

**Ethan McSweeney** is an internationally acclaimed freelance director based in New York City. Hailed in his early career by *American Theatre* magazine as a “wunderkind with a Midas touch”, over the last two decades he has distinguished himself with a remarkably broad range of work on many of the preëminent stages of North America and the world.

His direction has been called “impeccably stylish” and his productions “must-see events” which are “timely” and “daring” and known for incisive visuals, cinematic style, detailed text analysis, and acting “so sharp its like seeing a play in live high def” (*The Washington Post*). Over the last twenty years, he has brought what *Forbes* called his “probing intellect and uncanny ability to make plays come alive with dazzling staging and inspiringly visionary” productions to a career so diverse and eclectic that, according to *The Irish Times*, “as a director he himself is hard to figure out.”

McSweeney made his breakout debut with the electrifying Off-Broadway premiere of John Logan’s Leopold and Loeb thriller *Never the Sinner*, winning Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards in 1998. Two years later, he made his Broadway debut with a revival of Gore Vidal’s *The Best Man*, which was recognized with a Tony Award nomination, and the Drama Desk and Outer Critic Circle Awards for Best Revival. A regular on the New York stage, his work there includes the Broadway premiere of John Grisham’s *A Time to Kill*, a landmark adaptation of Aeschylus’ *The Persians* (translated by Ellen McLaughlin) for the National Actor’s Theatre, and the world premieres of Thomas Bradshaw’s *Fulfillment* (The Flea), Kate Fodor’s *Rx* (Primary Stages), her *100 Saints You Should Know* (Playwrights Horizons), and Jason Grote’s *1001* (Page 73) – the latter two of which were simultaneously named “Top Ten of 2007” by *TimeOut* and *Entertainment Weekly* magazines.

Nationally, his vibrant freelance career has seen him direct more than eighty productions of new plays, revivals, and musicals at most of the major institutional theatres in the United States including the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis (where he staged more productions than any other non-resident director in its history), the Goodman in Chicago, the Old Globe in San Diego, the Denver Center in Colorado, the Alley and Dallas Theater Center in Texas, South Coast Rep in Southern California, Center Stage in Baltimore, the Wilma in Philadelphia, the Public in Pittsburgh, Westport Playhouse in Connecticut, and the Kennedy Center, the Arena Stage and the Shakespeare Theater Company in Washington, DC.

His productions have been nominated from more than seventy-five theatre awards, claiming thirty wins, including four for Best Director: *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre

Company, 2017), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Gate Dublin, 2013), *A Body of Water* (The Old Globe, 2006) and *Six Degrees of Separation* (The Guthrie, 2003). His work has also been recognized with multiple "Best of" citations from journals around the country including the *The Village Voice*, *Theatremania*, *Baltimore City Paper*, *Denver Post*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *New Jersey Star Ledger*, and the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*.

In 2013, McSweeney made his Irish debut with *A Streetcar Named Desire* at The Gate theatre in a staging cited as "one of the highlights, if not the most spectacular play, of this year's theatre season in Dublin" that confirmed "McSweeney's reputation as one of theatre's brightest stars." *Streetcar* was honored with a brace of *Irish Times* Award nominations, receiving honors for Best Director, Best Leading Actress (Lia Williams) and Best Supporting Actress (Catherine Walker) as well as nods for Best Production, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Scenic Design. His affiliation with The Gate continued with well-received productions of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*, Brian Friel's masterful adaptation of Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*, and the Dublin premiere of Florian Zeller's *The Father* translated by Christopher Hampton, which was nominated for three *Irish Times* awards including Best Production, Best Set Design, and Best Leading Actor. His work in Ireland led to new artistic collaborations, most notably with playwright Deidre Kinahan who's *Moment* he premiered at the Studio Theatre in Washington, DC in 2016, receiving three Helen Hayes nominations including Outstanding Play and Director.

McSweeney's additional international work includes two seasons at the celebrated Stratford Festival in Canada where he directed audience-favorite productions of Christopher Hampton's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. In the spring of 2016, he added a new dimension to his international portfolio when he was invited to open the 27<sup>th</sup> Macao Arts Festival in China with his much-lauded production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* originally produced at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, DC.

