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PASSIONATE PRAISE A Tribute to Arthur Laurents

by DAVID SAINT Artistic Director of George Street Playhouse

Arthur Laurents led an extraordinary life with a career that spanned over 60 years and included writing Academy Award winning films and Tony Award winning shows. But he also had a prolific Tony Award winning career as a Director.

I was fortunate to be able to collaborate with Arthur fourteen times, and in the process we became best friends.

I learned much from him as a Director, whether acting as Artistic Director and hosting him at the George Street Playhouse as a Director, or serving as his Associate Director on *West Side Story*, and later directing the Tour, or most frequently, directing eight premieres of his work.

In all those collaborations Arthur always stressed the importance of finding the "emotional truth" in the text or subtext of the piece. He believed that was the primary responsibility of any Director. Anything which helped to support that truth was gold. Anything which served to draw attention to a Director's touch was dross.

I also spent over 20 years going to the theatre with Arthur and talking for hours afterward

about the work. He was known and feared for his brilliant insight and frequently uncensored criticism.

But few talk about his equally passionate praise.

I have been thinking lately about the directing work over the years which he exuberantly admired. The following were some of his favorites:

He adored Mike Nichols and often spoke about a moment in *Streamers* when the complex nature of forbidden lust and terrifying violence was powerfully captured in one moment of directorial genius - when Dorian Harewood almost imperceptibly touched his foot against Peter Evans' foot downstage on cots while a scene played out upstage. "That was genius!" Arthur said. "One gesture that caught the whole play."

The use of microphones pulled out of pockets by the young boys in *Spring Awakening* like penises bursting forth. Arthur loved the way Michael Mayer and Bill T. Jones worked together to help the actors physicalize the entire theme of the play. "Breathhtakingly original" he said.

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From left to right: Julie Taymor, Gil Cates, Madeline Puzo, Jeffrey Horowitz, Curt Columbus

A DIRECTOR'S LIFE THE SDCF TCG PANEL

by EVAN SHOEMAKE, SDC Business Representative

On a beautiful sunny day not long ago, a panel of theatre artists, gently sprawled across a stage in the black box theatre of a similarly sprawling high school campus in downtown Los Angeles, asked the age-old questions: *Why are we here and what are we talking about?* While not the words any moderator wants to hear from a group of carefully assembled panelists, each a luminary in their field, these probing questions were rarely as valuable as they were at that moment. These questions and the overall desire to begin a dialogue about the

arc of a Director's career led to one of the most intellectual, spirited, informative and valuable discussions I have witnessed during my tenure with SDC. All flair and authorial grandeur aside, SDC began a dialogue on June 18 at the 2011 TCG Conference that will most certainly shape and inform further discussion between Directors and Choreographers and the theatrical community that may or may not be doing all it can to support them.

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When your panel boasts the likes of Berkeley Repertory Theatre Managing Director Susan Medak, Tony-winning Director **Julie Taymor**, Geffen Playhouse Producing Director **Gil Cates**, Dean of USC Theatre School **Madeline Puzo**, Theatre for a New Audience Founder **Jeffrey Horowitz** and Trinity Repertory Artistic Director **Curt Columbus**, you might be afraid of creating the perfect storm; too many opposing opinions and strong egos to actually yield a productive session. But this could not have been further from the reality that occurred during the panel, *A Director's Life: Creative Development and Renewal*, as moderated by SDC Executive Director **Laura Penn**. There was certainly dissent amongst the ranks but all of our panelists shared a common purpose and passion, to find ways to better serve theatre Directors in a field that seems to have overlooked their contributions. From the institutional theatre to the freelance artist to the educational practitioner to the artistic directors, everyone agreed, we have to do more to support Directors.

There are countless highlights from the discussion and we hope to make available, soon, a full recording to Members. But one of the most interesting impressions

that I received was the overall sense from everyone that there needs to be a stronger community in place for Directors; either a community in which they live, a community they create for themselves with other artists, or a community created for them by institutional theatres. Each panelist spoke not just of his/her own experiences working and developing within a communal structure, but the value that it lends to a Director's growth and development. There was no consensus on how these communities could and should be created but there was little doubt that a Director should have the opportunity to create, develop, grow, experiment and play. Directors need a sense of safety in taking risks and having a voice and vision.

Five days after the TCG panel/conference an SDC Associate Member came into the office to meet with me. A young Director who has had some exceptional experiences already in his career, he came seeking guidance on how to take the next step, how to continue to "professionalize" himself. We had a wonderful discussion and through the course of our exchange I mentioned **Madeline Puzo's** passionate opinion that the theatrical field has to find ways to better serve and nurture young

Directors, those who are recently out of school and trying to find their way, and to create more resources for them. He smiled and said, "I think she's talking about me!" In fact, it seems, she was. As **Madeline** was preparing herself for this panel and as she was corresponding with **Laura** about the topic, this young Director was with **Madeline** in London. He is a graduate of the USC Theatre School where he studied under her guidance. Since graduation he has continually received guidance from her and she has continued to mentor him and other students, thus explaining the fervor with which she advocates for these individuals.

From sitting in the darkened theatre listening to these artists discuss how to better serve directors to having this young, developing director sitting in my office seeking guidance on his future, it was a remarkable moment of recognition that we have only just begun this discussion, and the questions of why are we here and what are we talking about are being answered daily. We are here to find ways to nurture the director's career and we are continually discussing what that means and how it can be achieved.

