

A large outdoor theater at night, filled with a diverse audience. Two actors in period costumes are performing on a wooden stage. The scene is illuminated by stage lights, with trees visible in the background.

AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR POSITION PROFILE

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[AMERICANPLAYERS.ORG/ADSEARCH](https://americanplayers.org/adsearch)**



THE OPPORTUNITY

APT is conducting a leadership search for an Artistic Director at a significant institutional moment. The organization approaches this transition from a position of genuine strength — a clear and well-articulated identity, a deeply committed ensemble, a loyal audience, and a stable financial foundation.

This is a rare opportunity to lead an organization that already knows what it is, that has the courage to name its non-negotiables, and that is genuinely aligned – across artists, staff, board, and audience – on the values that matter most. The right leader will embrace this clarity as a gift rather than a burden.

The incoming Artistic Director will not be called upon to rescue or reinvent APT. They will be called upon to understand it deeply, lead it with integrity, and help it grow into the next chapter.



CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

First and foremost, the Artistic Director sets and fulfills the artistic vision in a manner in keeping with APT's mission and values.

Artistic Planning and Programming

The Artistic Director leads season planning, including play selection, choosing directors and design teams, casting, and production development. They also oversee related artistic programs such as The Language Project, the apprentice program, and Winter Words reading series.

Managing Artistic Standards and Aesthetics

The Artistic Director defines and upholds artistic standards and aesthetics, builds relationships with current and prospective artists, and works with artistic leaders to manage directors, actors, designers, voice and text coaches, and other specialists while ensuring quality work and a strong creative experience.

Key Artist

The Artistic Director typically contributes as a practicing theater artist each season, most often by directing one production, or by serving in another artistic role such as designer or actor when appropriate.

Company Culture

The Artistic Director helps steward APT's collaborative and inclusive culture by modeling values, communication, and relationships that shape how people work together. They support artist development, rigorous and trusting creative processes, and APT's ongoing Equity and Belonging commitments.

Organizational Leadership

The Artistic Director co-leads with the Managing Director, balancing artistic ambition with operational sustainability. They partner transparently with the Board, engage in budgeting, co-lead the Leadership Team, and remain accountable, open, and accessible to colleagues across the organization.

External Relations & Community Stewardship

The Artistic Director serves as APT's visible public representative, communicating the mission, work, and culture to donors, press, peers, and the community. They support fundraising relationships, stay embedded locally, and engage peer organizations as both learner and resource.



VALUABLE EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

There are no required credentials, such as specific years of experience or degrees, to be considered for this position. This is intentional: the process is designed to be equitable and open to a wide range of candidates. The screening committee will consider the following experiences and skills when identifying candidates for the role.

- Artistic leadership at a scale and complexity comparable to APT, or the tools and experience to adapt to it, along with familiarity with the operational realities of a professional theater.
- A service-driven leadership orientation and exceptional, authentic communication across diverse stakeholder groups.
- Aesthetic acumen, including the ability to recognize and strive for excellence in the work on stage.
- Expertise in classical and poetic text, especially but not limited to Shakespeare, including its demands on actors and the conditions needed for it to land with clarity and power.
- Proven ability to build and sustain ensemble culture through authentic relationships with artists and staff, high standards of craft, and practices consistent with APT's values.
- Experience working in genuine partnership with a managing leader, artistic team, and staff, with a deep commitment to institutional fiscal health and sustainability.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity in casting, hiring, dramaturgy, and institutional experiences.
- Active practice as a theater artist, especially as a director.
- Strategic thinker skilled at balancing competing priorities and working self-sufficiently with minimal administrative support.



BENEFICIAL LEADERSHIP & INTERPERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

APT's Essence Document is explicit: how we do our work is as important as the work we do. This section outlines personal and leadership traits that the Artistic Director will need to accomplish this goal.

- **Mission and Improvement:** Serves APT with humility, honors its legacy, and advances excellence through continuous learning.
- **Purpose-Driven Vision:** Inspires the organization while staying grounded in APT's mission, place, language, and community.
- **Integrity and Empathy:** Communicates courageously, welcomes difficult truths, and balances high standards with respect and care.
- **Personal Accountability:** Stays steady under criticism, owns mistakes and outcomes, and avoids defensiveness or blame.
- **Leading Through Complexity:** Names competing priorities, convenes stakeholders, and makes balanced decisions honoring APT's identity and aspirations.



AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE OVERVIEW

Introduction

APT occupies a singular place in American theater. Located near rural Spring Green, WI, APT has spent decades building something that is genuinely difficult to name but impossible to mistake when you experience it — a convergence of language, landscape, community, and trust that creates not only extraordinary theater experiences but also an environment of belonging for artists and audiences alike.

