

## **Bio of Anita Stewart, Portland Stage Company, Maine**

Anita Stewart is one of the few professional theater designers in the United States serving in a leadership role at a regional theater. As Executive & Artistic Director, Stewart is responsible for keeping Portland Stage's mission and vision in focus on stage and off.

During her tenure at Portland Stage, Stewart has made a commitment to combine the best local talent with exceptional artists from around the country to create productions described by patrons in audience surveys as "...theater at its powerful best. and "...a real accomplishment for a regional theater to take on cultural and politically sensitive issues ...and to do it so successfully."

Stewart's passion and commitment for education is evidenced by Portland Stage's ever expanding K-12 programs based on Common Core Standards. These programs reached over 13,000 students this year, and connect students to the meaning behind language, promote collaboration and innovation and develop critical thinking skills. Stewart developed Culture Club-Portland, with three major arts institutions in Portland and an anonymous donor. Culture Club-Portland is a funding vehicle designed to provide every student in the Portland Public School district with access to art experiences at each of these institutions on a yearly basis every year from K-12.

The theater's Artistic Development and Dialogue programs, shaped under Stewart's tenure, are specifically designed to nurture developing artists as well as cultivate the skills of seasoned professionals. From the prestigious Clauder Competition for New England Playwrights to new play festivals, Stewart is devoted to developing new work for the field. Stewart also instigated the creation of the Maine Theater Collective a consortium of theater organizations across the state that facilitates communication and provides a collective marketing tool.

As an integral member of the national arts community, Stewart finds time to participate in granting panels for organizations across the country including: Maine Arts Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Theatre Communications Group and the Alpert Awards.

Stewart graduated from Yale University and Yale School of Drama. She is a member of United Scenic Artists 829 in set and costume design. She has taught at the University of Iowa, Iowa City and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Stewart has designed sets/costumes for numerous organizations including: American Repertory Theater, Cambridge MA; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Harvey Theater, Brooklyn, NY; Boston Lyric Opera, Boston MA; Boise Contemporary Theater, Boise Idaho; Canadian Opera Company, Toronto Canada; Center Stage, Baltimore MD; CSC Repertory Theater, NYC; Court Theater, Chicago IL; Dallas Theater Center, Dallas TX; Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis MN; Hartford Stage, Hartford CT; McCarter Theater, Princeton, NJ; Minnesota Opera Theater, Minneapolis MN; New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, NJ; New York Theater Workshop, NYC; Seattle Repertory Theater, Seattle WA; Shakespeare Theater, Washington D.C.; and Steppenwolf, Chicago, IL

She also worked with photographer Richard Avedon on exhibits of his photos appearing in the Pittsburgh Biennial and for his retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Art in NYC.