
WHAT: New Leadership at Company of Fools
WHO: Company of Fools: A Proud Part of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts
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Ketchum, ID — Feb. 21, 2018 — The Sun Valley Center for the Arts is pleased to announce a leadership transition at Company of Fools (COF), the award-winning professional theatre company based at the historic Liberty Theater in Hailey. The following changes will take place over the course of the month of February 2018.



R.L. Rowsey

R.L. Rowsey, a long-standing Company of Fools artist who has been involved in countless COF productions, returned on Feb. 5 to serve as COF's Season Producer. Rowsey, who has long been a beloved presence and integral part of the Wood River Valley's performing arts community, will work part time over the next several months to execute the remainder of COF's 22nd theatre season. He will also help shape and guide the Company's 23rd season, which includes productions that begin this summer and run through the spring of 2019.

Rowsey's life in the arts began in Richmond, Virginia, where he studied voice and piano at Virginia Commonwealth University and directed dozens of musicals at local theatres. He then moved to the suburbs of Washington, D.C., where he served as Musical Director for a new American opera, sang the title role in Michael Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, and both taught and directed at The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The Studio Theatre and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. He later worked as Musical Director and Conductor for the national tours of several Broadway musicals. After a short tenure as Associate Producing Artistic Director for TheatreVirginia, Rowsey returned to the road as General Manager for one of the nation's leading producers of national tours.

In 2000, Rowsey and his partner, John Glenn, relocated to Hailey, Idaho, to work with the newly established Company of Fools. Rowsey will continue his work as Education Artistic Director for the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, Music Director for Light on the Mountains Center for Spiritual Living, and conductor for Caritas Chorale.



Kent Thompson

Joining Rowsey at the helm of COF is another seasoned theatre professional—producer, director and theatre consultant **Kent Thompson**—who will serve as COF's Interim Producing Director for the next six months. During this time, Thompson will bring his considerable industry experience to bear in helping to assess COF's unique strengths and determine how to best frame, focus and structure the company for the future.

Thompson's impressive background includes a wide variety of leadership and management roles at theatre organizations across the country. He most recently served as Producing Artistic Director of Denver Center Theater Company (DCTC), where he spent the past 12 seasons (2005–2017) producing and directing more than 120 plays; managing creative staff and artists; developing the theatre's artistic and strategic vision; and promoting the organization at the local, regional and national levels. Prior to his tenure at DCTC, Thompson was Producing Artistic Director at Alabama Shakespeare Company (1989–2005) and served for eight years on the Board of Directors of Theater Communications Group, the national organization for the professional nonprofit theatre, of which Company of Fools was the first theatre in Idaho to be awarded Constituent Theatre status. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the College of William and Mary and an alumnus of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

The Sun Valley Center for the Arts' leadership and Board of Directors are thrilled to have Rowsey and Thompson coming on board to help imagine and facilitate the next chapter for COF. "R.L.'s knowledge of the community, his artistic voice and his long history with COF combined with Kent's extensive experience growing and guiding successful theater companies is an incredible combination of talent that promises to help us create a vibrant path forward," said Kristin Poole, Artistic Director at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts. "It's exciting work—work that we are all eager to begin."

The Center is also grateful to Ilana Becker, who joined COF in January 2017 as Associate Artistic Director and served for several months in an interim leadership capacity following the death of Artistic Director John Glenn. Ilana has stepped down as Interim Artistic Director and has resigned from her position at Company of Fools. Becker's dedication and passion for her craft guided the COF through an especially difficult period and enabled the seamless continuity of the 22nd season's productions and education programs. She will return to the Wood River Valley this spring to direct the *A Bee Mini-Musical* (working title), with student matinees April 19 & 20 and public performances at the Liberty Theater on Saturday, April 21, at 6 p.m. and Sunday, April 22, at 2pm.

For more information about Company of Fools and the Sun Valley Center for the Arts, visit www.sunvalleycenter.org.

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VISUALS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

For more information on this program or upcoming programs, please contact the Sun Valley Center for the Arts at 208.726.9491, information@sunvalleycenter.org, or visit our website sunvalleycenter.org.

Sun Valley Center for the Arts is located at 191 Fifth Street East in Ketchum, Idaho, in Hailey at 314 South Second Avenue and at The Liberty Theatre at 110 North Main St, Hailey. Ketchum hours are 9am–5pm Monday through Friday year-round and 11am–5pm on Saturdays in February and March and July and August.

Established in 1971, the mission of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts is to enrich our community through transformative arts and education experiences. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Center's year-round programming includes Company of Fools' professionally produced theatre, visual arts exhibitions featuring regionally and nationally recognized artists, lectures, concerts, film, dance, classes in visual and performing arts, play readings and BIG IDEA multidisciplinary projects that explore a theme or idea through multiple events and disciplines. In addition, The Center works to

enhance arts education in Blaine County schools by providing elementary school theater education, student exhibition tours, in-school artist residencies and performances, arts-based classroom enrichment projects, student and teacher scholarships and professional development programs for classroom teachers. More than 40,000 people attend these events annually. Our programs are supported through the Engl Trust, the Idaho Commission on the Arts, the Idaho Humanities Council, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, private foundations, proceeds from the Sun Valley Center for the Arts Wine Auction, grants, donations and membership dues.

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