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**Desperate Measures**

*A Musical Comedy Gone Wild*

**Book and Lyrics by**

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“A delight... such a hoot!

WONDERFUL!”

The New York Times

“The MOST ACCLAIMED Off-Broadway

MUSICAL OF THE SEASON!”

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**BEST MUSICAL!**

2018 OUTER CRITICS CIRCLE & OSA AWARDS

**BEST MUSIC & LYRICS!**

2018 DRAMA DESK AWARDS

Saddle up and see why audiences and critics alike have branded *Desperate Measures* a grade ‘A’ musical!

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Original Off-Broadway Company

Photos by Carol Rosegg
We’re off and running, and well into both a new year—and a new decade!

January can, and should, feel like starting with a clean slate. Remember the start of a new school term, with your crisp spiral-bound notebooks, fresh textbooks, and as-yet unknown classmates, when everything seemed full of possibilities and hope? Remember the lists of New Year’s resolutions, when you promised yourself you would lose a few pounds, spruce up your wardrobe, and finally clean out that kitchen junk drawer?

It’s not always easy to follow through on our best intentions, but we sure feel good when we reach a goal. So now, in March, we’re entering the second quarter of 2020, and it’s time to revive our resolutions. Get that dusty gym bag out of the trunk! Plan that trip we’ve been dreaming about. Make a schedule to keep the bathtub clean!

So, here are a few things I am going to do, and I encourage you to come up with your own goals. For starters, I will look for ways to get involved in my community, and get my community involved with theatre. For me, that means becoming more inclusive in our casting. Let me give you an example, from the show Matilda, which I recently directed and choreographed. It’s a classic kid’s show, presenting great opportunities for young people with prior experience to stretch their theatre wings, and for newbies to absorb a new, wonderful world. Well, during auditions, a girl with Down’s Syndrome presented herself, and guess what? I cast her. Not as a “special needs” kid, but as a regular student at Matilda’s school. I can’t say rehearsals were entirely without challenges, but I worked with her in a way suited to her abilities.

The process was rewarding for everybody. First, the girl was thrilled to be included in a mainstage show that was part of our regular season. Second, her castmates treated her with compassion, dignity, and friendship, and it was heartwarming to see their collective smiles each night. Third, her mother was appreciative of the opportunity, and for the growth of her child. Fourth, I learned to be open to individuals with differing abilities, and in the future, hope to work with kids (and adults) who might have vision, cognitive, mobility, or other differences, because they, too, have a place with us. Inclusion can have so many facets, and I resolve to discover more of them. Committing to one theatre resolution big or small can be a powerful thing. I wish you the best in yours.

------ Perfect Shows for Summer Theatre Camps ------

A comical yet surprisingly educational parody of “Twelve Angry Men.”

In this musical it all comes down to a small pea, and a determined princess.
# aactWORLDFEST 2020
This year’s festival, in Venice, Florida, will offer young people several special opportunities to enjoy and learn, along with amazing performances from around the world and a stellar lineup of workshops.

# Community Theatre Management Conference 2020
Held in Venice, Florida, just before aactWORLDFEST, this conference serves anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre.

# AACT NewPlayFest 2020 World Premiere
*Shattering* by Pat Montley, had its world premiere at Tacoma Little Theatre in Tacoma, Washington.

# AACTFest 2021
Louisville’s state-of-the-art Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will be home to AACTFest 2021, June 14-19, 2021. Mark your calendar to join your AACT theatre family for a great time—and great theatre.

# National Directors Conference
Five of the administrators who participated in AACT’s biennial conference share take-aways and insights gained from the conference and their time in the field.

# Digital Marketing Platform Priorities
Today’s audiences move at the speed of digital. Your online marketing platforms should too! Julie Nemitz offers ideas to maximize the effect of your website and emails.

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**On the Cover**
*Donovan Mahannah (Jonah) and Cynthia Kinyanjui (LaBelle) in the world premiere production of Shattering, by Pat Montley, at Tacoma Little Theatre, in Tacoma, Washington*  
*Photo credit: Dennis K Photography*

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**Contacting AACT**
AACT  
PO Box 101476  
Fort Worth, TX 76185  
817-732-3177  
info@aact.org

AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone number above.

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TO BE WICKED

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North Salt Lake, UT (2021)

Upcoming Events
AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere
The Cayuga Canal Girls
by Laura King
Phoenix Stage Company
Oakville, Connecticut
March 20 – 29, 2020

USITT Conference and Stage Expo
April 2-4, 2020
Houston, Texas
usitt.org/conference

AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere
Proprioception
by Marilyn Millstone
Rover Dramawerks, Plano, Texas
April 24 – May 9, 2020
roverdramawerks.com

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Winston Daniels, Operations and Events Assistant

AACT Insurance Program
AACT organizational members are eligible to participate in property, liability, and other coverages of the AACT Insurance Program.

For more information, contact:
Grice King
grice@kinggroup.us
940-612-1300
aactWORLDIFEST 2020  
A Focus on Young People

aactWORLDIFEST is a celebration of community theatres from around the world, with riveting performances from 12 companies. Past participants have witnessed productions from Russia, Brazil, Australia, Germany, Italy, China, and other countries, and enjoyed workshops offered by international directors and actors.

Chinese Opera Masterclass

This year’s festival, in Venice, Florida, offers young people several special opportunities to enjoy and learn, including an exclusive week-long Chinese Opera Masterclass, taught by Dr. Chua Soo Pong, founder of the Chinese Opera Institute. You need not be an opera singer to benefit from the workshop, whose topics include stylized movement, make-up technique, and vocal work.

After the first week concludes, aactWORLDIFEST begins, and young people will attend international performances, give a demonstration presentation of skills learned in the Chinese Opera Masterclass, participate in workshops, and meet with other teens from the U.S. and around the world in the AACT Youth Arts Leader Conference. Imagine all that on a college resume!

Young Actors Residency

New this year is the Young Actors Residency at aactWORLDIFEST. AACT will award scholarships to four students for the two-week residency, June 11 - 28, 2020 — before and during the festival in Venice, Florida. Travel grants, spending monies, and lodging will all be provided for those selected. Students must be 16-19 years old at the time of the festival in order to participate. Deadline to apply is May 1, 2020.

For more details and an online application form, go to aact.org/residency. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. (Interested candidates may also submit inquiries and questions to AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland at quiana@aact.org)

The Young Actors Residency is made possible by in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.

Youth Leadership Conference


The conference is open to young people ages 14-18, and will consist of theatre performances, roundtable discussions, youth activities, educational workshops, and enlightening sessions. The goal is to instill confidence, knowledge, and team-building skills in an exhilarating and stimulating experience with youth from around the country.

Registration for the Youth Arts Leader Conference is $35, and is an add-on event to aactWORLDIFEST. Therefore, conference attendees must also have registered for the festival, in order to attend all the shows and workshops. Student discounts are offered for each of the three festival packages.

Complete information on aactWORLDIFEST packages and rates, plus registration for the festival itself, is available online at venicetheatre.org/international.