MISSION

APT's mission is to perform timeless, challenging poetic plays — with Shakespeare at the center — to as broad an audience as possible. We strive to share our understanding that great poetry and stories, both from our past and from the emerging voices of our future, can illuminate the ever-expanding experience of what it is to be human.

Location, Venue and Scale

APT is located on 110 wooded acres four miles south of Spring Green, Wisconsin, a small village (population 1,566) 40 miles west of Madison. From June through October, APT produces approximately 200 performances of eight plays in rotating repertory. Five productions are staged in the outdoor Hill Theatre, APT's flagship 1,000-seat amphitheater. Three productions take place in the 200-seat indoor Touchstone Theatre. A ninth production closes out the season in the Touchstone Theatre in October and November.

Production shops begin building for the season in mid-April and rehearsal begins in late April/early May. Five plays (three on the Hill, two in the Touchstone) open in June, and three more (two on the Hill, one in the Touchstone) open in August.

In addition to the theaters, APT's campus houses all production facilities, including shops, storage, administrative offices, and rehearsal halls. Public areas include dozens of acres maintained for picnicking and nature hikes, and many patrons arrive well before the performance to enjoy the grounds. The Hill Theatre is a 10-minute walk on a wooded path from the picnic area, and shuttle buses are available for those who would rather ride. The Touchstone Theatre is a 5-minute walk from the picnic area through restored prairie land.

The theater has 38 year-round staff members, and seasonal staff which brings the total staff count to nearly 300. The annual budget is \$10.7 million.

APT History

APT was founded by Charles Bright, Randall Duk Kim, and Anne Occhiogrosso who had a vision to create a center for classical theater. The founders searched throughout Wisconsin to find a location for their theater that was in proximity to potential audiences but outside an urban center. Their vision was to perform classics “complete and uncut” and to focus on craft, “to be guided and taught by the texts themselves and to bring into being a truly versatile team of men and women who are capable of skillful, intelligent, impassioned, and revealing stage work.”

The site on which APT settled was a farmstead located four miles outside Spring Green and less than two miles from the Wisconsin River and Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright’s home and school. The first performance was *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* on July 18, 1980.

David Frank was appointed Artistic Director in 1991 and became Producing Artistic Director in 2005. During his tenure, the Core Acting Company and Apprentice Program were established. In 2009, he led the effort to open the 200-seat indoor Touchstone Theatre which allowed APT to extend the season and expand the dramaturgy.

Brenda DeVita was appointed Artistic Director in 2014, following two decades on the artistic staff. She worked alongside David Frank to develop the Core Acting Company and the Acting Apprentice Program. As Artistic Director, Brenda DeVita developed APT’s Voice and Text Program, launched the Creating the Classics of Tomorrow new play development program, and the Language Project training program.



APT'S WORK AND THE PEOPLE WHO CREATE IT

What makes APT genuinely unusual is its culture: rigorous work, real relationships, and values that are lived rather than merely stated. The rural Wisconsin landscape gives artists space to recharge and focus, fostering a strong ensemble, a passionate audience, and an identity rooted in authenticity.

APT is devoted to creating a unique and personal experience for the audience through clear and compelling storytelling inside of language-based, poetic plays. We believe that works widely regarded as classics are relevant and powerful today, but we are also uniquely positioned to seek out and explore work with potential to become classics for future generations. We also seek out classic stories from across the world to include in our repertory. Diversity and representation are central: half of the acting company and one third of guest artists identify as people of color.

APT is dedicated to individual and collective excellence, believing how we create art is as important as the art we create. We build the organization on trust, respect, and the joyful pursuit of constant improvement—values that continue to attract exceptional guest artists.

For more on how APT works and the work we create, please see the **Essence Document**.

Hill Theatre productions are expansive in scale and theme, heightened by the surrounding woods and stars. The intimate Touchstone Theatre complements that work. Typically, two of five Hill productions are Shakespeare, with the rest drawn from language-based plays. As APT's repertory has broadened beyond European playwrights to American classics and more diverse voices. Together artists and audiences to explore the question of, "what is a classic?"

APT creates productions that are challenging yet accessible, classical yet urgently relevant. Its focus on voice and text treats poetic language as transformative—heightening emotion, challenging beliefs, and reflecting our shared experience. A full-time Voice and Text Coach serves each production, working closely with actors in rehearsal and individual sessions.