SDC AT TCG **Our Members Report from the Trenches!**



JACK REULER

Artistic Director, Mixed Blood Theatre Company

This SDC Member found the 2011 TCG national conference – "What If..." – truly inspiring: as veteran conference attendee, as an artistic director aspiring to usher in the next generations of theatre artists,

as an immigrant to the digital landscape, and as an avid audience member. It was a conference signaling the evolution and maturation of TCG to be in synch with **David Foule's** sagely closing quote that, paraphrased, we should try to be the parents of our future rather than the offspring of the past.

My lexicon grew with words like disintermediation, neurosphere, morph corp, miscapitalized, post-ironic, and paracosmos (most of which are underlined by spell check). While I had long heard and known that good is the enemy of great, I now also believe that **sustainability is the enemy of adaptability**. I am thrilled to be convinced that there is a tangible shift in funders' mentality to **rewarding achievement** rather than supporting need. I came away needing to insist that staff and board **be risk positive and move quickly** rather than risk averse and cautionary.

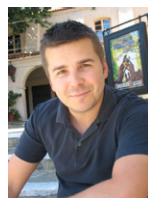
It was an epiphany that there are 5 C's that must now precede the 3 R's for earth's residents: **creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, content, and context**. I will hold myself accountable to suggested standards for leadership and management in a transformational age:

- Adaptability
- Collaborative ongoing reorganization
- Resilience
- Vision

Todd London's nuggets of ideal theatre are not theoretical for me and I will persist in being introspective if my leadership is of an institution that:

- ✓ Is by, about, for, with, and near community
- ✓ Allows for the realization of beauty
- ✓ Is a transparent vessel for honesty, self-criticism, and dissent
- ✓ Widens the base of the American theatre audience
- ✓ Allows the audience to enter "through the world," diluting and striving to eliminate notions of elitism.

The TCG conference was not without its obligatory whining, its never-progressing diversity discussions, and the mourning of companies that had attended last year but no longer are in operation. But in 2011 the alert participant could connect the dots from plenary to plenary to breakout to schmoozathon to performance and depart Los Angeles wiser and inspired to face the Shift Age armed with confidence and tools.



DÁMASO RODRIGUEZ

Co-Artistic Director, Furious Theatre Company

I attended the TCG Conference this year both as a representative of Furious Theatre Company and as a freelance Director living and working in Los Angeles. The few days of TCG, alongside the concurrent events

RADAR LA, Hollywood Fringe Festival and the Asian American Theater Conference, turned my artistic hometown into what felt like the center of the American Theatre. I was proud to see L.A.'s vibrant theatre community make such a strong showing – word spread that this was the largest conference in TCG history with over a 1,000 attendees.

Highlights for me included **Todd London's** plenary session speech "An Ideal Theatre: Visions That Built an American Art" during which he passionately and eloquently chronicled the founding visions of our first "regional" theatres – one of the powerful takeaways for me was the revelation that what we have come to know as "not-for-profit" or "regional theatres" in the early 20th century were

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self-identified as “art theatres.” It struck me as an unfortunate turn that through the decades we had re-branded the art theatres with names primarily evoking their distance from New York or tax status. London challenged us to look backward toward the future.

A changing world and therefore a changing theatre seemed to be a through-line between many sessions. “The Shift Age,” an address by futurist and author David Houle, and “The Community Formerly Known as the Audience” by ArtsJournal.com editor Douglas McLennon dominated many between-session conversations with each speaker making the case that our audiences have been forever changed by the undeniable impact of social media. The future is in the hands of the so-called “Digital Natives,” the generation of under-10-year olds born into the age of touch screen technology and instant communication, and the Millennials who came of age with the same technology. As Houle provocatively pointed out, those of us over 20 are in fact “immigrants” in this new landscape. I left these sessions and the entire conference with a sense that the future could be one of opportunity vs. obstacle.



ERIC TING

Assoc. Artistic Director, Long Wharf Theatre

MEIYIN WANG

Assoc. Artistic Producer, Under the Radar



ERIC: So Meiyin, this is what-- your third TCG conference?

MEIYIN: Fourth! Four glorious times.

ERIC: Mine too mine too. Excellent. Something we have in common. What was different for you this time around?

MEIYIN: Probably the big thing was the RADAR LA Festival which was the TCG Pre-conference. I thought that seeing theatre in tandem with attending the conference really drew focus to what the conference was about.

ERIC: “What if...?” [the theme of this year’s conference]

MEIYIN: Our creative practices.

ERIC: There did seem to be a re-focusing (from fiscal survival at the 2010 Chicago conference) to artists and the support of artists this time around – with Julie Taymor as the closing plenary and a lot more playwrights, for instance, represented than I remember from past conferences.

MEIYIN: I’d love to see the numbers on that. So would Kristoffer Diaz. We’ve been talking about researching concrete numbers that would qualify so many of these discussions

ERIC: Where’s Kris Diaz when you need him?

MEIYIN: Making an elaborate entrance at the Public. Or the Dallas Theater Center.

