

Nataki Garrett Biography



A change-maker and trailblazer, Nataki Garrett is a nationally recognized director and the sixth Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), the first woman to artistically lead a \$44 million theater company and OSF's first Black female in this role.

Born and raised in Oakland, stemming from a family of educators, artists and community organizers— she garnered a deep appreciation for theater and for telling the untold stories not typically seen on the main stage.

Since her appointment in April of 2019, she has guided the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic and tragic local fires, galvanizing a cohort of Oregon arts leaders and securing \$8 million for the state's performing arts organizations from the federal relief fund package. She is currently leading the charge to mobilize theatre organizations across the nation to procure long-term federal government support to ensure the theatre industry's reemergence post-pandemic.

Garrett's forté and passion is fostering and developing new work, including those that adapt and devise new ways of performing the classics. An example of her innovative approach to traditional theater is "Quills Fest," Oregon Shakespeare Festival's first immersive digital event, which she launched in November 2021. The event included a series of visuals and conversations online, enabling audience members to see and experience the intersection of live theater and (extended) virtual reality (VR).

In addition, she has directed and produced the world premieres of many well-known and important playwriting voices of our time, including Katori Hall, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Dominique Morriseau and Aziza Barnes. Her credits at OSF include directing a beautifully successful production of Christina Anderson's *How to Catch Creation* and producing the world premiere of Karen Zacarias's *The Copper Children*. Prior to her appointment at OSF, Garrett served as the Acting Artistic Director for Denver Center for the Performing Arts Theatre Company (DCPA) during the \$66 million organization's 18-month leadership transition. During her tenure, she produced a very provocative *Macbeth*, which became the most successful production in the Space Theatre's 40-year history.

Garrett has served on nominating committees for the MacArthur Award, the Kilroys, Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust Distinguished Playwright Award, Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship panel, Mellon Foundation Playwrights Award Panel, the Hermitage Greenfield Prize, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, several NEA panels, and countless juries supporting artists around the world.

Garrett is a recipient of the first-ever Ammerman Prize for Directing, given by Arena Stage. She also received the National Endowment for the Arts and Theatre Communications Group Career Development Fellowship for Theatre Directors. She is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and a member of the board of directors for Theatre Communications Group, a company member at Woolly Mammoth, and an advisory board member for Mixed Blood Theatre. Garrett is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts with an MFA in directing.

Garrett served as executive producer for “YOU GO GIRL!”, a short film that was selected to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2022.

A frequently sought out voice for her thought leadership and subject matter expertise, Nataki can be read, watched or listened to regularly, across regional and national news media.