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**THEATER DIRECTOR MICHAEL KAHN  
RECEIVES FIRST ANNUAL TENN AWARD  
FROM THE PROVINCETOWN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS THEATER FESTIVAL**

**Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C.  
highlights the Festival's theme in September 2017:  
Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare**

May 18, 2017 — (Provincetown, MA) **The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival** is pleased to announce American theater director, educator, and arts leader **Michael Kahn** as the recipient of the Festival's first-ever **TENN Award**.

This recognition inaugurates an annual tradition in which the Festival honors an individual, group, or organization that advances the spirit of Tennessee Williams through performance, public awareness, study, or publication.

Throughout his accomplished career, Kahn has delved deeply into the work of Williams and of Shakespeare — making him an exemplary honoree in advance of the organization's 12th-annual Festival, which will celebrate **Tennessee Williams and William Shakespeare** when performances around the world come to Provincetown from Sept. 21-24, 2017.

Accepting the award, **Michael Kahn** says that "Tennessee Williams has made an indelible impression on me, and his writing continues to shape and provoke deep questions about what is possible on stage. I am thankful that the Tennessee Williams festival in Provincetown has dedicated the past 12 years to uncovering lesser-known and unseen sides of Williams, and I am honored to receive this year's TENN Award. I am eager to see the festival continue to grow, and I look forward to seeing more discoveries made by Williams-inspired artists around the world in coming years."

**Festival Executive Director Jef Hall-Flavin** says that "Michael Kahn is a brilliant theater artist, and because of his longstanding commitment to staging great texts, audiences better understand what makes Tennessee Williams our great American playwright. His tireless passion for Shakespeare, which has animated his 31-year tenure at the Shakespeare Theatre Company, opens up new worlds to us year after year, even within well-known and much-loved texts."

**Festival Curator David Kaplan** feels that Kahn is especially noteworthy because "he's been an advocate for Tennessee Williams since the 1960s. The collective impact of his work has changed Williams' reputation — especially for the one-acts. These productions

successfully expand, for audiences and theater artists, the magnitude of Williams' achievement, well beyond conventional cultural gate-keepers."

Hall-Flavin adds that "Kahn's direct personal connection to Williams in the '60s and '70s, combined with his 50-plus years of work to champion lesser-known plays by Williams, positions him beautifully to receive this award. His legacy as a Williams director and our work here at the Provincetown Festival are in perfect harmony."

### **About Michael Kahn**

Born in Brooklyn in 1937, Kahn has worked as Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC) in Washington, D.C. since 1986. Concurrently, he was also the Richard Rodgers Director of the Drama Division at the Juilliard School in New York City from 1992 to 2006.

Kahn began his career Off-Off Broadway in 1964, directing experimental plays and other works that included Shakespeare. He became a staff member at Juilliard in 1968.

In addition to his extensive credits directed Shakespeare over the years, Kahn has a storied history of directing Williams plays. He directed the inaugural production of *Camino Real* at the new Robert S. Marx Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park in 1968.

His 1974 production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, CT transferred to Broadway in 1975 – a run that earned Elizabeth Ashley a Tony nomination for her portrayal of Maggie the Cat alongside Keir Dullea, Fred Gwyne, and Kate Reid.

In a 2013 essay for *The New York Times*, Jeb Brown reflected on his role, as a ten-year-old actor, in that production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and recalls the regular presence of "Tennessee himself" during that yearlong rehearsal process. "It's almost hard to imagine today that he collaborated with us as a living playwright," Brown wrote. "He assembled a new third act for our production, revised the play extensively and went on record again and again with his enthusiasm for Michael Kahn's staging. And he reserved special, worshipful praise for Liz, whom he felt was giving audiences the Maggie he had always imagined."

In the mid-1970s, Kahn directed a cast of Juilliard students (which included Robin Williams) in *The Night of the Iguana*, as well as a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ that featured actors Glenn Close as Stella and Shirley Knight as Blanche. In 1975 he produced a revised version of *Kingdom of Earth* at the McCarter, which was directed by Garland Wright.

Kahn directed *The Glass Menagerie* for the Chautauqua Theater Company in 1985, *Ten by Tennessee* off-Broadway for The Acting Company's 1985-86 season, and *Five by Tenn* for The Acting Company's 1987-88 and 1990-91 seasons.

In 2004, Kahn directed a new *Five By Tenn* that featured the world premieres of five one-acts plays, which he staged at the Manhattan Theatre Club and at STC in Washington, D.C. His successful staging of those one-acts, which were not offered for production or publication during Williams' lifetime, provided much of the impetus for getting them published in what became *Mister Paradise and Other One-Act Plays* in 2005.

At the STC, Kahn's Tennessee Williams directing credits also include productions of *Sweet Bird of Youth* in 1998 and *Camino Real* in 2000. He has also worked as the artistic director for several other companies, directing regional theater and opera and receiving numerous awards and honors.

On February 8, 2017, Kahn announced that he will resign as Artistic Director in July 2019.

### **About the 2017 Festival Program**

Details of the Festival's full September 2017 line-up of shows will be announced at the **Annual Dinner on Saturday, June 3, 2017**. The gala will be held at Town Hall in Provincetown.

Festival board members Deborah Bowles and Jim Mauro will co-chair the event, and the Festival thanks Fleur du Cap wines for their sponsorship of this event.

Premium seats, general admission tickets, and table sponsorships for the Annual Dinner are available online at **twptown.org** or by phone at **866-789-TENN**.

The line-up will include productions of Williams' work paired with works by Shakespeare, as well as lighter "lagniappe" experiences similar to recent cabaret and late-night Festival events such as last year's *Saloon Songs*.

This year's theme builds off the success of last year's festival, during which plays by Williams were paired with plays by Eugene O'Neill. In 2017, the experience of Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare side by side in performance, educational programming, and social events will offer Festival audiences a new understanding of both playwrights.

### **About the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival**

The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in Provincetown — the birthplace of modern American theater — where Williams worked on many of his major plays during the 1940s. The TW Festival is the nation's largest performing arts festival dedicated to celebrating and expanding an understanding of the full breadth of the work of America's great playwright. Each year, theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams' enduring influence in the 21st century, hosted by venues throughout the seaside village. For more details, visit [twptown.org](http://twptown.org) and follow the Festival on **Facebook**.

This Festival is funded in part by the Provincetown Tourism Fund, and is presented by Sage Inn & Lounge.