ERIC: Who can keep track these days? (laughs) ... But not only the writers’ process – innovative practices too. Questions of devised work, ensemble creation, the new avant garde –

MEIYIN: Actually now I call it “form-forward”–

ERIC: Love that. I found myself most fascinated by this consideration of the evolving topography of theatre-making that the festival drew focus to. Too often in institutional (hate that word) theatre, it feels like the work is being forced to adapt to the conditions of the field – to budgets and aging audiences and competing entertainments; but I was reminded that it’s actually the other way around. It’s the work that redefines the field. And we have to learn to adapt, to bend, or we’re almost certain to break.

MEIYIN: And as Teresa Eyring said, “Instead of asking how we can save theatre, we should be asking how theatre can save the world.”

ERIC: I also remember Todd London’s inspiring reminder to look backwards even as we move forwards.

MEIYIN: And that we don’t have to reinvent the wheel – that these questions have been with us from the beginning... And you? What was different for you this time around?

ERIC: Well, there was a lot more sex. (chuckles)

MEIYIN: ...What do you mean...?

ERIC: Well, you know, not literally. But so much of these for me are about the encounters outside of the auditoriums and the classrooms and the conference rooms. It’s the company and the companionship, the reunions and the new unions-- they should be like sex, you know?

MEIYIN: I don’t know about you, Eric, but I may be too nice a Chinese girl to have sex in classrooms.

ERIC: No, but really, that’s what was different for me this time around-- all these casual yet intense, brief but passionate encounters in the bars and lobbies and sidewalks and hallways and plazas (and yes hotel rooms), filled with nonverbal gestures and primal grunts, thoughts and ideas colliding with raw inspiration. Isn’t that how art is made? We woo. We win.

And this may only be meaningful for the twitterati amongst us, but we’d like to sign off with simply this: #socks

PASSIONATE PRAISE continued from cover

He gushed about Kathleen Marshall’s direction/choreography of “There Once Was a Man” in *Pajama Game* when, as he put it, “the driving rhythm of the song became a pure manifestation of unbridled sexual energy - we had no doubt about the core of the show.”

He often brought up Mark Brokaw’s incredible sensitivity to the importance of David Morse’s performance in *How I Learned to Drive*. “That was real direction! To make sure that his sympathetic performance seduced us right along with the young girl. We finally understood the horror of pedophilia.”

Sometimes it could all come down to one line, and the right emphasis. He praised

Doug Hughes’ guidance of Cherry Jones handling of that last line “I have doubts.” He loved when a Director could work with a team of designers to reinforce the emotional center of a play. He talked for hours about Joe Mantello’s brilliant work on *The Pride* where a design of shiny black mirrors and chrome literally masked and reflected the constant repression and reflecting generational paranoia of the story.

And most recently, he was literally astonished at how Dan Sullivan in one scene of an unspoken baptism of humiliation added to *Merchant of Venice*, “made me understand the play emotionally for the first time. Sensational!”

I mention all these examples not only to explain Arthur’s taste in directorial choices but also to give a sense of his genuine passion for great work. His own work of which he was justifiably proud? Probably his favorite was the discovery first with Angela Lansbury, and then repeated with Tyne Daly and Patti LuPone, that if Rose continued to bow at the end of “Rose’s Turn” even after the actual applause of the audience stopped, we would become staggeringly aware of the emotional truth of her psyche, and even complicit in contributing to it - a genuine coup de théâtre.

Directing emotional truth.
A true Arthur touch.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



WE ARE



ARTHUR

by KATE POWERS
Member Director

SDC Members direct and choreograph in so many arenas on pieces of such diversity it is often difficult to keep up with our Members and the depth and breadth of such work. I was chatting with SDC Member Kate Powers one afternoon when we got to the inevitable "what's keeping you busy right now" moment of the conversation. Kate spoke of her schedule for the production of *Superior Donuts* she'd been directing at Sing Sing Correctional Facility (a maximum security prison "up the river" in Ossining, NY). Kate talked about the rehearsals and prep that she had been engaged in since the beginning of the year and the upcoming performances for the prison population as well as a performance for an invited audience of "civilians." My ears

perked up. I asked if I could be invited and low and behold, some weeks later, found myself making my way up to Sing Sing. Experiencing the work of one of our Members in an environment like Sing Sing was a profound experience for me...causing me to examine my thoughts and beliefs about who and how we incarcerate and rehabilitate and a potent reminder of the impact of making and experiencing theater. Kate writes below of a part of that process and of a special moment of connection she was able to make happen for the men engaged in the process.

- BARBARA WOLKOFF, Director of Member Services



Even though I am in prison three times a week, I am only just beginning to understand what it feels like to be incarcerated. What I do know is that the men with whom I work with Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) at Sing Sing Correctional Facility feel like they have been thrown away. They know that society at large thinks of them as little more than vicious animals, rightfully caged. They feel forgotten, invisible. They are used

to being addressed with contempt, and as a mass of not-quite-humanity; many of them were treated this way long before they were incarcerated. The men tell me how much it means that a few civilians come in to teach them, work with them, see them as actual people.

At least once a week, someone asks me a question to the effect of "why do you go in there to teach theatre to those hardened criminals?" For one thing, they are not all so hardened; some of them have a brave front, but tremendous vulnerability, tremendously deep wounds.