To register for the Youth Arts Leader Conference add-on, visit aact.org/leader.
**FESTIVAL PACKAGES**

**THE JETSETTER PACKAGE**
Regular $500  Student $415
- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Reserved seating for all Pinkerton shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties
- Gala
- Free Drinks

**THE PARADISE PACKAGE**
Regular $295  Student $225
- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties
- Gala

**THE BEACHCOMBER PACKAGE**
Regular $245  Student $175
- Access to all MainStage shows
- All workshops
- All afterglow parties

aactWORLDFEST 2020 registration prices listed are for AACT members. If you are not a member, add $75 to adult registration; $15 to student registration.

Festival Registration and more information is available at venicetheatre.org/international/

**Hotel Venezia** is the official hotel for aactWORLDFEST 2020.
Registration includes
- Deluxe Breakfast Buffet
- Complimentary High Speed Internet

Hotel Venezia is one mile to Venice Beach, and one mile to Venice Theatre.
$105. Standard room
$135. King Suite
HotelVeneziaFl.com 941-308-7700, Ask for the aactWORLDFEST festival discounted rate.

continued on next page ▶
aactWORLDFEST continued from page 9

aactWORLDFEST 2020 Workshops And Events

Workshops and seminars will range from beginner to advanced and are open to all festival attendees. Whether it is just for fun or to build upon your current skill set, there will be something for everyone. Visit venicetheatre.org/international for updates.

From Singapore and China:

Dr. Chua Soo Pong, Director of the Chinese Opera Institute in Singapore, will travel to Venice to direct Madam Whitesnake, a Chinese opera. He will be teaching Chinese Opera techniques to students, locally and from around the United States. Students will work daily, all day, for two weeks prior to the festival and will perform as part of aactWORLDFEST. Dr. Chua is world renowned for his expertise in Asian theatre. He directs, adjudicates, and teaches in at least 20 countries each year. Price is $750 for the two-week course of study, festival registration, and home housing. Scholarships are available (see page 8). Total registration limited to 20.

From New York:

A Venice Theatre alumnus, Parker Lawhorne, will return home to conduct two workshops. Fresh off working on Broadway's Beautiful, Parker is known for his character makeup, as well as his vibrant, creative wig designs. Parker will demonstrate some of his unique techniques in makeup/hair/wig workshop. He'll also do a presentation and Q&A about hustling for work in the New York theatre scene.

From Gander, Newfoundland:

We will honor the “best of humanity” with a special event: The real-life people made famous in Come From Away will share their experiences from the week of 9/11/2001, when “the world came to town.” Join Os Fudge, Beulah Cooper, and Brian Mosher of Gander for a Q&A and, later a Screech-In, where you can become an honorary Newfoundlander. Nick and Diane Marson, the famous couple who met while stranded in Gander, also will be on hand to help honor Gander. This event is especially meaningful to Venice residents, who unwittingly housed the 9/11 hijackers while they trained at the Venice airport. Also, the Beyond the Overpass Theatre Company from Gander will be performing at aactWORLDFEST 2020.

Games and Things...

Expect some new experiences this festival. From international games under the tent and a revamped adjudication, to karaoke night, and a livened afterglow, you’ll have as much—or as little—to do as you like. ♦
Register now for the 2020 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC), June 21-23, in Venice, Florida.

While modeled after the renowned AACT National Directors Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, CTMC more broadly serves anyone with responsibility for managing a community theatre. Attendees learn through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, roundtable discussions that speak directly to participants’ unique challenges and experiences within their own theatre and community.

Participants prioritize and suggest topics through a pre-conference questionnaire. Based on previous CTMC sessions, popular discussion topics will likely include, but are not limited to:

- Sales and Marketing
- Other Sources of Earned Income
- Fundraising and Development
- Event Planning
- Volunteers
- Board
- Season and Play Selections (Winners and Losers)
- Classes, Educational and Outreach Programming
- Box Office Operations

The National Community Theatre Management Conference will be held Sunday, June 21, through Tuesday, June 23, just prior to aactWORLDFEST 2020 in Venice, Florida. This allows attendees to take part in both events in one trip—and aactWORLDFEST attendees receive a $15 discount on their CTMC registration.

Conference schedule:

SUNDAY, JUNE 21
1 pm Registration & begin Roundtable Discussions
5:30 pm Dinner Break
7 pm - 10 pm Roundtable Discussions

MONDAY, JUNE 22
8:30 am Roundtable Discussions
11:30 am Lunch at aactWORLDFEST $15 (optional)
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm Roundtable Discussion

TUESDAY, JUNE 23
8:30 am Roundtable Discussion
Noon Wrap-up

As previous years’ attendees know, the Community Theatre Management Conference will send you home with ideas that will more than pay for your trip, plus a renewed enthusiasm for your theatre management role, and a nationwide network of colleagues.

The conference will be facilitated by Ron Ziegler, the first Artistic/Managing Director for Iowa's Des Moines Playhouse's Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. He also founded and managed the Iowa Fringe Festival, and was the first Executive Director for Orlando Repertory Theatre, Orlando, Florida. He has directed productions for Venice Theatre and Ocala Civic Theatre in Florida, as well as for Des Moines Playhouse. A past president of AACT and an AACT Fellow, Ron has also served as facilitator for the National Artistic Directors Conference.

AACTEd Hours: AACT will provide you with documentation of your participation in this and other quality educational activities through AACT. Full participation in CTMC earns 20 AACTEd Hours.

Register now at aact.org/ctmc

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AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere: 
*Shattering* opens at Tacoma Little Theatre

Tacoma, Washington, celebrated the latest AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere when *Shattering*, by Pat Montley, opened on January 24, at Tacoma Little Theatre (TLT). The play received an outstanding production and was well received, followed by a festive opening night reception. The production ran through February 9.

Playwright Pat Montley attended the opening, sharing her delight and gratitude for the Tacoma production.

“I am over-the-moon about the AACT NewPlayFest. I have been writing and submitting plays to contests/theatres for...well, yes, decades, and I would be hard-pressed to recall a more positive experience.”

Montley was particularly appreciative of the help and guidance from AACT staff.

"From Susan Austin's timeline sent out in April, through her updates on my play's advancing in the competition, to Quiana Clark-Roland's interactions regarding the contract, to David Cockerell's detailed explanation of the process, it was clear to me that this was a professional, well-organized operation. In addition, Dramaturg Kathy Pingel showed respect for my work, made suggestions that were insightful and helpful, and became a friend in the process.”

Montley also praised TLT for its support and hard work on the production:

"If Chris Serface's excitement about my play hadn't made me fall in love with him, his careful, creative directing certainly would have. The show was blessed with a committed, talented cast, and TLT’s production staff fashioned an amazing, imaginative theatrical event. Being able to attend and give feedback on early rehearsals was invaluably reassuring for me; returning for the opening night gala—a playwright's dream.