Highly regarded as a "classical imagist," McSweeney has helmed important revivals of Shakespeare, Shaw, Miller, Williams, Wilde, Chekhov, Albee, Pinter, Euripides, and Aeschylus and also premiered or work-shopped new work by contemporary authors Courtney Baron, Lee Blessing, Thomas Bradshaw, Carol Carpenter, Anthony Clarvoe, Zayd Dohrn, Steven Drukman, Kate Fodor, David Friedman, Richard Greenberg, Paul Grellong, Rinne Groff, Jason Grote, Adam Gwon, Noah Haidle, Christopher Hampton, Rupert Holmes, Julia Jordan, Peter Kellog, Deidre Kinahan, Tony Kushner, Alex Lewin, Ken Lin, Quincy Long, Ellen McLaughlin, Michael Mitnick, Peter Morris, Octavio Solis, John Strand, Lloyd Suh, Adam Szymkowicz, Regina Taylor, and Anna Ziegler among others.

In recent years, McSweeney fulfilled a long held ambition to add opera to his repertoire, beginning with the world premiere of Luna Pearl Wolf and Caitlin Vincent's *Better Gods* for the Washington National Opera in January of 2016, followed by the world premiere of Mohammed Fairouz and Mohammed Hanif's arresting new one-act *The Dictator's Wife* in 2017, and culminating in a *Tosca* that he will stage for WNO's 2018-19 season. Pursuing an interest in bringing his visual acuity and narrative skill to the screen, he is also in development on the independent feature films of Carol Carpenter's borderland thriller *The Guadalupe*, Frank Allen's historical micro-epic *Twelve Days in May*, and Gerald L'Ecuyer's cautionary romance *Magic Hour*.

Long involved in the administration of arts institutions, Mr. McSweeney served as the Artistic Director of the Chautauqua Theatre Company from 2004 to 2011 and maintained a strong affiliation with the company as its Resident Director through 2015. Under his leadership, CTC experienced a remarkable growth in artistry and audiences (up over 300%) alongside a corresponding boost in national recognition as a vital center for the cultivation of the finest emerging theatre artists in the country and the development of exciting and relevant new work for the stage. Among his proudest accomplishments at CTC was the creation of the highly successful New Play Workshop series, which not only built audiences excited to participate in new play development but also sent multiple works on to successful New York and national premieres, eventually evolving to include a significant bi-annual new play commission. As a director for the company, McSweeney staged noted productions from the American canon including *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Death of a Salesman*, *All My Sons*, and *The Glass Menagerie* as well as creating a groundbreaking large scale collaboration with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra on Tom Stoppard and Andre Previn's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*. The work of the company as both a producer and incubator of talent is prominently showcased in the PBS documentary *Chautauqua: An American Narrative*.

In addition to CTC, Mr. McSweeney has proudly served in the leadership of SDC, the national labor union representing Stage Directors and Choreographers in the United States. Elected by his peers to the Board of Trustees in 2005, he served two terms as the organization's Treasurer from 2009-2015, with a responsibility for overseeing annual budgets both for the union and its affiliated foundation. As a Trustee, he was instrumental in the search for the current Executive Director and the rebranding of the organization on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary while broadening its national reach. As Treasurer, he lead the company through the successful financing and planning of a headquarters relocation and the massive restructuring of its computer and communications platforms, firmly establishing the union for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having reached his term limit in 2017, McSweeney was asked to join the inaugural board of the newly-minted SDCF, an independent foundation tasked with promoting the art and craft of stage direction and

choreography with a special emphasis on creating opportunities for new and emerging talent.

Alongside his directing, McSweeney has always maintained significant institutional affiliations, beginning with his four years training at the side of Michael Kahn as Associate Director of the Shakespeare Theatre in the early 1990's. Since then, he has served as an Associate Artistic Director at the George Street Playhouse, Artistic Associate at Tony Randall's National Actor's Theatre, Artistic Advisor to the Cape Cod Theatre Project, and Resident Director at New Dramatists, New York's leading playwright and new works center. He was part of the founding class of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab and is currently a member of Wingspace, a Brooklyn-based design collective that promotes collaboration in the field of theatrical design while fostering a larger conversation about design, its principles, and the collaborative spirit within the community. Since 2011 he has been an Affiliated Artist at the Shakespeare Theatre Company where his work includes a string of hit productions: *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Ion*, *Major Barbara*, and *The Persians*. A contributor to the LA Theatre Works broadcast on National Public Radio, he is also featured in the recently published *Directing Shakespeare in America* by Charles Ney (Arden Shakespeare, 2016) and has served as a Tony Awards voter for the last decade.

Originally from Washington, DC, McSweeney maintains strong ties to the political and cultural community through both his family and his artistic work in the nation's capital. Although he intended to be a Russian Studies major, Ethan ended up as the first ever undergraduate to receive a Theatre and Dramatic Arts degree from Columbia University.

More information (and pictures) is at [www.ethanmcsweeney.com](http://www.ethanmcsweeney.com).