Then I say, "who do you want coming home?" Even among these men who are often serving 25 to life, most of them will eventually come home. So who do you want coming back into

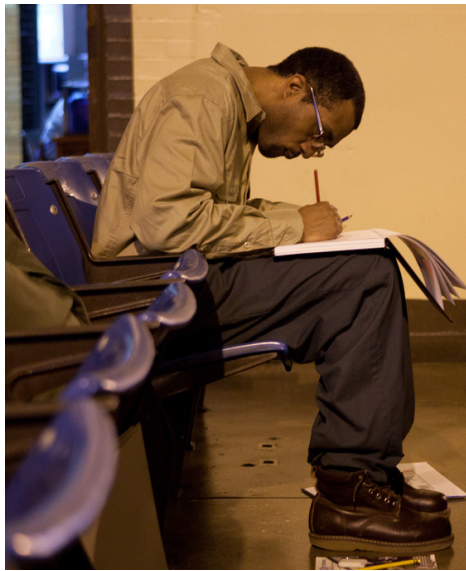
the community? The man who has been thrown in a cage and left to stew in his own hurt, anger and bitterness, or the man who has had the opportunity to develop trust, communication skills, critical thinking skills, compassion and a sense of community? The Director in me wants to make it all better, but I can't. I often wish I could bring them baked goods or knit them hats, but these things are strictly prohibited by the Department of Corrections. So when the men on the steering committee for RTA selected Tracy Letts' *Superior Donuts* as our production for this spring, I suddenly thought of a gift I could legally bring them. Maybe. If I could work it out. I could give them the gift of recognition, of human interaction, of shared experience with someone who has not been tarred with the prickly Class A felon brush.

Michael McKean

Through the magic of Twitter, that breaker of barriers, that creator of dialogue and access, I spoke with Michael McKean, who created the role of Arthur Przybyszewski first at Steppenwolf and then on Broadway. I invited Michael to come speak with the men in RTA at Sing Sing, and he said yes.

When I told the guys that Michael was going to come for a visit, they looked at me through veiled eyes. One or two nodded in acknowledgment: "message received," but until they saw the blue of his eyes, they were not about to display their enthusiasm

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or excitement. Too used to disappointment, they seemed to imagine all the ways this could go wrong.

Last Friday night [April 22], after a small mountain of paperwork was expertly scaled by Katherine Vockins, Executive Director of RTA, and the administration of Sing Sing, Michael came to prison with me.

It is my custom to greet each man individually when I enter our class and rehearsal room, rather to lump them once again together in a collective hello. I asked Michael to join me as I made my way around the room, so that I could introduce each participant in the program, so that Michael could meet them and they could meet him. As he walked up to the incarcerated actor — with the tell-tale disheveled beard — who will be playing Arthur at Sing Sing, Michael warmly took his hand and said, “We are Arthur.”

We invited Michael to join us in a warm-up game of ball. He gracefully jumped into our playful fray.

(Anyone who has rehearsed anything with me in the past 19 years will tell you that playing ball is an integral feature of my rehearsal process; 98% of those who have worked with me will tell you how much fun it is. The unhappy 2%? I don’t really want to work with them again anyway.)

Then we sat in a circle and talked shop for two hours. Michael conversed with the men, peer to peer, about the play, about how he got involved with the project initially, about process.

Michael said he was drawn to the play because “redemption is our favorite story. Arthur exists without the kindness of the world, and he is able to find a way to redeem the 40 years he’s lost.” You better believe that resonated. All of the men listened actively as Michael spoke; S., who is playing Arthur, only took his eyes off Michael long enough to take some notes.

At one point, he mentioned a textual question on which the men had challenged my interpretation, and he unwittingly agreed with what I’d been telling them since about the third day of rehearsal. I made a silent gesture of celebration. Everyone laughed, and one of the men looked at me, smiling and said, “How vindicated do you feel?”

Snowball effect

We’re at that point in the rehearsal process (just a couple weeks to go before we perform this play for the general population and then for an invited civilian audience) when the strain, the nervous energy is starting to mount for the men of RTA. They are role models within the prison; they feel a responsibility. They also suffer from domino-like bouts of group anxiety; if one guy is having a rough night at rehearsal, struggling with words or choices, pretty soon a few guys are having a rough night, and then it’s just a rough night.



A few nights before Michael’s visit, I asked the men, in an attempt to refocus or harness that nervous energy, what messages, themes or ideas they want to share with the population when we present the play. One man quoted the play’s Max, the cantankerous Russian, “People still can, can always change later” by way of expressing what he wants to share. My assistant director said that when he first read the play, he couldn’t believe a white person would ever do for a black man what Arthur does for Franco, but then he thought about the RTA civilians who come in to work, and

he realized that cross-racial kindness and friendship can happen. Other men talked about the depth and possibilities of friendship, and Lady’s line, that if you are still alive, “You still have time.”

Hope is gold

Michael reinforced a lot of messages and ideas that the RTA facilitators work to instill in the men, but it wasn’t his agreeing with my colleagues and me that was so great. What was great was that he took the time to come; what was great was that, for the men, this person they had seen on television and in films decided that they were worth talking to, came to see them, share with them the experience of building a character, of working through self-doubt during rehearsals, of the redemption that is possible when you tell a good story well. Hope isn’t sentimental, Michael said, “Hope is gold.”

This article originally appeared in Kate’s blog, 2AMt, on April 25, 2011.

Rehabilitation Through The Arts (RTA) presented the play *Superior Donuts* at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York on Friday, May 13, 2011. Kate Powers and Kate Kenny, RTA Volunteer, work with program participants.