The warm welcome I received—from my generous B&B..."
Montley, who lives in Lutherville, Maryland, has had 20 plays published. Her works have enjoyed readings at the Kennedy Center, Baltimore Center Stage, Rep Stage (MD), and the Abingdon Theatre (NYC), and productions at the Nebraska Repertory Theatre, the Manhattan Theatre Source, the Harold Clurman Theatre, the Nat Horne Theatre, Baltimore's Theatre Project, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Her work has been supported by a Kennedy Center Playwrights' Intensive, by residencies at the Millay Artists' Colony (NY) and the Djerassi Resident Artists Program (CA), and by grants from the Deutsch Foundation, the Maryland and Pennsylvania Arts Councils, the Shubert Foundation, the Mary Roberts Rinehart Foundation, and Warner Brothers.

Montley has a Ph.D. in Theatre, and has taught playwriting at a number of colleges and universities, including Chatham University in Pittsburgh, where she chaired the theatre department.

In Shattering, Montley presents the audience with characters whose lives intertwine in unexpected ways. Jonah has just been released from juvenile commitment into the foster care of Jacqueline "DeeDee" Dawson, whose estranged son Jonah helped to murder. She witnessed the crime and testified against the other two perpetrators. Now the gang leader who organized that crime wants to teach a lesson about what happens to "snitches." He orders Jonah to torture and kill Jacqueline—or be killed himself. The instructions come through Jonah's girlfriend...
LaBelle, whose investment in the outcome is intensified by her pregnancy. Jonah and LaBelle plot the murder, even as Jonah's relationship with the strict but caring Dawson develops, and his imagined visits with her dead son jar his conscience.

Chris Serface directed TLT's world premiere production of Shattering. The cast featured Robin McGee as DeeDee, Donovan Mahannah as Jonah, Joshua Hector as Sonny, and Cynthia Kinyanjui as LaBelle. The production crew included Assistant Director Jeremy Lynch, Stage Manager Nena Curley, with set design by Blake R. York, lighting design by Niclas Olson, sound design by Dylan Twiner, properties by Frank Roberts, and costumes by Michele Graves.

“Tacoma Little Theatre was honored to be selected as part of the AACT NewPlayFest,” says Director Chris Serface. “Shattering was one of the last scripts that I read of the 13 finalists we were to select from. When I read the play's last line, I had goosebumps. I knew that this was a powerful story, and one that was different from anything TLT had produced in the recent past. We were thrilled when we were given permission to produce it.”

Serface acknowledges that Shattering deals in difficult subject matter.

“DeeDee tries to teach Jonah that he has choices in life,” Serface explains, "but he is also shown other choices by his girlfriend, LaBelle, who is pregnant and still has ties to the gang. Through LaBelle, we learn that Jonah is being ordered to kill DeeDee for being a ‘snitch.' You sit on the edge of your seat until the final moments of the play, wondering what will happen. One patron of the show summed it up quite eloquently, 'I can't say I enjoyed this story, but rather that I experienced it, and have a strong respect for the actors that were able to tell this powerful story.'”

Having the ability to premiere a new work at Tacoma Little Theatre was “exciting, daunting, and exhilarating,” Serface says. “One of the things we most appreciated was AACT’s inclusion of a workshop with the playwright, along with access to a dramaturge. The week that we were able to spend with author Pat Montley and AACT’s dramaturge, Kathy Pingel, brought so much revelation and discovery to the cast and crew.

“If you have the opportunity to be a part of the NewPlayFest as an author or a producing theatre, I highly recommend it. It will breathe new life into how you approach a project.”

The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation provides a grant that helps make AACT NewPlayFest possible. The Foundation was created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin and friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through AACT NewPlayFest, presenting and promoting new theatre works. For more information, visit aact.org/newplayfest-2020.
Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest’s winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit aact.org/dpc for direct links to Dramatic Publishing Company’s NewPlayFest anthologies and plays, plus information about discounts and special offers for AACT members.


Upcoming World Premieres

Since 2014, AACT NewPlayFest has worked to select and promote original plays to be produced as world premieres across the country. The 2020 NewPlayFest cycle continues with the two productions listed below. For more information about each play, visit: aact.org/premieres. Winning plays will be available for production through Dramatic Publishing Company, following each play’s NewPlayFest world premiere,

*The Cayuga Canal Girls* by Laura King
**Phoenix Stage Company**, Oakville, Connecticut
March 20 – 29, 2020
phoenixstagecompany.org, 860-417-2505

*Proprioception* by Marilyn Millstone
**Rover Dramawerks**, Plano, Texas
April 24 – May 9, 2020
roverdramawerks.com, 972-849-0358

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Submit a Script for AACT NewPlayFest 2022

AACT is accepting script submission for AACT NewPlayFest 2020 during May and June, 2020. Details for script submission are available at aact.org/new2022. Non-musical, full-length plays only. Scripts must be unpublished and must not have already received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre’s production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright will be accepted. No fees are required for AACT-member playwrights; there is a $10 script processing fee for nonmembers. For more information and script formatting guidelines, visit aact.org/new2022.

Be a Reviewer

Dedicated volunteers read and score the scripts, evaluating them in several rounds of reviews. Join this exciting process by being a Reviewer. You’ll find application form and more information at aact.org/new2022.

Visit secondchancesmusical.com to see clips & hear songs
For perusals and quotes contact: Tom Ross Prather Tommyp37@aol.com or 239- 691-9894

SOLD OUT IN THREE PREVIOUS PRODUCTIONS!
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AACTFest 2021
June 14-19, 2021
Louisville, Kentucky
aact.org/21

Louisville’s state-of-the-art Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts will be home to AACTFest 2021, AACT’s national theatre festival, June 14-19, 2021. Mark your calendar to join your AACT theatre family for a great time—and great theatre.

The 2021 National AACTFest will feature three experienced and nationally known adjudicators. Their comments on productions will be a learning experience for all participating company and audience members.

Allen Ebert is the Executive Director at Children’s Theater of Madison in Madison, Wisconsin. He is also a proud veteran of the U.S. Army, whose Army Community Theatre provides soldiers and family members an opportunity to participate in and experience theatre. It is where he learned many skills and formed lifelong relationships—and put him on the path to become a theater professional, including a degree in theater and drama from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His company, Children’s Theater of Madison (CTM), is a resident company of Madison’s Overture Center for Performing Arts, and a member of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA. Ebert previously served as Executive Director of La Crosse Community Theatre, and spent three years in Vicenza, Italy, as the Entertainment Director of Soldiers’ Theatre, an Army Community Theatre. He has served on the Wisconsin Association of Community Theatre board of directors, including as president. Over the past 23 years, Ebert has directed, performed, adjudicated, and conducted workshops at state, regional, and national community theatres. He also directs and performs in the Madison area.

Faye M. Price is Co-Artistic Producing Director and Co-Center Director of Pillsbury House + Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her focus is the transformation of Pillsbury House, a 130 year-old neighborhood center, and Pillsbury House Theatre (PHT), a 27 year old professional theatre, into a one-of-a-kind, arts-integrated social service center. Together, these provide

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- Moini Benochea, actress, Reno Little Theater

“Our highest attended drama to date.”
- Melissa Taylor, Executive Director, Reno Little Theater

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more than 15,000 people a year with affordable day care, afterschool programming, and other services, along with high-quality arts experiences. The rationale for integrating the two organizations under artistic leadership is rooted in the growing understanding of the effectiveness of arts-based community development, PHT’s national artistic reputation for excellence, and the desire to pursue a culture-based organizational strategy for meeting community needs. In this pursuit, Price draws on her extensive experience as a producer and artistic director, in addition to acting, directing, and dramaturgy. She was a founding acting company member of both Mixed Blood Theatre and Penumbra Theatre, where she remains a company member. In her work she has demonstrated a commitment to the arts as a vehicle for social change, and to making the arts available to all.

