



NEW VILLAGE ARTS

MEDIA ALERT

New Village Arts Announces Founder and Executive Artistic Director Kristianne Kurner's Final Season with a Landmark 25th Anniversary Celebration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARLSBAD, Calif. — New Village Arts (NVA) has announced that its 2026–2027 season—the company's 25th Anniversary Season—will be the final season under the leadership of Founder and Executive Artistic Director Kristianne Kurner, whose vision and dedication have helped shape the organization into one of Southern California's most adventurous, diverse and acclaimed professional theatres and community arts centers.

This exciting and musical-heavy anniversary season will celebrate New Village Arts' remarkable history while honoring Kurner's tenacious tenure leading the organization. NVA started in Carlsbad's The Granary (a converted chicken coop) in 2001, spent the next five years making theatre in the corporate headquarters of Jazzercise, Inc, and moved to the historic Bauer Lumber Building in the heart of Carlsbad Village in 2006-7, supported by the building's owners, the City of Carlsbad. In 2023, NVA completed a multi-million dollar renovation of the facility, reopening as the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center, only the second arts center in the United States to be named in honor of a Black woman. The company re-opened with a sold-out run of the premiere outside of London and New York of Jez Butterworth's unforgettably epic play *THE FERRYMAN*, directed by Kurner.

"There is nothing else like live theatre for bringing a community together. We sit in the dark and listen to stories outside of our own lived experience, leaving the theatre feeling more alive than when we entered. Theatregoers start to breathe together - their hearts start to sync up. It's been the honor of my life to create these experiences for our community for the past 25 years," said Kristianne Kurner. "And don't get me started about the people - our village - who have made it all possible: the extraordinary artists, staff, board members, volunteers, donors, and audiences. I have been surrounded by the most inspiring people over these 25 years and I am entirely grateful. Ending my tenure with our 25th Anniversary Season feels especially meaningful because this milestone belongs to everyone who has believed in New Village Arts over the years."

During Kurner's leadership, New Village Arts has become known for bold artistic programming, meaningful community partnerships, and a commitment to producing work that reflects the diversity and complexity of the region it serves. The company has expanded arts education, cultivated new audiences, developed innovative collaborations, and remained steadfast in its



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mission to create adventurous artistic experiences for—and with—the community. Kurner has directed over 40 productions during her tenure and produced over 130 plays and musicals. She has created an/or grown community programs like the Mainstage Players, Mindful Theatre, A Walk With Yaamay, Feelin' Good, and the Dea Hurston Fellowship.

Kurner's final directing project, *AS YOU LIKE IT*, Laurie Woolery and Shaina Taub's joyful musical adaptation of Shakespeare's beloved comedy, reflects many of the themes that have defined her artistic vision: transformation, belonging, resilience, and the power of community. Her final season as producer will conclude with *IN THE HEIGHTS*, the Tony Award-winning musical celebrating family, neighborhood, identity, and hope—a fitting finale for a leader who has dedicated her career to creating theatre that welcomes everyone and a wonderful send-off as she returns to New York City in the Fall of 2027.

"Reflecting on the past 25 years, Kristianne should feel an immense sense of pride. What she's created at New Village Arts has had a real and lasting impact—not just artistically, but in how it has brought people together, strengthened the community, and elevated what's possible for a regional arts organization. It's been an honor to be even a small part of that journey, and I'm deeply appreciative of the partnership we've shared over the years," said Dan Yates, CEO/Founder of Endeavor Bank and Chair of the Prebys Foundation. He continued: "Getting an organization to a place where it can truly stand on its own is no small feat. That kind of transition—from founder-led to a successor leader—is one of the hardest and most important evolutions, and it says a lot about Kristianne's vision, discipline, and long-term commitment that New Village Arts is ready for it."

While the 25th Anniversary Season marks the conclusion of Kurner's tenure as Executive Artistic Director, it also represents a new chapter for New Village Arts. The organization remains committed to its mission of producing bold, inclusive, and transformative theatre while continuing to deepen its relationships throughout North County San Diego and beyond. The Board of Directors has created a Search Committee to find the next leader for the organization and is dedicated to ensuring a smooth and successful transition.

"Kristianne has led New Village Arts with extraordinary creativity, courage, and heart," said Milena Sellers-Phillips, Chair of the New Village Arts Board of Directors. "Her impact can be seen not only on our stages, but throughout our community. The 25th Anniversary Season will be a celebration of everything New Village Arts has accomplished under her leadership and the strong foundation she leaves for the future."

The Cultural Arts Manager of the City of Carlsbad, Craddock Stropes, had this to say, "Kristianne's done phenomenal work at New Village Arts; 'proud' doesn't even begin to capture it. She has been absolutely transformative for the organization, the city and the arts community across the region.



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Her impact will reverberate for many, many years to come. Bonus that she is leaving a solid foundation for new generations of leadership to build upon. Now that's a rare achievement!"

Additional details about the anniversary season, special events, and opportunities to celebrate Kurner's legacy will be announced in the coming months.

About New Village Arts

Celebrating 25 years of award-winning professional theatre and thriving education and outreach programs, New Village Arts (NVA) has truly become the cultural hub of North County San Diego. NVA attracts more than 30,000 patrons each year to experience professional theatre, music and art events in the heart of Carlsbad Village. In addition to full seasons of plays and musicals featuring some of the best artistic talent in Southern California, NVA hosts talkback discussions and other supplementary events designed to create conversation and cultivate community. The White Family Next Stage in the Dea Hurston New Village Arts Center presents a series of music, comedy, and improv events throughout the year. NVA offers robust theatre programs in partnership with local schools and strongly believes that theatre and arts experiences should be accessible to all people, becoming a recognized leader in equity, diversity, and inclusion in San Diego. NVA has been fortunate to receive support from the City of Carlsbad and other local businesses, who recognize the importance of a resident professional theatre company as a crucial component of an inclusive and creative community. In turn NVA prioritizes serving its community by presenting works that respect its diversity, engaging every citizen with relevant and inspiring stories.

New Village Arts is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization listed
under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS.

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