Photographer: Jens Knudsen.

On June 9, 2011, the SDC formally filed an arbitration claim against Spider-Man Broadway, LLC, the Producer of "Spider-Man/Turn Off the Dark," for failure to pay royalties to the Director **Julie Taymor**.

Laura Penn, Executive Director of SDC, stated, "Taymor has given nine years of her life to this project. The Producer has absolutely no right, legally and ethically, to withhold royalties that are due to her. In fact, the right to use her work, on Broadway or anywhere else, is dependent upon the payment of royalties."

The Producer's failure to pay to Ms. Taymor any royalties for the run of the production is in violation of both the SDC collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and her individual contract. SDC is asking for an accounting from the Producer to determine the precise amount of royalties due to Ms. Taymor, payment of all royalties due to Ms. Taymor, and continued payment of royalties and all other compensation due now and in the future.

In exchange for royalties Directors and Choreographers license their creative work to Producers. Under SDC's CBA the Producer does not have the rights to use Ms. Taymor's direction unless she is receiving royalties. According to Karen Azenberg, SDC President, "Royalties are the foundation of the compensation structure for Directors and Choreographers on Broadway. SDC exists to protect and enforce the rights of our Members to be paid for their work and for ongoing use of their property."

NEGOTIATION UPDATE

OFF-BROADWAY AGREEMENT COMPLETED

by MAURO MELLENO, Director of Contract Affairs

The new Off-Broadway Agreement, effective July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2013, secures increases in fees of 3.5% to 4% over the life of this three-year Agreement; pension and health increases from 14.5% to 24% over the life of the Agreement; and expanded coverage for workshop activity in the Institutional Not-For-Profit Theatres.

The Agreement replaces a Royalty Pool (Pool) structure with a Net Operating Profit (NOP) structure (as exists in the Broadway Agreement) as an alternative to paying royalties based on gross weekly box office receipts. The SDC committee was able to negotiate higher weekly minimums and the removal of the cap on royalties in exchange for the shift from Pool to NOP.

New provisions were added covering Electronic Transmission, Reproduction, Media and Promotion.

A great deal of discussion regarding Additional Companies led to provisions that will assist Producers in opening up new markets in which to license productions, thereby expanding Directors' and Choreographers' opportunities to license their work if unable to direct and choreograph the production themselves.

The Off-Broadway Committee was chaired by **Leigh Silverman** and co-chaired by **Chay Yew** and **Dan Knechtges**. Committee members included **Andrea Andresakis**, **Karen Azenberg**, **Pam Berlin**, **Tracy Bersley**, **Mark Brokaw**, **Joe Calarco**, **Jonathan Cerullo**, **Edie Cowan**, **Trip Cullman**, **Jeremy Dobrish**, **Timothy Douglas**, **Peter DuBois**, **Thomas Kail**, **Julie Kramer**, **Pam Mackinnon**, **Lisa Peterson**, **Scott Schwartz**, and **Henry Wishcamper**. SDC would like to thank the Off-Broadway League and the SDC committee members for their dedication in the negotiation of this Agreement.

THE 2011 ANTC NEGOTIATIONS

by PAM MACKINNON, ANTC Committee Member

The 2011 ANTC negotiations were cordial and quick; it was a like-minded room. **Joe Calarco**, our counsel **Ron Shechtman** and staff member **Randy Anderson** sat at the head of the table, well prepared and determined to leave before sundown with a solid agreement in place.

In six short hours we arrived at a new 4-year agreement. We expanded and clarified the media clauses – always tricky as who can predict the future? We came to good terms on fee increases, balancing them with health contributions, recognizing that the ANTC theatres are ahead of the curve on health, compared to other bargaining partners.

Executive Director **Laura Penn** ended the negotiations by reinforcing the idea that our Members don't see ANTC as a stepping stone but rather an arena in which to work throughout our careers; we do some of our best and most rewarding work in these smaller houses. This new contract strengthens the relationship between our Members and theatres, making the work more financially possible. The agreement will be brought to the Executive Board for ratification in July.

(Special thanks to my fellow ANTC Committee Members: David Glenn Armstrong, Tracy Bersley, Joe Calarco, Abigail Zealey Bess, Annette Jolles, Mahayana Landowne, Henry Wishcamper)

I was very excited to report at the most recent SDC Executive Board meeting about the Membership meeting I attended in Salt Lake City (see the article below), and I was even more excited when I heard about all the other regional meetings that had been held in the last couple of months. I am proud of our national initiatives that have encouraged these meetings and of the enthusiasm of our Members, not just in supporting SDC but in the ways that they support one another by making time in their busy schedules to host, promote and attend these gatherings. It is one thing to simply *say* we are a national Union, but it is a completely different matter to actually *be* a national Union. Our Members are making their voices heard across the country, ensuring that the art and crafts of direction and choreography are alive and well in America and SDC is here to help.

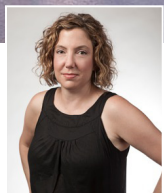
In an effort to continue developing stronger connections to the national Membership, this year's SDC Executive Board elections will include Regional Representative candidates who have been selected by special Regional Nominating Committees composed of Members from the regions that the candidates will represent. This is the first cycle of elections to incorporate this new nominating procedure and I think it is another important step in recognizing the national nature of our Membership and in strengthening our national presence.