Amy Wratchford is Managing Director of the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) in Staunton, Virginia. Previously, she served as Managing Director of Synchronicity Theatre in Atlanta, and worked for 13 years in a number of capacities in theatre in New York City, as producer, director, and actor. Wratchford regularly serves on grant panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts and Virginia Commission for the Arts. Her work on adjudicating panels includes EdTA China’s 2019 National Young Thespian Festival in Shanghai, as well as state and regional community theatre festivals in the U.S. She is an elected member of the Staunton City School Board, and serves on the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center’s Community Advisory Board. She routinely lectures on finance, budgeting, and nonprofit governance for Mary Baldwin University’s M.F.A. program in Shakespeare and Performance. Wratchford holds a bachelor’s degree in acting from the Tisch School of the Arts of New York University, and a master’s degree in performing arts management from Brooklyn College.

Alternate adjudicator: Richard (Rick) St. Peter is an award-winning stage director, producer, and educator, with nearly 20 years’ experience in professional and academic theatre. During the 2016-2017 academic year, he had the honor of serving as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Craiova in Romania. From 2003 to 2009, he served as the Artistic Director of Kentucky’s Actors Guild of Lexington, where he produced over 40 shows and directed more than 10. Since 2006, St. Peter has served as a visiting lecturer at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance in London, England. He was a 2007 participant in the LaMaMa/Umbria International Directors Symposium, held in Spoleto, Italy, and in 2002 was recipient of a Princess Grace Foundation Theater Award. He previously served as the Associate Artistic Director of Theatre Virginia and Barksdale Theatre (now Virginia Repertory Theatre). St. Peter received his M.F.A. in Stage Directing from Virginia Commonwealth University, and his Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University.
AACTFest 2021 will begin with a Welcome Party, sponsored by AACT Corporate Partner Disney Theatrical Group. Afterglow parties following each night’s performances will be sponsored by Stage Rights, while Concord Theatricals will sponsor Saturday’s Pre-Award Show Cocktail Reception. AACT Diamond Corporate Sponsor Music Theatre International is sponsoring the AACTFest 2021 Closing Celebration Party, a great ending to an exciting week of theatre. More AACT Corporate Partner events will be added soon, ensuring that AACTFest 2021 will be a memorable experience.

The National Companies to perform in Louisville will be decided in the next 15 months, as productions advance through state and regional festivals. Meanwhile, planning has begun for other festival events, including the Monologue Competition, sponsored by Dramatists Play Service, and AACT’s National Design Competition, sponsored by USITT, which celebrates community theatre designers from across the country. Exhibitors

Brad Sinclair, Reese Lynch, and Lauren Norris in Region IV’s Wetumpka Depot Players production of The Diviners at AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
will also be on hand with information on products and services to make your theatre the best it can be.

The Hyatt Regency Downtown is our host hotel, with special discounted rates for festival attendees. The Regency is also the location for AACTFest special events, workshops, exhibits, and conferences. This four-star hotel is within walking distance of the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts, and Actors Theatre of Louisville, as well. (A trolley will also be available to transport those staying at the hotel to the festival theatre.) The Hyatt is just steps from the Fourth Street Live District, Louisville's premier dining and entertainment destination.

Additional host hotels will be announced soon. Please consider staying at a designated host hotel, as this makes it possible for AACT to provide the great discounts, services, and experiences offered during the festival.

More information about the festival will be posted on the AACT website soon (aact.org/21).

Want to Perform at AACTFest 2021? Any theatre wanting to perform in 2021, should start planning now to participate, and get involved in your state’s AACTFest qualifying festival. Note that each state process is different—some may function on an annual basis, while others function on a biennial cycle. For more information about your state festival, contact your State Contact, listed at aact.org/statecontacts and/or your Regional Representative at aact.org/regionreps.
As the 2021 Festival Cycle begins, the AACTFest Handbook has been updated and revised, as well. Although revisions are few, some may have significant impact on those participating in the festival process.

Here is a summary of changes in the 2021 Handbook:

1. Festivals with four or more participating productions must rank all shows through sixth place. This is to assure that alternate productions are available, should higher-placing shows not be able to advance. If an alternate production is chosen to advance, its rehearsal and performance slots will be the same as the show it replaces.

2. Region IV, which in the past has sent two shows to the national festival, has been divided into two regions. Region IVa (Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia) and Region IVb (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida) will each send one production.

3. Theatres performing at the national festival will be required to re-submit the T4 (technical information) form.

4. For panel adjudications, theatres will be required to provide a microphone for each adjudicator.

5. Audience members, who leave a performance once it has begun, may re-enter if the theatre facility allows for such reentry without disturbance (e.g. a balcony entrance).

6. New wording now clarifies that a rehearsal may not necessarily be scheduled on the same day as a company’s performance.

7. Adjudicators cannot be chosen by the host theatre if that theatre has a production competing in the festival. In addition, anyone involved with a festival production who has any “hands-on” duties (such as a director, actor, musician, or technician), is not allowed to choose adjudicators for the festival, or serve as festival chair.

The AACTFest 2021 Handbook can be downloaded at aact.org/handbook.

Listings of upcoming State and Regional festivals will be posted to aact.org/calendar.
The National Directors Conference
“An Inspiration and a Gift”

The recent 20th biennial National Directors Conference, on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, brought together full-time employed community theatre administrators from varying backgrounds and levels of experience to share challenges and solutions, learn about other theatre operations, and network with colleagues from across the country. It was the largest gathering in the history of the conference.

AACT was truly honored to have such a strong and diverse cohort of administrators represented this year. Here are just four of their stories, with take-aways and insights gained from the conference and their time in the field.

"The National Directors Conference is both an inspiration and a sanity-saver. It is such a gift to be surrounded by mission-driven, passionate, and thoughtful arts leaders, and to share in our desire to create the best art while doing the best for our communities.

The information shared and friendships forged during each conference have great staying power for me, and for Theatre Cedar Rapids. I have met some of my closest colleagues through the AACT National Directors Conference, who I gratefully call upon throughout each year. The peer-group information we all so willingly share provides essential benchmark data that I use to monitor our theatre’s growth and potential. I also appreciate the opportunity to connect with a wide variety of organizations and to learn the ways we are all similar, and the ways we differ. Without fail, I walk away from Madison with a refreshed perspective and a tremendous peer group.

It is a gift to be surrounded by individuals with varying years of experience and tenure; to be reminded that there is rarely a problem that someone else hasn’t faced; and to participate in challenging conversations that are essential to the vitality of theatre making in each of our communities. I’m glad for the conversations that will continue until we meet again in 2021!"

