

# TIDEWATER

## Regional Repertory Theatre

At the Yoder Barn / 2008  
Artistic Summary

### *Mission*

*Founded in 2007 and operating in partnership with Christopher Newport University and the Ferguson Center for the Arts, Tidewater Regional Repertory Theatre is dedicated to producing plays and musicals that illuminate all that is passionate, profound, diverse and daring in the great American spirit. Our focus is on theatre inspired by, and created from America's complex cultural landscape. TRR is a place to celebrate all that constitutes the unique American consciousness. It is a place for audiences to experience, discuss and deliberate through theatrical imagination; to be entertained, challenged and inspired by America's greatest playwrights. At the center of TRR is artistic expression; all other programs are born, grow and thrive in support of the art of theatre.*

### INTRODUCTION

This is the Artistic Director's Summary for the inaugural season of **Tidewater Regional Repertory Theatre**. What follows is a vision of a new theatre on the Virginia Peninsula – one that is in partnership with CNU and utilizes the unique performance space of the Yoder Barn. This summary is intended as a guide for the development of future documents that will offer detailed descriptions of how to fulfill many of the goals and ambitions addressed within these pages.

The ideas submitted here cover the beginning of **TRR's** artistic, educational and operational goals. As with all strategic planning, it will be necessary to select priorities for immediate attention. These priorities will be re-assessed in TRR's premiere season by the Ferguson Center Production Staff, CNU, and TRR's artistic staff. Adjustments will be made to this plan as deemed necessary.

This Artistic Summary offers a road map of ideas that will shape the future of TRR, its artists, staff and students.

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## **Ideal Vision of TRR**

- Create a venue where the best American plays are the foundation and inspiration;
- Offer the Tidewater area the highest quality small professional theatre in an Off-Broadway venue;
- Establish a reputation for artistic excellence in the theatre community and the public sector;
- Build a dynamic and powerful artistic community by offering professional opportunities for qualified local and regional artists;
- Produce professional theatre where qualified CNU students can grow and thrive;
- Instill in the public a life-long love of and participation in the theatre arts through quality productions and education programs
- Cultivate an engaged, diverse and responsive audience;
- Advance regional and national visibility of CNU;
- Provide theatrical experiences that enhance “quality of life” in the Tidewater region;
- Become an educational resource for students and teachers;
- Ensure that all TRR artistic, financial, educational and administrative plans support TRR’s mission and the mission of CNU.

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## The Vision Extended

Live theatre is one of the most creative and vital forms of cultural expression. It allows us to participate in the celebration of the human condition through exploration of our deepest sensitivities and moral resolution. Furthermore, it is a catalyst for telling the most profound and enduring stories thereby preserving our culture for future generation's learning, growth and appreciation.

Tidewater Regional Repertory Theatre is dedicated to producing plays and musicals that illuminate all that is passionate, profound, diverse and daring in the great American spirit. Additionally, TRR promotes educational experiences that enhance the artistic vitality of the greater Hampton Roads Community while offering opportunity for CNU students and qualified local artists to work collectively with visiting guest artists in a quality environment. TRR is committed to telling stories that celebrate our unique American consciousness while producing the best in theatre entertainment for the widest possible audience.

TRR views the entire Hampton Roads area—from Virginia Beach to Richmond—as a potential audience. This includes audiences of all ages and diversification.

It is not difficult to envision a time that TRR will spawn popular successes that may move on other stages both locally and regionally. This activity, in turn, will raise the artistic standard for all theatres in the region. This ambitious vision is the professional standard TRR is dedicated to building.

Equally important to long term success of TRR's mission is to offer educational opportunities to talented professionally-driven CNU students. "Core Acting Company" members and internships, comprised primarily of CNU students and recent alumni, will allow a close association and cooperation with the Christopher Newport University's music, art and theatre programs. This association will continue to build the reputation of all programs and provide CNU with another strong recruiting tool. Additionally, TRR will offer opportunity for CNU faculty members to further their professional and artistic work and to maintain/raise the reputation of Christopher Newport as a leading institution of higher learning, not only in Virginia but in the broader geographic region.

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## The Vision Realized

### 1. Resources

Achieving TRR's ideal vision requires significant funding used for operating expenses, emergency applications, guest artist allotments, housing agreements, etc. Given its mission, TRR will need to rely on substantial gifts each of the first two years. Further, it is logical that in years to come, funding will be forthcoming from federal, state and local arts agencies. But, for the near-term, funding from CNU, Newport News and private resources is essential.

### 2. Implementation

In the national scope of professional/educational theatres, TRR is a small organization operating with a limited staff. Therefore, the Producer and Artistic Director must assume much of the responsibility for implementing the goals identified in this summary. Importantly, they must plan and educate the public about its need to care for the organization. This process will not happen overnight but, must nevertheless, it must be addressed with an initial burst of energy and sustained diligence.

### 3. Audience

In the final analysis, theatre is performed for an audience. Without a diverse, well educated audience who supports a specific vision/purpose, no theatre can expect to survive. Although CNU, due to the Ferguson Center and TheaterCNU, has already established a supportive audience base, TRR believes that the Yoder venue and its new artistic vision will attract a new and wider audience.

### 4. Children's Educational Camp

All successful theatres maintain educational outreach programs. These programs serve the community while, simultaneously, offering the theatre a means of financial support. TRR proposes a summer theatre day camp to be implemented as early as July/August of 2008. This educational program will be run by junior company members (CNU students) and held in 10-day sessions. The target constituency for this program is students between the ages of 8-15.

### 5. Priorities

Planning for TRR is a complex process. Imagining and organizing a new entity's goals, mission and direction will ultimately lead to a healthy/stable organization. However, it is difficult for the small staff to be knowledgeable about all aspects of the organization and remain focused on a handful of truly important decisions, goals, strategies and actions. Consequently, TRR proposes a Two Tier Plan to prioritize the work effectively. This Two-Tier Plan is currently being developed.

### 6. Season One Planning

TRR will begin producing in the summer of 2008. Given this ambitious timeline; budgets, preliminary staffing and production choices must be completed by October 1, 2007.