

Biography - Joan Vail Thorne

Joan Vail Thorne is a librettist, playwright and stage director. In addition to her collaboration with Linda Tutas Haugen, on *Pocahontas*, she has written two operas with Stephen Paulus - *The Woman at Otowi Crossing*, which premiered at Opera Theatre of St. Louis and *Summer*, which premiered at the Berkshire Opera Company and was presented by The Center for Contemporary Opera in New York City. She has also collaborated with Stephen Paulus on three pieces for narrator and orchestra: *Voices from the Gallery*; *Behold the Man*; and *Windows of the Mind - The Five Senses*.

As a playwright Ms. Thorne is best known for her play, *The Exact Center of the Universe*, which opened to critical acclaim in New York City, with Frances Sternhagen in the starring role, and subsequently enjoyed an Off Broadway run. A more recent play, *The Things You Least Expect*, premiered at the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Mary Beth Peil in the starring role. Other plays include *Signs and Wonders*, *Anatomy of a Female Pope*, and *Missing Pieces*. She has won the Southern Playwrights Festival, the Southern Theatre Festival, and the Sarett/Crawford playwriting awards and been nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award.

As a stage director, Ms. Thorne has worked on Broadway as Assistant Director to the renowned American director Alan Schneider. Off Broadway she has directed at the American Place Theatre, the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and The Women's Project, among others. Her regional directing credits include The Alley Theatre of Houston, Arena Stage of Washington, D.C., The Asolo Theatre of Sarasota, the Dallas Theater Center and Florida Stage. She has written and directed two short films: *Last Rites* shown on PBS and *Secrets* shown on Cinemax.

Ms. Thorne has served on the faculties of the Drama Division of The Juilliard School, Pace University, and Playwrights Horizons Theatre School, a studio of New York University, where she currently teaches directing. She is a member of ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild, The League of Professional Theatre Women, the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers and Women's Project.