Katie Hallman
Executive Director
Theatre Cedar Rapids
Cedar Rapids, Michigan
theatrecr.org

continued on next page
This was my first time attending AACT’s National Directors Conference, and I was pleased to find that, even as a newbie, I could contribute and had experiences to share in areas that were valuable to others. I expected to learn a lot about how theatres navigate the ups and downs of running a theatre business, but I also was struck by the incredible value of learning that every theatre has probably been in similar situations. Everyone starts somewhere and everyone grows. Problem solving and moving forward connects us all.

I found it interesting that interest in big, fancy fundraisers is waning. Fundraising is not what it used to be, because the donor pool is different. Donors want more of an experience when it comes to supporting their favorite theatre. Some suggestions that popped up were backstage tours, wine or liquor tastings, pre-show or post-show talkbacks, murder mystery dinners, and concert series. Another tip was using evenings that are usually dark for concerts, cabarets, or other quick events. Thinking outside the box was a big theme at the conference.

Diversity was one of the challenges that people want to talk about and face head-on.

Diversity was one of the challenges that people want to talk about and face head-on. While it may take a lot of changes and time, making diversity and inclusion a part of the culture in our theatre community is an important step towards building trust. When it comes to challenges facing community theatre, our ability to think creatively is our greatest resource.

The conversations that happened outside of the main discussion sessions were incredibly valuable. Everyone was so willing to share ideas and give each other support. This conference is such an amazing experience for connecting, networking, and realizing that none of us are alone in our theatre journey.
The Marvelous Wonderettes

“IRRESISTIBLE!”
The New York Times

“Infectious!”
TheaterMania

“EXCEPTIONAL!”
Los Angeles Times

“TREMENDOUS!”
Variety

“DELIGHTFUL!”
Associated Press

“CHARMING!”
Show Business

“PURE DELIGHT!
A MAJOR CROWD-PLEASER.”
—Tom McCoy, Exec. Producer,
McCoy Rigby Entertainment

“The Most Successful
Show in Our 24-Year History!”
—D. Lynn Meyers, Artistic Director,
Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati

“AUDIENCES SIMPLY GO CRAZY FOR THIS GEM OF A MUSICAL!”
—Kerrin McLaughlin, Producing Artistic Director, Seagull Repertory Theatre

Produce the original Off-Broadway hit or one of these delightful sequels:

The Marvelous Wonderettes

- Caps and Gowns
- Dream On

Winter Wonderettes

The Marvelous Wonderettes

STAGE RIGHTS.com
Stephen Carver  
Executive Director  
The Kalamazoo Civic Theatre  
(The Civic)  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Kazoo Civic.com

"This was my second time at AACT’s National Directors Conference. At my first conference, I took pages and pages of notes and my brain was on “system overload” by the end. This year’s conference, once again, offered tons of useful information that I could bring home and implement immediately. I greatly appreciated learning from Michael Fox (Hale Centre Theatre) of how/when to use ticket discounts, and the strategy behind “papering” a house.

Kalamazoo Civic recently became a charter member of the Penguin Project (for special-needs children and their mentors) and I enjoyed learning about the positive impact this project (penguinproject.org) had on both Lincoln Community Playhouse and Gettysburg Community Theatre. Also, someone mentioned a video segment their theatre created called a “Monday Moment.” I stole that idea and called it the “Monday Minute,” where we focus on behind the scenes at our theatre. We’ve been doing it for about a month and it’s been hugely popular.

But what I enjoyed most was the camaraderie with the other managing directors. Producing sustainable community theatre is a challenge, and we need to remember we’re not alone. The relationships I’ve enjoyed through these conferences have been invaluable. Everyone is positive and supportive. I feel I can call any of the managing directors and ask for advice or request help. The conference is a very special experience in relationship building."

Sara Reuschel,  
Executive Director  
Brandon Thomsen,  
Artistic Director  
Quincy Community Theatre  
Quincy, Illinois  
1qct.org

"This was Brandon’s second conference and Sara’s first, but we both saw the National Theatre Directors Conference as an opportunity to seek new ideas and trends to help us continue our efforts to build a strong theatre and education program for the future.

We had the opportunity to network and to gain insight into the trenches of community theatre; but most important, the conference served as a channel for the two of us to cultivate a deeper working relationship. Topics from the conference became our talking points at meals, walks to and from the hotel, and in the seven-hour car ride from Madison to Quincy. We opened up to each other about our ideas, insecurities, and excitement, and were able to share thoughts that helped merge our respective ideas into one cohesive vision. We entered the conference as individuals, and walked out as partners, with new ideas, trends, and lessons learned from the movers and shakers of community theatre. As a result, we feel more empowered to lead Quincy Community Theatre’s staff and volunteers."

A Word from AACT

Thank you to all who attended the 2019 National Community Theatre Directors Conference and shared their concerns and solutions. Information on the next conference will be available later this spring at aact.org/ctdc.

Those who missed the chance to attend, or are not employed full-time by their theatre, may want to attend the Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC). While modeled after the Directors Conference, CTMC is geared toward any level of administrator (volunteer, part-time, contract or full-time) who seeks professional development, problem-solving, and support from a network of fellow community theatre practitioners across the country. Dates are June 21-23, 2020 in Venice, Florida. See page 11 for more information on CTMC, or visit the AACT website at aact.org/ctmc. ♦
ROCKY

LOVE ALWAYS WINS

in this knockout musical from the Tony-winning team of Lynn Ahrens, Stephen Flaherty and Thomas Meehan, adapted from the Oscar®-nominated screenplay by Sylvester Stallone.

available spring 2020

Learn more at mtishows.com
The TEAMS Conference will return to the beautiful Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, August 21-23, 2020.

TEAMS 2020 is a national educational conference with these five tracks:

**TECHNICAL THEATRE**
Professional advice on technical elements to support your upcoming shows. Hands-on training in special effects, automation, scenic design/construction, lighting design, and more.

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**
Boost your theatre’s education program, exchange ideas and experiences, and learn skills to better manage your programs.

**ARTISTIC DIRECTION VISION**
Discover and re-envision exciting ways to produce high-quality theatre. Choose the right plays for your next season; learn solutions for choosing directors, recruiting actors, and solving technical problems; and examine long-range planning.

**MARKETING**
Learn strategies for small, medium, and large sized arts groups to build audiences, create loyalty, and learn ways to use marketing and branding in today’s changing social media world.

**STAGE MANAGEMENT**
Learn best practices for organizing rehearsals, supporting the director, managing the cast, and getting the curtain to go up on time.

Attend as an individual, or get even more out of the conference by putting together a team. The five tracks are held simultaneously, so team participants can share rides and rooms, while selecting the track that best suits their own individual needs. As attendees have found, the insights gained can pay for the conference registration many times over.

### REGISTRATION

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<td><strong>Group (3 or more)</strong></td>
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**Early bird registration deadline: June 29, 2020**

Standard rate after June 29, 2020

Registration covers continental breakfast, Saturday lunch, snacks, and materials.