So, check out what some of your fellow Members have been up to, look for a regional meeting near you and in the fall don't forget to vote! Until then, Happy Summer!

KAREN AZENBERG, President

MEMBER MEETING UPDATE: Members Report from the Field



Philadelphia

Anne Marie Cammarato, Reporting

A group of Philadelphia-area Directors and Choreographers gathered at the Wilma Theater on May 24, 2011. In attendance were SDC Members, Associate Members, and early-career Directors who were curious about the benefits of SDC Membership. Philly-based Directors and Choreographers, as well as those from the surrounding areas of New Jersey and Delaware, met and heard from SDC's Barbara Wolkoff about updates to SDC and its services. SDC Executive Board Member Richard Hamburger, in town to direct *My Wonderful Day* at the Wilma, hosted the event and led a discussion about area-specific concerns, including Tier Contracts, logistics of working within local universities, and the overall role of the Union to local Members. The meeting provided a great opportunity for Members and non-Members to meet, reunite, connect, and successfully discuss issues facing the careers of working Directors and Choreographers in the tri-state area.



Utah

Tim Threlfall, Reporting

On May 29, 2011 Pioneer Theatre Company Artistic Director **Charles Morey** hosted an informal get-together at his home in Salt Lake City for the ten or so SDC Members and Associates in the state of Utah. This was the first ever meeting in Utah and SDC President **Karen Azenberg**, in Salt Lake directing a production of *Rent* at PTC was also a guest at the event.

Others in attendance included **David Ivers** and **Brian Vaughn**, co-Artistic Directors of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, **Jerry Rapier** of Plan-B Theatre, **Tim Threlfall** representing Tuacahn Center for the Arts, as well as freelance Directors and Choreographers **Jim Christian**, **Jayne Luke**, and **Adrienne Moore**.

Mr. Morey commented on the evening saying, "I thought it was a terrific first get-together and opening of an on-going dialogue about what we do, how and why we do it and how we can collectively make the environment better for our work here in Utah."

The group committed to holding a similar gathering on an annual basis for Utah-based SDC Members to formulate a statewide educational campaign to help audiences recognize the role of professional Directors and Choreographers in quality theatrical productions.



Atlanta

Sharon Ott, Reporting

As SDC Southeastern Representative, I convened a get together for Members, Associates, and interested non-Members on June 6 at the Theatrical Outfit in Atlanta. We had a great group show up- four SDC Members, three Associates, and two interested non-Members. Most of the attendees were from the Atlanta area, but **Dane Peterson**, an Associate Member, joined us from Birmingham, Alabama. We had a wonderful free-ranging discussion which lasted most of the morning on topics which ran the gamut from health care to job creation to the benefits of membership and the local Atlanta scene. We all affirmed the importance of continuing gatherings such as these, where Members, Associates, and non-Members can learn from each other and network.

I plan on convening a similar forum in the Washington, DC area in late August, early September, and also hope to visit Florida at some point in the coming year.



SDCF, like many not-for-profits, begins its fiscal and programming year on July 1, so it is now officially FY 2012 at SDCF. Thanks to all of you – volunteers, contributors, funders, and for the first time ever, sponsors – who helped make our events and programs successful this past year. SDCF has only part-time staff; I needed each and every one of you make our programs happen.

With this new year, let's look to what is happening now and in the first half of this season. Please note that applications and guidelines for each program are available at SDCweb.org, and if you have difficulty accessing our website (which is currently undergoing maintenance), all forms are also available at our temporary site on wordpress at <http://sdcfoundation.wordpress.com/>.

- **NOMINATE BY AUG 1**
We're accepting nominations for the 2011 Zelda Fichandler Award, which awards a Director or Choreographer who is transforming the landscape in the Eastern region an unrestricted grant of \$5,000. Please see full information on the back cover for more details.
- **JOIN US**
On October 3, 2011, in NYC we will be presenting **George C. Wolfe** with our "Mr. Abbott" Award for Lifetime Achievement in Theatre. Venue and program will be announced soon. Please see the related article below.
- **APPLY AGAIN**
Our Reginald Denham Fellowship application and guidelines will be available online July 10. This Fellowship provides or supplements the Director's fee on a project anywhere in the country. Deadline for submission is August 25.
- **AND WATCH FOR FURTHER DETAILS**
Our One-on-One conversations with prominent Directors and Choreographers will be announced soon. These feature in-depth conversations with theatre luminaries focused on their careers, crafts, and artistic leadership.
- **SAVE THE DATE**
Our Zelda Fichandler Award presentation will be on October 24 at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. – please join us for the presentation and reception celebrating both Zelda and the 2011 recipient.
- **APPLY**
We are accepting applications through September 1 for our Observership Program. As in past years, we'll offer 25 Observerships, on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and at regional theatres throughout the country. All applicants are invited to our Observership Open House on Tuesday, July 12 at 5:30 p.m. at SDC/SDCF office in NY (1501 Broadway, suite 1701).
- **PLAN TO ATTEND**
Our Callaway Committee has been busy attending eligible productions throughout the 10-11 season. The Callaway Awards will be presented at the SDC Annual Membership Meeting in NY on Monday, November 14.
- **CONTACT US**
Please let us know if you'd like to serve on a selection committee or volunteer in any way. We always need and appreciate the help.

