed by Charles Towers

2004-05
The Complete History of America (abridged) by Adam Long, Reed Martin, and Austin Tichenor
Directed by the Reduced Shakespeare Company

The Price by Arthur Miller
Directed by Charles Towers

*The Kreutzer Sonata by Leo Tolstoy, adapted by Larry Pine
Directed by Larry Pine

Quartet by Ronald Harwood
Directed by Gavin Cameron-Webb

Constant Star by Tazewell Thompson
Directed by Tazewell Thompson

The Homecoming by Harold Pinter
Directed by Charles Towers

Pouring the Sun (special event) by Jay O'Callahan
Directed by Jay O'Callahan

2003-04
Three Songs by Craig Warner
Directed by Michael Canavan

Boy Gets Girl by Rebecca Gilman
Directed by Charles Towers

Looking Over the President's Shoulder by James Still
Directed by Seret Scott

An Infinite Ache by Jon Marans
Directed by Greg Leaning

Boston Marriage by David Mamet
Directed by Charles Towers

Something in the Air by Richard Dresser
Directed by Mela Bensussen

Rounding Third by Richard Dresser
Directed by Charles Towers

2002-03
*Fallen by Craig Warner
Directed by Charles Towers

The Woman in Black by Stephen Malatratt
Directed by Charles Towers

Sanders Family Christmas by Connie Ray and Alan Bailey
Directed by Alan Bailey

Old Wicked Songs by Jon Marans
Directed by Martin Platt

Women Who Steal by Carter W. Lewis
Directed by Martha Banta

The Drawer Boy by Michael Healey
Directed by Charles Towers

The Pavilion by Craig Wright
Directed by Brenda Fox

2001-02
Cookin' at the Cookery by Marian J. Cafey
Directed by Marion J. Cafey

Three Days of Rain by Richard Greenburg
Directed by Charles Towers

Sanders Family Christmas by Connie Ray and Alan Bailey
Directed by Alan Bailey

*Short Haired Grace by Bill Bruhl
Directed by Charles Towers

The Bible: The Complete Word of God (abridged) by Long, Martin & Tichenor
Directed by Reed Martin

The Weir by Conor McPherson
Directed by Burke Walker

Gun-Shy by Richard Dresser
Directed by Charles Towers

2000-01
Last of the Red Hot Lovers by Neil Simon
Directed by David Zoffoli

A Walk in the Woods by Lee Blessing
Directed by Alex Dmitriev

The Founder of the Feast by David G. Kent
Directed by David G. Kent

From the Mississippi Delta by Dr. Endesha Ida Mae Holland
Directed by Kaia Celnobun

King of the Moon, Over the Tavern Pt II by Tom Dudzik
Directed by Steve Stettler

Visiting Mr. Green by Jeff Baron

2000-02
Directed by Danny Gidron

ART by Yasmina Reza
Directed by David G. Kent

1999-2000
Picasso at the Lapin Agile by Steve Martin
Directed by David Zoffoli

Awake and Sing by Clifford Odets
Directed by David G. Kent

The Rainmaker by N. Richard Nash
Directed by Tom Markus

Cloud Tectonics by José Rivera
Directed by David G. Kent

Avenue X by Ray Leslee & Jon Jiler
Directed by John Ruocco

The Front Page by Ben Hecht & Charles MacArthur
Directed by Russell Treyz

Defying Gravity by Jane Anderson
Directed by David Zoffoli

1998-99
+Don't Dress for Dinner by Marc Camoletti, adapted by Robin Hawdon
Directed by David Zoffoli

Racing Demon by David Hare
Directed by David G. Kent

The Boys Next Door by Tom Griffin
Directed by Danny Peak

+Full Gallop by Mark Hampton & Mary Louise Wilson
Directed by David Zoffoli

Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose
Directed by David G. Kent

K2 by Patrick Meyers
Directed by Robert Walsh

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare
Directed by Russell Treyz