Register at [aact.org/teams](http://aact.org/teams)

**Bonus Offer:** Participants will receive 50% off their ticket to see *Titanic the Musical* at the Hale Centre Theatre—a spectacular spectacle in water! This breathtaking musical, by Peter Stone and Maury Yeston, is in keeping with the scale of the mighty (but doomed) vessel—a factual story of her officers, crew and passengers. Experience soaring music and mammoth staging in this not-to-be-missed theatrical event. Tickets are only $26, with your TEAMS discount.

**Housing:** The Hilton Garden Inn (across the street from Hale Centre Theatre) will serve as the official conference hotel. A special group rate for TEAMS Conference attendees will be available. For more details on the hotel, and a link to receive the AACT discount, visit [aact.org/teams](http://aact.org/teams).

**AACTEd Hours:** Participants will once again earn 17 AACTEd Hours for participation in all sessions of their conference track. Pro-rated hours will be awarded to those who are unable to attend all sessions.

Amber Lewandowski, Head of the BFA Stage Management program and Production Manager at the University of Utah, leads the TEAMS 2019 Stage Management Track as they examine how a stage manager is the central communication hub of any production.
NEW TITLES NOW AVAILABLE

AUDIENCE FAVORITE TITLES

Bringing Theatre to Communities Everywhere

THEATRICALRIGHTS.COM
Today’s audiences move at the speed of digital. Your online marketing platforms should too!

Whether you are a theatre-maker or theatre marketer playing a bigger marketing game in 2020, having your digital communication platforms running optimally is crucial. Moving potential audience members from what we in marketing call a warm lead to a purchaser is determined by the content they consume and enjoy along the path to your box office.

At Playhouse Theatre Marketing Academy, I work with many theatres across the country and I hear the challenges. Digital marketing feels overwhelming. You are a marketing department of one and have many responsibilities. Your marketing budgets are limited. You’re unsure what to prioritize.

Building solid, modernized digital marketing platforms should be your priority. Then delivering valuable information to your audiences will be much easier for you and more successful in driving ticket sales.

The Digital Dynamic Duo

There are two priority platforms for your digital marketing: your website and your email. If you focus on ensuring that these platforms are up to date, you’re in great shape to seamlessly deliver content across them.

Your Website

This critical destination is your virtual theatre ... and your virtual storefront. Its priority is communicating with audiences past, present, and future. Making the purchase of tickets online seamless is also a critical function of your website. I know many of you may still have PTSD from a website build five-plus years ago. It was a grueling process that required coders, designers, and mysterious technology. If you haven’t updated your website since then, now is the time, because it’s important to deliver a modern, digital website experience for your audiences.

Can your website check these boxes?

- It's designed to be fully functional on a mobile or tablet device.
- You've simplified the navigation at the top of your page. Less is more!
- You make purchasing tickets online easy and seamless.
- Your logo and tagline are prominently placed at the top of your homepage.
- You show versus tell, using photos, videos, graphics, and headlines that pop. Your design has plenty of clean white space. Too much text on your homepage can feel overwhelming to site visitors today.
- You implement a design that allows the viewer to scroll down a long page, versus asking them to click around on dozens of links. The more mobile takes over, the lazier we get in wanting to click often.
- You make it easy to sign up for emails and newsletters.
- Your mission, values, and purpose are communicated clearly.
- You promote yourself! Share awards, critic quotes, grants awarded, elected official quotes. For people new to your theatre and unsure of whether they’ll purchase tickets, these elements that raise your reputation are important.

There is nothing that frustrates a potential ticket buyer more than making it to your website and not finding the information they need immediately. A modern website is critical in their path-to-purchase. Ask yourself, “What is most important for visitors to my website to know today if they never clicked past the homepage?” Don’t forget “buy now” and “click to purchase” messaging and visual graphics should be top of mind when you are adding or updating content to your website.

Your Email

Email is the most powerful digital marketing platform you have. Building your email list is crucial because it’s the best way to...
build a relationship with potential and existing patrons in an intimate way. Emails wait in someone’s inbox until they’re read, and when you write really useful and entertaining emails, people will refer to them more than once because emails are easily searchable, too.

There are many ESPs (email service providers) out there and you’ve likely settled on one. But are you achieving these priorities?

- You send weekly emails to your list of subscribers.
- The content you write is useful and entertaining.
- You embed photos and videos into your email for visual impact.
- You have clear “buy now” buttons and messaging that lead directly to your online box office.
- Conversely, you don’t do hard-sell ticket pushes in every email. You educate and inspire too!
- Segmentation, segmentation, segmentation. Your database of patron emails has been segmented (grouped by like-qualities). Want to send just to subscribers? You’ve got them organized in a segment within your email service provider. Want to send just to volunteers? You’ve got them segmented.
- You write content based on who is a part of each segment. This is important. The content you deliver to volunteers is very different from what you send audience members!
- You convert your monthly or quarterly printed newsletter into digital form and send consistently.
- Your email database is integrated with your online ticketing service provider. You segment based on the type of show. Patrons who see children’s shows? Put them into an email segment. Patrons who only attend musicals? Put them into a segment.
- You only promote discounts and coupons in the controlled environment of segmented email. Never on your website or social media.
- You use email to deliver surveys to your audience. When you learn more about what they want and like, you make better decisions in the content you produce.
- You repeat your important copy points several times within your email. Face it, most readers are skimmers and you don’t want them to miss the dates of the production or the link to buying tickets!
- You send “Know Before You Go” emails to those who purchased tickets for your upcoming production. Remind them where to park. Where to eat before the show. Where to grab drinks afterwards. Give them another sneak peek at photos from the production they’re about to see.
- You send “Thank You For Joining Us” emails to those same patrons. A message from the director, cast, or even your Executive Director builds connection and affinity for your theatre.

You end uncertainty for your patrons by delivering content that is useful, informative, and inspiring. With each email you send, or content update you make to your website, you build your relationship with your patrons. Relationships matter. The connections that actors grow during the rehearsal process find their way into the performances shared with your audiences. Growing connections with audiences matter equally as much. Relationships should blossom on your digital platforms too!

Uncertainty is a more significant barrier for audiences than unfamiliarity. Marketing can help audiences overcome that uncertainty.

Julie Nemitz is the founder and chief content officer for Playhouse Theatre Marketing Academy, LLC where she inspires and educates community theatres and theatre educators in how to promote their theatres online more easily, efficiently and affordably, using the latest marketing techniques.

Learn more at playhousetheatremarketingacademy.com and join the mailing list. Contact Julie at: julie@playhouseartscollective.com or @playhousetheatremarketing on Facebook and Instagram.

“Uncertainty is a more significant barrier for audiences than unfamiliarity. Marketing can help audiences overcome that uncertainty.”

- Peter Linnet
- Slover Linnet Audience Research
Harris Cashes Out!

by Londos D’Arrigo

writer for JOAN RIVERS, PHYLLIS DILLER and LILY TOMLIN

Another hilarious, proven comedy from the author of SPREADING IT AROUND

Reviews and photos: www.londos.net
Publisher: www.canadianplayoutlet.com
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Omer Masters Jr

In Honor of Mary Britt  
Stephen and Mary Krempasky  
William Muchow

In Memory of Twink Lynch  
Frank Peot  
Mary and John Doveton

Thanks to the AACT Board and other AACT volunteers who pay their own travel expenses to attend meetings, and to those theatres that help with their travel expenses.