APT artists combine craft with intention, bravery, and honesty. The 18-member Core Acting Company, part of the 45-member acting company, has made APT its artistic home while pursuing transformative, elevating work. Their skill and experience are fundamental to APT's success, and audiences follow and champion their careers.

The same depth of artistry extends to APT's production shops. Nineteen Core Production Staff artisans lead across the 100-member production team, creating, constructing, and safeguarding every aspect of production with the same care and rigor as the acting company.

SPRING GREEN AND THE RIVER VALLEY AREA

The Village of Spring Green is located in the Driftless Region of Southwest Wisconsin, a few miles from the Wisconsin River. Spring Green is part of what is referred to as the River Valley and is the largest community in the River Valley School District. The area is a fascinating combination of a small rural town and a vibrant arts haven, where people know their neighbors and get involved in the community.

The median age skews higher than the Wisconsin average, and 95% of Spring Green's population identifies as white. The median household income are about 10% higher than that of Wisconsin overall and the median value of owner-occupied homes is \$258,600.

The River Valley has an active arts scene and includes Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and school. In addition, dozens of artists and musicians live and work in the River Valley. The House on the Rock, an eclectic museum and nationally known roadside attraction, is also nearby. Thousands of tourists visit the area annually, mainly during the summer months.

APT is proud to be an active part of the River Valley community with many staff participating in civic organizations. APT is also a major economic driver for the area, supporting over \$45 million in economic impact annually.



RESIDENCY AND COMPENSATION

Residency

The demands of the Artistic Director position require personal connection to the APT community, including with artists, staff, and other stakeholders. They will need to be in person at APT a great deal, both during the season and off-season. For these reasons, it is highly preferable that once hired, they live full time in close proximity to APT.

Compensation

The salary range for this position is \$135,000 - \$175,000

Benefits include medical, dental and vision, and life insurance, HSA/FSA, generous paid time off and seasonal schedule flexibility, and 403(b) with employer match.

HIRING TIMELINE

Applications will remain open at least through January 31, 2027, with initial screenings to take place in the first quarter of 2027. APT expects to make a hiring decision in the 4th quarter of 2027 with the new Artistic Director starting on site in early 2028.

APT has allowed for generous overlap time between the Artistic Director Designate and current Artistic Director Brenda DeVita to allow for knowledge transfer. A specific transition plan and timeline will be developed in conjunction with all parties when an offer is made.

APPLICATION & INQUIRIES

To read the full job posting submit an application, please visit
americanplayers.org/ADSearch

Questions may be addressed to ADSearch@americanplayers.org

Photos: Cover: Joshua M. Castille & Casey Hoekstra, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2025, Photo by Hannah Jo Anderson; Tracy Michelle Arnold & Triney Sandoval, *The Matchmaker*, 2026, Photo by Hannah Jo Anderson; *The Two "Gentlemen" of Verona*, 2026, Photo by Dan Norman; Laura Rook & Phoebe González, *Fallen Angels*, 2025, Photo by Michael Brosilow. P. 1: Nate Burger, *Hamlet*, 2022, Photo by Liz Lauren; *Anna in the Tropics*, 2025, Photo by Michael Brosilow; Colleen Madden, Maggie Cramer & Elizabeth Reese, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, 2024, Photo by Liz Lauren; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2017, Photo by Liz Lauren. P. 3: Winter Words, 2025; Tracy Michelle Arnold & Triney Sandoval in rehearsal; Closing Night 2025, Photos by Hannah Jo Anderson. P. 4: *The Winter's Tale*, 2025, Photo by Michael Brosilow. P. 5 Brenda DeVita & Marcus Truschinski in rehearsal, 2024, Photo by Michael Brosilow. Kelly Simmons & Rasell Holt in rehearsal, 2025, Photo by Hannah Jo Anderson; APT Picnic Grounds, 2026, Photo by Hannah Jo Anderson; *The Book of Will*, 2019, Photo by Liz Lauren. P. 7 Brian Mani, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2015, Photo by Liz Lauren. Sarah Day & Stephen Hemming, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1993, photo by Zane Williams; Joshua M. Castille, *Romeo & Juliet*, 2023, Photo by Liz Lauren; Anne Occhiogrosso & Charles Bright welcoming the audience to APT's opening night, July 18, 1980. Photo by Robert Wood. P. 9: Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin Preservation; David Daniel & Jonathan Gardner, *The Two "Gentlemen" of Verona*, 2026; The House on the Rock, Photos by Hannah Jo Anderson; View of the River Valley, Photo by Jewell Associates Engineers, Inc. P. 10: *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2022, Photo by Liz Lauren.