1997-98
Laughter on the 23rd Floor by Neil Simon
Directed by David Zoffoli

Long Day's Journey Into Night by Eugene O'Neill
Directed by David G. Kent

Shirley Valentine by Willy Russell
Directed by David Zoffoli

Nixon's Nixon by Russell Lees
Directed by David G. Kent

+Over the Tavern by Tom Dudzik
Directed by Geraldine LiBrandi

Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune by Terrence McNally
Directed by Vincent Murphy

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill by Lanie Robertson
Directed by Rob Ruggiero

1996-97
Italian American Reconciliation by John Patrick Shanley
Directed by Eli Simon

night Mother by Marsha Norman
Directed by David G. Kent

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Directed by David Zoffoli

Three Viewings by Jeffrey Hatcher
Directed by David G. Kent

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill by Lanie Robertson
Directed by Rob Ruggiero

Later Life by A.R. Gurney
Directed by Robert Walsh

Travels With My Aunt by Graham Green, adapted by Giles Havergal
Directed by David Zoffoli

1995-96
Light Up the Sky by Moss Hart
Directed by David Zoffoli

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee
Directed by David G. Kent

The Nightingale by Hans Christian Anderson
Directed by John T. Farrell

The Great Holiday Dinosaur Mystery by Dino Rock
Directed by Dino Rock

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe by Jane Wagner
Directed by David Zoffoli

Speed-The-Plow by David Mamet
Directed by David G. Kent

All in the Timing by David Ives
Directed by David Zoffoli

Hamlet by William Shakespeare
Directed by David G. Kent and David Zoffoli

1994-95
The Illusion by Tony Kushner
Directed by David G. Kent

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Directed by David G. Kent

Open Window by Brad Kornsmenter
Directed by David G. Kent

Holiday Memories by Truman Capote
Directed by Robert Walsh

All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten by Robert Fulghum
Directed by David Zoffoli

Oleanna by David Mamet
Directed by David G. Kent
If you were a Lowellian in the late 1970’s, you were witness to the formation of a National Historical Park, a wave of immigration from South Asia, and the establishment of the region’s first—and to this day, only—professional theatre. For $6.50, you could buy a ticket to top-notch live theatre from a company dedicated, from day one, to hiring the best professional actors, designers, directors, and stage managers.

The early years were funded on a shoestring and a prayer, but the company’s unflagging commitment to contemporary, relevant work of the highest artistic quality kept it going, season after season. Today, **MRT remains a professional, Equity, non-profit company committed to bringing great contemporary theatre to the city of Lowell**—with a special emphasis on new work that’s both exciting and accessible. It is now one of three LORT theatres in Massachusetts, with an over $2,000,000 operating budget and nearly 4,000 subscribers, living up to its reputation as a true cultural treasure of the Merrimack Valley.

**LOWELL’S THEATRE**

When Merrimack Repertory Theatre opened its doors in 1979, the city of Lowell was in the early stages of an economic revival that would help it become the vibrant cultural center it is today. The Lowell National Historical Park had opened the year before with the mission of preserving the city’s industrial past, and in the decades ahead, the city would welcome a host of new cultural institutions to its streets: the Lowell Folk Festival; a multitude of museums and art galleries; the Angkor Dance Troupe; the Lowell Spinners minor league baseball team. An ever-evolving city, its motto rings true: “Art is the Handmaid of Human Good.”
Set on the banks of the Merrimack River, ten mill complexes once sprawled over Lowell's nearly six miles of canals, employing thousands upon thousands; the city was the breeding ground of both the Industrial Revolution and the Labor Movement in America.