Thanks to all our contributors!  
Due to space, only contributions over $50 are listed above. Visit the website for a complete list: aact.org/donor-list

Your support of AACT benefits theatres all over the country.  
Please consider making a donation online at aact.org or send your contribution to  
AACT  
PO Box 101476  
Fort Worth, TX 76185
**Make A Legacy Gift**

Please consider including the American Association of Community Theatre in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT’s mission and provide learning experiences for AACT member companies participating in AACTFest national festivals.

To learn more about AACT’s Legacy Society, visit aact.org/legacy

or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org

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**Spotlight on Discounter**

**Arts People**

Arts People provides complete ticketing and fundraising software, developed by and for people who recognize the positive power of the arts. The Arts People integrated system is developed exclusively for a diverse group of arts organizations. Affordable, easy to use products, are designed to work efficiently for your theatre’s specific needs.

The Arts People team, with backgrounds in acting, arts administration, board of directors, box office managers, and comedy, provide unparalleled technical experience and five-star customer service!

AACT members who become new clients of Arts People receive free setup, free patron data migration, and a discount on usage fees. AACT members who are already Arts People clients, may refer an organization and receive a $100 credit, “when they go live.”

For more information on Arts People discounts for AACT members, visit aact.org/arts-people-1. For more AACT member discounts, visit aact.org/discounts-special-offers.

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**OTHER MUSICALS:**

- Christmas My Way – A Sinatra Holiday Bash
- I Left My Heart – A Salute to the Music of Tony Bennett
- Simply Simone – The Music of Nina Simone
- One More For My Baby - A Sinatra Songbook
- Town Without Pity – The Love Songs of Gene Pitney
- Bonnie & Clyde
- Club Morocco

**PLAYS:**

- Dracula - The Case of the Silver Scream (Film Noir)
- The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria
- Casa Blue—The Last Moments in the Life of Freda Kahlo
- Vampire Monologues
- War of the Worlds

**Scripts, Information, and Licensing at:**

summerwindproductions.com
**National Arts Action Summit**  
March 30 - 31, 2020  
Washington, DC  

Hosted by Americans for the Arts, and cosponsored by 85+ national arts organizations, the 32nd Arts Advocacy Day will be the largest gathering of its kind. Attendees will attend a full day of advocacy training to learn the latest research and legislative arts priorities on Monday, March 30. That evening, The Nancy Hanks Lecture at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is sure to inspire and motivate advocates. The following day, March 31, is Arts Advocacy Day, when advocates take their passion, knowledge, and stories to Capitol Hill for meetings with their congressional leaders in support of issues like arts education policy, the charitable tax deduction, and funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

AACT is a co-sponsor of this event.  
[americansforthearts.org/events/national-arts-action-summit](americansforthearts.org/events/national-arts-action-summit)

**USITT Conference and Stage Expo**  
April 1 - 4, 2020  
Houston, Texas  

The Annual Conference and Stage Expo is now in its 60th year. USITT 2020 will bring four days of education and networking to the George R. Brown Convention Center for technical theatre and live entertainment professionals and students.  
[usitt.org/conference](usitt.org/conference)

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**AACT Web Power**  

One of the great advantages of AACT membership is access to a wide range of discounts on everything from royalties to supplies. Some are special offers (often for a limited-time), while others are ongoing—and all can be found on the AACT website.

For example, AACT organizational members receive substantial discounts on scripts, materials, and royalties from 11 different publishers. Discounts are also available for theatrical supplies and services—from box office & member management software, to graphics & web design, from backdrops & projections, to car & truck rentals.

Go to aact.org/discounts and check out the many offers for AACT members. Details on how to redeem these benefits are at aact.org/discounts2 (sign-in required).

*Watch for Web Power in every issue of Spotlight—and learn how to get the most from the AACT website.*
**Spotlight Award Honors Freddie Bayne**

The **AACT Spotlight Award** partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award (aact.org/spotlight-award).

The Upstagers, Del Rio, Texas, has honored Freddie Beth Bayne with the AACT Spotlight Award for her long-time, dedicated service to the community theater group. Freddie was totally surprised and very moved when the award was presented by Board Treasurer, Candy Graf, and Board President, Lea White, at the theatre’s annual meeting in October.

Freddie and her husband, Jim, have been supportive patrons and season ticket holders of The Upstagers for over 25 years. Freddie became involved with the Board of Directors as a community representative in 2003. She was immediately recruited as Board Secretary, and joined the Reading Committee, which selects the group’s shows for each season.

According to the Upstagers’ nomination letter, “Freddie still says she isn’t qualified to be on our Board, since she doesn’t act, sing, dance, build sets, or do tech work, but she knows our community and loves theatre. And as a retired English teacher, she has organizational and writing skills that are indispensable to our group.”

Freddie managed the box office for years, and supervised the front of the house for each performance. She organized ticket sales at various businesses in the community—in the process, becoming the “face” of The Upstagers. She coordinated annual season ticket sales, keeping accurate records of patrons, subscriptions, donations, and address changes from year to year. For someone who never performed onstage or assisted backstage, Freddie has been an indispensable volunteer for the community theatre group.

Recently, Freddie agreed to assist in the administration of The Upstagers’ Facebook page, even though she felt that she was “too old and out of date for all that.” She monitors the page daily, posting news and photos for the group.

“I want to thank The Upstagers for letting me do all this,” Freddie said, “and have so much fun over the years! It has meant the world to me.”

**Friends We’ll Miss**

Jill Sigman (Manitowoc, Wisconsin), long-time travel specialist for the U.S. Army Soldier Show, died November 11, 2019 due to complications brought on by multiple sclerosis, which she endured from the age of 23.

Jill worked as the Travel Manager for the U.S. Army Entertainment Division, handling the travel, billeting, and freight requirements for all the Divisions activities; including the U.S. Army Soldier Show tours, in-country and overseas; Army Concert Series, stateside; USA Express world tours; the Stars of Tomorrow Army wide annual entertainment contest; and the stateside requirements of any AACT Region X groups participating in AACTFest. She was active with both U.S. Army Entertainment and AACT from 1998 to 2012.

For the American Association of Community Theatre, she served as a committee member developing guidelines for handicapped accessibility and services for theatres.
Northern Kentucky University
Y.E.S Festival of New Plays

Northern Kentucky University School of the Arts is calling for submissions for the 20th anniversary of its award-winning Year End Series Festival of New Plays - The Y.E.S. Festival, running April 8-18, 2021.

Two plays will be selected for performance in the festival.

The selected playwrights will each receive a cash prize of $400 and an expense-paid (travel and accommodations) visit to NKU to see their plays in production. Selected plays will receive a full production.

Full-length plays and musicals are eligible. The author must fully own all rights.

No children’s theatre, one-acts, or reader’s theatre pieces will be considered.

Adaptations will only be considered if the adapted work is in the public domain.

Submissions may not have had a previous professional or university production.