We hope to see you at our DCNs, free monthly meetings on the last Tuesday of each month featuring discussion with invited guests focused on a topic of interest to Directors and Choreographers at all career levels.

GEORGE C. WOLFE NAMED "MR. ABBOTT" AWARD RECIPIENT

SDCF is thrilled to announce that acclaimed Director **George C. Wolfe** will be celebrated with the 2011 "Mr. Abbott" Award for his incredible breadth and depth of work in the American Theatre. The Award will be presented at a gala event in New York on Monday, October 3, 2011.

The "Mr. Abbott" Award is named in honor of renowned Director **George Abbott** and is one of the only awards given to theatre Directors and Choreographers by their peers. This honor is presented to a Director or Choreographer in recognition of lifetime achievement. Past honorees include **Hal Prince, Susan Stroman, Lloyd Richards, Kathleen** and **Rob Marshall, Tommy Tune, and Michael Bennett.**

Of the selection, **Karen Azenberg**, President of SDC and Chairperson of the SDC Foundation Committee, remarks, "His artistry and vision as reflected in his body of work is enough of a reason to present George C Wolfe with the "Mr. Abbott" Award for lifetime achievement. And yet SDCF also wishes to celebrate Mr. Wolfe for his impact on the field, both the non-profit as well as the commercial theatre. Through his craft and his industry leadership, Mr. Wolfe has influenced the cultural landscape, and the American theatre is stronger for his presence."

Upon receiving notification of this honor **George C. Wolfe** said, "I am truly proud to be this year's recipient of the 'Mr. Abbott' Award and overjoyed to have my name added to the astonishing list of past honorees."

JUNETEENTH

by LORNA LITTLEWAY, Co-Founder Juneteenth Legacy Theatre

In April I asked colleague and Juneteenth Legacy Theatre Board Member **Sue Lawless** to approach the Stage Directors Foundation about a proposed partnership between SDCF and the Juneteenth Festival regarding a summer staged reading series about the African-American legacy. I produced such a series at Actors Theatre of Louisville for eleven years, and Sue directed many of those plays. The SDCF-Juneteenth Festival partnership would be mutually beneficial, providing an opportunity for union Associate Members and giving the Festival access to talented professional Directors.

The Festival included four new full-length plays – three dramatic scripts and a musical- and the presentation format was a marathon running from Saturday, June 18th at 5 p.m. resuming Sunday, June 19th at 1 p.m. and concluding at 11 p.m. The chosen directors not only had to be committed to artistic excellence but also had to be good collaborators with playwrights, resource managers, connected within the theater community, and team players.

The Festival hit pay dirt with the two applicants, **Anita Gonzalez** and **Peter Zazzali**. Their respective playwrights were very pleased with the staging of their scripts. One playwright said in a letter to me, "I've never seen a more expert, professional reading in all of my career of many readings." I was very pleased with the quality of their work, enthusiastic and professional attitude, and supportive spirit.



ANITA'S EXPERIENCE

The 1st Annual Juneteenth Festival of New Plays in NYC! hit New York last month with a dynamic slate of performances that brought African-American history to life.

I directed *Nobody*, a full length musical by Richard Aellen, about the vaudevillian team of (Bert) Williams and (George) Walker. Williams was a turn of the (20th) century entertainer who, with partner Walker, developed the first African-American musical, *In Dahomey*, to tour to London. Williams achieved financial success through appearances with the Zeigfeld Follies. The irony was Williams' artistic survival depended upon blackface performance. Through his skillful imitation of a poor, Black Southerner - his "Jonah Man" role – he brought humanity to a stereotypical character, a particularly challenging feat because Bert was born in Antigua, West Indies, and knew little of Southern culture.

Directing this piece was an educational and illuminating experience. Richard, from BMI, worked closely with me to revise the script. The cast, featuring Dathan B. Williams, James Edward Becton III, Jannie Jones and Angela Arnold, was fully committed and learned over 14 songs.

The Festival presented surprising and educational insights into African-American history. Two of the plays were set in the nineteenth century, a period when the United States was forging its identity against a background of slavery, industrialization, and manifest destiny. The role of the slave and the African American within the U.S.A. was being redefined as the nation struggled to negotiate ideals of freedom, independence, financial stability and the meaning of race.

The Juneteenth Festival reminded me how important it is to continue to produce plays that entertain even as they remind audiences that America's history, morality, and cultural beliefs were forged through the experiences of African descendants who excelled and continually negotiated their status with other European descendant Americans.

- ANITA GONZALEZ, Associate Member



PETER'S EXPERIENCE

I truly appreciate the fact that the SDC's commitment to provide opportunities for "emerging Directors" enabled me to participate in such a rewarding experience. Gretchen and Ellen have been particularly behind these sorts of efforts and I am truly grateful for their service.

It was a pleasure to work alongside fellow SDC Members Anita and Sue. In addition to the mutual support we provided each other, it was a unique learning experience to share in each other's process, especially as it pertained to the joint production meetings and technical rehearsal.

It was a most rewarding experience to serve this Festival by directing one of its four dramatic offerings, *Young Frederick Douglass*. In addition to feeling satisfied artistically with my piece, the collective spirit of Juneteenth and its importance in U.S. history was infectious among the 40 artistic collaborators. It was a very positive professional experience, and I will always be grateful to the SDC for providing the opportunity to me.