And while the river drove the city's rise, Lowell's heart has always been its people. Many early workers were "mill girls" who left their farm homes for the mills' boardinghouses. As the country's demographics shifted, so did Lowell's, as immigrants from scores of nations came to live and work in its brick buildings. Though manufacturing began its decline in the late 1920's, Lowell has survived, and flourished. Over 90% of its downtown mill space is now rehabilitated for new use, and art galleries, performance spaces, restaurants, businesses, and housing fill the long brick corridors. A tremendously diverse city, Lowell is committed to letting creativity and art drive its business and its future, providing resources for artists and an environment where creative work can thrive. Merrimack Repertory Theatre is the only professional theatre in the Merrimack Valley, and it finds itself right at home in Lowell; like the company's namesake river, powering the city, and nurturing the citizens that are its heart.

SOURCES:
Lowell Historical Society Timeline: http://www.lowellhistoricalsociety.org/lowell_history.htm
Park Handbook, Lowell National Historical Park:
http://www.nps.gov/lowe/historyculture/park-handbook.htm
Fresh Face: Sean Daniels

Sean Daniels is taking over the reins of artistic director at Merrimack Repertory Theatre
PHOTOS BY MEGHAN MOORE

Dad’s Garage might seem an unlikely name for a theatre company, until one of its cofounders is revealed to be director Sean Daniels, who, at the time of its inception, was 22 years old, flying by the seat of his pants and holding fast to fraying purse strings. That was nearly 20 years ago. The money never ran out, and the show still goes on.

An accomplished director and creator of new works, Daniels was recently appointed Merrimack Repertory Theatre’s (MRT) new artistic director. Named by American Theatre magazine as “one of the top 15 up-and-coming artists in the United States, whose work will be transforming America’s stages for decades to come,” Daniels brings to MRT’s stage a trove of ideas, a cache of connections, and an enthusiasm impossible to contain.

His most recent credits include a stint as artist-at-large at the Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, New York; four years as associate artistic director at the Tony Award-winning Actors Theatre of Louisville, where he directed 17 productions including five Humana Festivals; and time as associate artistic director and resident director of the California Shakespeare Theater, where he was in charge of all the young audience programs (while there, he quadrupled the number of young people attending the theatre).

The secret to his success? Excellent audience engagement. “People always want to see themselves on stage,” notes Daniels, who started staging plays written and acted by people in their 20s at Dad’s Garage. At work was his notion that if you want people to come see your shows, you need to speak their language, or teach them yours.

Imperative to Daniels’s objective as a director is this idea of how to engage not just the audience but also the community at large, particularly on behalf of a larger institution like MRT.
While at the Geva Theatre, he conceived and implemented the Co-hort Club—a group of 20 Rochester residents of various ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds who were granted access to the entire creative process. Participants went to rehearsals, saw previews, attended openings, and spoke directly with Daniels, the playwright, and the actors in order to gain a fuller understanding of what’s involved in producing a show.

“Each of those cohort members [acquired] such a fluency in terms of what it takes to make theatre— who does it, the difference between local theatre and a tour, a League of Residential Theatres venue versus a nonprofit...all these things that we say, but they don’t always understand,” explains Daniels.

Inspired by a Chinese proverb that translates to, “Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand,” Daniels plans to bring the nationally recognized audience engagement programs he developed at Geva to MRT. “I want to figure out a way to really use this place as a community center, where people can get involved and learn more about what the art form is,” he says. “Then, they [will] invest more in it because they can understand it. Education breeds excitement.”

As he did at Geva, Daniels will look for 20 to 30 individuals who reflect Lowell’s demographics. In this way, he hopes to engage new community members, in addition to those already attending the theatre. “There are two ways to create audience engagement: One is to attract new people, the other is to deepen your engagement with the people you already have. This is a way to do both.” Opening the doors and offering a greater level of transparency will help keep the audience they have and diversify future audiences.

Cohort participants will be asked to write about their experiences and “publish” them in their communities—whether that’s via social media or a church newsletter or through storytelling. “That’s a way for us to get the word out...it markets the theatre in their own language,” notes Daniels, who believes this approach is the difference between friends’ recommendations and mass media messaging. “It’s not just us saying it’s great—someone involved in it is saying so.”

