



## **Karla Boos** – *Music and Fine Arts*

As an experimental artist who purposefully strives to live outside her comfort zone, Karla Boos, the founder in 1990 of Pittsburgh's Quantum Theatre, cites Wheeling's educational and theatrical communities as significant reasons for her ongoing success.

Her roots and early inspiration are in Wheeling where her family settled when she was 10. The daughter of Paul V. and Anna C. Boos, her siblings include sisters Mimi and Maria, sister-in-law Martha Wright, and a brother, the late Paul T. Boos, a former city solicitor. She is a graduate of Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy and attended Bethany College before matriculating at the University of Pittsburgh and the California Institute of the Arts near Los Angeles. She often mentions fond memories of the inspirational teaching nuns at Mount de Chantal, where her deep love of literature and music was nourished, and of joyful time spent at Oglebay Institute's Towngate Theatre where the late Hal O'Leary, a member of the Wheeling Hall of Fame, served as an important mentor. "He was the real deal, so early in my life, of a man of the theater, and what the theater as a kind of frame for your life can offer. I'm sure I would not be the person I am today but for Hal," she said.

A theatrical innovator, Boos followed in the footsteps of international inspirations. She envisioned Quantum Theatre as a laboratory for the new and unique and makes theatre in an environment outside traditional theaters. She has staged productions with artists from Pittsburgh, throughout the country, and the world in spaces that fit intrinsically to that being offered, whether it's the Union Trust Building, the former North Side Carnegie Library, a Gothic church building, an empty swimming pool, horse stables, or the blast furnaces of a former steel mill.

She frequently directs, sometimes performs, and often adapts literature for Quantum's stages. She served as guest curator for the 2018 Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust,

and Quantum Theatre's world premiere, "Chatterton," based on Peter Ackroyd's book, under her direction appeared at Trinity Cathedral Pittsburgh as part of the festival.

Boos is a member of the National Theatre Conference, the International Women's Forum, and the recipient of both the Carol R. Brown Award for Established Artist and its predecessor, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Creative Achievement Award for Emerging Artist.

"In a traditional theater experience," she said, "it's very easy to go to the velvet seat and the lights go up on the stage and you know where you're going to have dinner. ... I upend those circumstances to leave you hanging in a less comfortable, more uncertain position where more is required of you. People are more likely to come out a little changed on the other side of that kind of experience," she believes.

"When I was still a young woman, I had my years in Los Angeles, at Cal Arts and afterward, working with experimental artists. I came back to Pittsburgh because I thought I could do my thing here. And there was a person I wanted to talk to about my ideas, and it was August Wilson," she said. Upon finding the famed playwright in a crowded jazz club, she said Wilson "allowed me to explain what I wanted to do and gave me the kind of encouragement that I will never forget."

Boos said she enjoys a rich life in Pittsburgh with her longtime partner, Joel Le Gall, and near her daughter, Ana Hoffman, son-in-law, Josh, and two beloved granddaughters. She added, "I'm also a major multidisciplinary arts appreciator. I love dance. I love music. But most of all, I love a packed theatre."