In deciding what to submit, a writer should know the festival will be cast with undergraduate student actors. Submissions with larger casts are looked upon favorably in the selection process.

Selected playwrights must be available to visit the festival about one week before opening so that their visit can be arranged to include late rehearsals and the premiere of their play.

Awards: Two cash prizes of $400 each, plus expense-paid travel to the festival.

Deadline: June 1, 2020

Submission may be electronic or by mail.

For more information, contact:

Michael King, Co-Project Director
mking@nku.edu
(859) 572-5647

Corrie Danieley, Co-Project Director
danieleyc1@nku.edu
(859) 572-5451

Details: nku.edu/academics/sota/theatre/season/yes-festival
AACT Corporate Partners

Much of the work of the American Association of Community Theatre would not be possible without the generous support of our Corporate Partners, who are listed below. We thank each of them for their commitment to AACT—and to the work of community theatres everywhere.

**Diamond Partner**

Music Theatre International

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- USITT

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- Heuer Publishing
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**SUPPORT THEATRE IN AMERICA**

Become an AACT Corporate Partner

For information on becoming an AACT Corporate Partner, visit aact.org/become-corporate-partner
Steven Butler, AACT Board Member and Florida Theatre Conference Executive Director, visits the cast of Hello Dolly! after a performance at The Players Center for Performing Arts in Sarasota, Florida, in December 2019


Front (l – r): Shana Martin, Sarah Conte, Lily Mancini, Brianne Nunnelley, Debbi White, Abigail Kiepke, Kenneth Glese, Caroline Claybread, Alana Opie, Katelyn Goneau, Jessica Babcock, Kate Ayres

(l – r): Mary Jo DeNolf (AACT Festival Coordinator and Grand Rapids Civic Theatre Director of Volunteers and Operations), Beth Peterson (Players de Noc), Jamie Peterson (Community Theatre Association of Michigan Board, Players de Noc), Bill Anderson (Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, Midland Players), Michael Wilson (Grand Rapids Civic Theatre Props Master), and Leigh Levine (Grand Rapids Civic Theatre) visit backstage at a performance of The Wizard of Oz at Bay City College in Escanaba, Michigan on November 2, 2019

continued on next page
Premiere Arts (Elkhart, Indiana) Executive Artistic Director Craig Gibson and John Follmer visit with Broadway star Jeff Kready backstage at performance of Tootsie at the Marquis Theatre on Broadway in December 2019.

Craig won this package deal for the Broadway performance and backstage visit at the AACT Silent Auction held at AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

BARD ARTS PLAYS

FunBirds (5 F, 2 M) Roger Coyne, recently divorced, swears that in the modern age, monogamous relations are obsolete. "In an age of abundance," he says, "a man can have two of anything—including women." His FunBirds, Edna and Desiree, compete with each other, then agree to cooperate. They devise a plot to teach Roger a lesson. Obsession matches obsession leading to ludicrous ruin.

An Examined Life (2 F, 1 M) Amo, a philosopher, feels that he has failed in life. His life-examination consists of conversations with the ghost of his youthful teacher, Max, who still dominates his psyche. His student, Trudy, persuades him to engage in "an enlightened conversation," and finds a way to free the Prof from his demon.

For these and other Bard Arts plays visit badartsny.com. Email: bardarts@verizon.net.
Artie's Advocacy Tip

Become more aware and involved in political arts advocacy. Learn how at americansforthearts.org/advocate

As a constituent, you are the ideal grassroots advocate to convey to members of Congress how essential the arts and arts education are to your community. You have the power to educate them about the importance of the arts in your community and to engage them on important arts issues on Capitol Hill.

Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund created a movement to stand up for the arts in America! You can make a difference by taking action today on Americans for the Arts’ current campaigns. Visit the Arts Action Center to participate in current campaigns and to find your legislators by zip code artsactionfund.org/action-center?vsrc=%2faddress.

Without your help, your member of Congress may not realize the ability of the arts to change lives in your community.

The National Arts Action Summit will take place on March 30-31, 2020 in Washington, DC. For more info, visit: americansforthearts.org.
Shopping for Insurance: Where Do You Start?
Grice King

We get calls every day from theatres that are just getting started, or that are leasing a venue for the first time, and been told they need insurance. The problem is that they’re not sure what kind they need, or even why they need it.

There is no simple answer that fixes everything, because the reasons for purchasing theatre insurance are as unique as the theatres themselves. That’s why it pays to work with an insurance broker who is experienced with, and dedicated to, the theatre industry. Locating the right broker is always the best place to start.

Issues often arise when renting or leasing a venue that requires the producing theatre to have their own general liability insurance, and also name the venue as an “additional insured” on that policy. This can send the theatre company scrambling—sometimes the day before they need access to the venue—to find a policy that satisfies their lease requirements, only to discover that it may not be possible to put together coverage in 24 hours. Then the issue of cost comes into play, which most young theatres haven’t budgeted for.

An experienced theatre insurance broker will know which questions to ask to develop the appropriate strategy for the situation at hand. Do you only need coverage for the impending production, or year-round? Will you be using this venue again during the year, or another one with the same requirements? How quickly do you need a certificate of insurance? The answers to these questions will help a broker narrow down the options to get to the best policy at the best price, and as soon as possible.

The search for insurance is never a simple one, especially when a theatre is under the gun to have it in a hurry.

The example given addresses general liability insurance, which is the most common need. However, there will be other situations where the need for workers compensation, auto liability, or directors and officers liability, precipitates a similar set of circumstances—and a completely different set of questions. The important thing to remember is that the right broker will always know the right questions to ask in order to tackle those issues.

The search for insurance is never a simple one, especially when a theatre is under the gun to have it in a hurry. Knowing where to begin can take the burden off the theatre and put it in the hands of an experienced professional. And that professional should always be someone experienced in both insurance and the needs of theatre companies, to make sure that the need is met in the most expedient and cost-effective manner.

After all, don’t theatres have other important things to attend to?

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<tr>
<td>Feb 26-Mar 1</td>
<td>Southeast Theatre Conference 71st Annual SETC Convention</td>
<td>KY</td>
<td>Louisville 336-272-3645 setc.org/convention/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 12-14</td>
<td>Texas Nonprofit Theatres State Conference</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>817-731-2238 texastheatres.org/state/</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Indiana Community Theatre Association Spring Conference</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>ictaindiana.org/conference.html</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 20-29</td>
<td>AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <em>The Cayuga Canal Girls</em> by Laura King at Phoenix Stage Company</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>203-632-8546 phoenixstagecompany.org</td>
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<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>World Theatre Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 27-28</td>
<td>Iowa Community Theatre Association ICTA Convention 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 30-31</td>
<td>National Arts Action Summit/Arts Advocacy Day 2020 Americans for the Arts</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>202-371-2830 americansforthearts.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 1-4</td>
<td>USITT 2020 Conference &amp; Stage Expo</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>800-938-7488 usittshow.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 23 - May 9</td>
<td>AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <em>Proprioception</em>, by Marilyn Millstone at Rover Dramawerks</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>972-849-0358 roverdramawerks.com</td>
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