With respect to MRT’s current audience, Daniels shows much admiration. “The thing that is different and a plus about this audience is that [they] are committed to the theatre, not just the names of the shows, which is why I think the theatre is able to do so much contemporary work and take risks in terms of its programming.” It seems most large theatres are forced to do familiar plays in order to keep a full house. According to Daniels,
MRT’s audience, though it may look like other audiences, differs in terms of the depth of their dedication to the company.

It’s that commitment that has him feeling hopeful MRT can become one of the great theatres for new play production in the country. “We can start programming plays we think are going to take off and travel to the rest of the world.” Of particular interest to Daniels are comedic works. The entire regional theatre movement “grew up as serious theatre” in order to be taken seriously. Daniels thinks an opportunity has been missed. There are many theatres producing new plays, but, says Daniels, “There are not a lot of joyful new plays being done.” Comedy writers are instantly swept into television. “Getting writers to come back to the theatre to write comedy is something nobody else is doing,” he notes. But it is something MRT will actively look to do when planning future seasons.

In terms of putting together a winning season, variety is key. “Planning a season is a bit like planning a great dinner party,” says Daniels. “You have to figure out who goes with whom—one loud guy is fine, but two loud guys is a disaster.” When lining up shows, Daniels considers what it would mean to watch all the plays and looks for “the conversation” happening between them. “We hear from our audience that they love to be challenged and they also love to have fun. They never want to have a season where it is just one or the other.”

Daniels plans to work, not only with the internationally recognized artists with whom he already has relationships, but with Boston–based artists as well. “It’s very important to me that the [greater] Boston community feels like we are engaging with them, and this is a home for area artists.” Daniels and his colleagues track where the next great artists are coming from and where plays are being produced. “For us to position ourselves as that [place] is an exciting thing for the theatre to do.” His aim is to do work that will have a long life in the American theatre canon. “Some shows should start here,” he says, “and then, in a year or two, everyone will be doing them.”

Gathering people together to see the world through somebody else’s eyes and to experience empathy is also very important to Daniels, who thinks turning off one’s phone and listening to someone’s story for two hours is one of the most radical acts that can happen these days. “I love to be able to be a revolutionary in that [way].”

Daniels is quick to credit former artistic director Charles Tower with having built the theatre into one in which the audience knows the shows will always be good—full of high-level writing and fantastic acting. He also readily recognizes the people of Lowell: “This community has such civic pride around the town and around the theatre,” enthuses Daniels. “By giving them more information and allowing them to run with it, I think we can make big things happen here.”

ABOUT THE THEATRE

MRT has been the only professional theatre in Massachusetts’ Merrimack Valley since its founding in 1979. The 36-year-old company attracts more than 35,000 audience members each year. Its September through May season of seven productions features primarily contemporary work and frequently regional and world premieres. It has become known for its high production standards and is a centerpiece of the region’s cultural identity.

Director of marketing and public relations Kate Brandt says, “MRT is easily accessible and there’s plenty of parking. You don’t have to drive to Boston to get really high-quality, affordable theatre. We are for people who want to add a little variety to their theatrical diet, and are looking for something that is more intimate—who want to get a bit adventurous. But it is going to be some-thing familiar, too.” mrt.org
LOWELL -- Merrimack Repertory Theatre has often been called the region's best-kept secret, and its new artistic director is hoping to shed that title.

Looking to raise the profile of MRT is Sean Daniels, who was announced Monday as the organization's fourth artistic director. He replaces Charles Towers, who is stepping down from the position he has held for 14 years at the end of the current season. Daniels has already begun to work with MRT staff to plan the 2015-2016 season, and will be on site full time beginning July 15. He has signed a five-year contract.

"I truly believe there is no other theater as prepped for growth as Merrimack Rep is," Daniels said in an exclusive interview with The Sun. "Everybody does new plays, but most people do them in April, in a second space, as part of a festival. There's really no other theater in the country I know that does new work all year long and has an audience which is game for that."

He said the audience's trust in the programming of MRT is a tribute to the work and vision of Towers, who laid the strong foundation Daniels now has the opportunity to build upon.

According to Kate Brandt, director of marketing and public relations for MRT, the 36-year-old organization worked with Albert Hall & Associates, a national search firm that specializes in the arts, to seek candidates following Towers' announcement in the spring that he would be stepping down.

There were more than 100 applicants for the position, Brandt said.

In a six-month process, that number was then pared to 15 by a search committee consisting of members of the board of directors, which chose seven to interview in the first round, Brandt said. Only three finalists were invited back for second interviews, and from there, Daniels was unanimously chosen to be Towers' successor, she said.

"The entire board is confident that Sean will build upon the exceptional reputation MRT has earned for artistic excellence over the years, bringing the theater to new heights and instilling a new sense of excitement that our subscribers, patrons and supporters are bound to enjoy," said Stephen Irish, trustees' president and search-committee chairman.

Executive Director Elizabeth Kegley said Daniels has "an impressive breadth of experience," and she's excited to have someone coming on board that is committed to doing new work and raising the national profile of MRT while remaining focused on its local and regional artists.
"He will be a terrific asset to our community, nurturing the work of talented artists and enthusiastically engaging with our audiences, and a fantastic partner, as he recognizes and is ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of managing a nonprofit theater company," she said.

Daniels, 41, has a theater career spanning two decades and holds a bachelor degree in theater from Florida State University. In 1995, in partnership with eight friends from college, Daniels co-founded Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta, which quickly became nationally known and recognized for its youthful, edgy flair. At the time, the average theater audience member in the country was a 57-year-old married woman, but at Dad's Garage, the average was a 27-year-old single male, he said.

"I think the reason we had so many young audiences was that we were young, and we looked around and we couldn't see ourselves anywhere on stage," Daniels said. "So we started creating work and finding playwrights that were doing that, and the great lesson was, everyone wants to see themselves on stage -- but if you ever come and you watch a series of shows and you're not up there, eventually you stop coming."

Daniels stayed there for nine years before moving on to become the associate artistic director/resident director at the California Shakespeare Theater in Berkeley. He has also served as associate artistic director of the Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky, known for its Humana Festival of New American Plays, and most recently held the title of artist-at-large at the Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, N.Y.

Daniels said his aim is to bring to MRT the best components of his last two jobs, which were to "figure out how to make a world-class organization for new work, and also one where the audience feels like they own it and they get to be a part of it, and that it's their theater."

One of the initiatives he plans to institute at MRT is the Cohort Club, a nationally recognized model for inspiring audiences, started at Geva.

"It's like an audience immersion program, where we let 20 community members be a part of the entire process of putting a play together, from beginning to end," Daniels said.

"They get to be in the rehearsal room, they get to come to production meetings, they get to watch previews -- and I know for the Geva Theatre, it's really reoriented how they respond to the community and what that community thinks about it."

Follow Alana Melanson at facebook.com/alana.lowellsun or on Twitter @alanamelanson.

Read more: http://www.lowellsun.com/todaysheadlines/ci_27145667/new-merrimack-repertory-theatre-chief-hopes-raise-curtain#ixzz3Yc9Z3mal
Reviewers, journalists, bloggers, and others writing about MRT are encouraged to request more information about the theatre. To request complimentary tickets for reviewers or to be added to our press list, email your name, affiliation, and contact information.

**Contact**

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**Reviewing**

Reviewers and bloggers interested in publishing a review of a production are encouraged to attend press performances on the first Saturday evening (Opening Night) or first Sunday matinee of each production.

**News**

Read press releases at [mrt.org/news](http://mrt.org/news) and blog posts at [mrt.org/blog](http://mrt.org/blog)  
Access press resource pages for each production at [mrt.org/media-relations](http://mrt.org/media-relations)

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