- PETER ZAZZALI, Associate Member

ARE UNIONS TO BLAME?

by MICHAEL M. KAISER, *President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts*

A recent article I read suggested that labor unions are a primary cause for today's financial problems in the arts. I could not disagree more.

It is absolutely true that when income falls precipitously, as it has for many arts organizations, costs must be realigned. And it is also true that unions, in protecting their workers, fight tooth and nail to maintain their members' standard of living and work environment. That is why there are unions in the first place.

But the key issue is: *why* has revenue fallen so far for so many arts organizations?

It is not the fault of union members that we are selling fewer tickets or raising less funds. We can blame a terrible economy, lack of arts education in our schools, substantially lower government grants at every level and new forms of entertainment that compete for the time and resources of our audiences for much of the reduction in resources available for arts organizations. A recent study, for example, found that contributions for the arts fell much farther

during the recession than had previously been expected.

But this is not the entire story.

For while many arts organizations are cutting budgets and reducing their service to their communities in response to falling revenue, many others are doing very well, thank you.

They may have to work harder for the resources they require for growth but they are still growing. These are the organizations that are smart about building revenue. They produce important art, they market this art and their institutions aggressively, and they are especially good at making people feel welcome as members of their extended families.

I have been surprised (and dismayed) to see how many arts organizations handle their donors, manage their special events and treat their board members. One arts manager I met told me that her organization never communicates with its donors except for writing them once a year and asking for their annual contribution! I recently went to

a board member event for one organization where the board members were left to fend for themselves as the staff members sat and drank and ate! Another arts executive told me on several occasions how he "hates his board members and wishes they would go away!"

And then they are surprised when their levels of contributions fall.

It is impossible to blame unions for the lack of revenue for arts organizations when so many are doing such a poor job of managing themselves.

In any event, cutting wages is not a long term strategy for success, nor does it ensure that the mission of an organization will be pursued with vigor. (And you can only cut for so long before there is nothing left to cut.) The only way to assure success for any not for profit is to build a sustained and growing revenue producing capability.

This blog originally appeared in the Huffington Post on June 6, 2011.

OTHER UNION NEWS NOTEWORTHY

NEW MEMBERS

Gregg Brevoort
Director
Van Nuys, CA

Antoinette DiPietropolo
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Brantley Dunaway
Director
Prospect, KY

Niki Flacks
Director
New York, NY

David New
Director
Chicago, IL

Morris Panych
Director
Toronto, CA

Ken Roht
Director/Choreographer
Los Angeles, CA

Lester Thomas Shane
Director
New York, NY

Hana Sharif
Director
Rocky Hill, CT
Michelle Tattenbaum
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Jim Weaver
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Jeff Whiting
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Laura Caparrotti
Director
New York, NY

Thomas B. Costello
Director
Pittsburgh, PA

Kevin Doyle
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Amanda Friou
Director
Minneapolis, MN

Angelisa Gillyard
Director/Choreographer
Washington, DC

Jessica Heidt
Director
San Francisco, CA

Michele H. Jones
Director
Valley Stream, NY

Ben Kawaller
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Matthew Mohr
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Alicia Okouchi-Guy
Director
Orange, CA

Andy Paris
Director
Irvington, NY

Lorca Peress
Director
New York, NY

Michele Shay
Director
Los Angeles, CA

Patrick Vassel
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Jeffrey Woodbridge
Director
New York, NY

IN MEMORY OF

Ed Burgess
Choreographer
Milwaukee, WI

Arthur Laurents
Director
Quogue, NY

NEW OR RENEWED IPA'S

Penguin Rep, Stony Point
NY IPA to ANTC

Cause Célèbre, New York
NY IPA to ANTC

Epic Theatre, New York
NY IPA to ANTC

Reagle Players, Waltham
MA IPA to CORST

STRIKE & DEFAULT

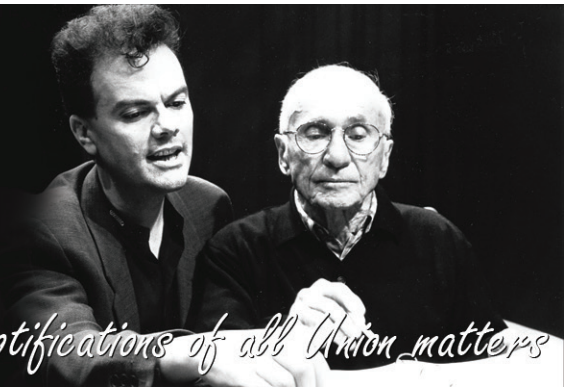
Members asked to work for one of the theatres or producers appearing on the Default or Strike list should contact Mauro Melleno (ext. 237, MMelleno@SDCweb.org) immediately. Work rules stipulate that Members may not work for employers on the Strike list and must have an appropriate SDC contract for all employment, otherwise fines or penalties may be incurred.

STRIKE LIST *The Strike List contains employers with whom serious issues have arisen and remain unresolved. Examples include refusal of these employers to recognize SDC, or failure to comply with the terms of an SDC contract. No Member may render directorial or choreographic services, including those associated with "show doctoring," for a producer or theatre posted on SDC's Strike List.*

Alternative Scenario LLC Jeffrey Altshuler, Producer	DS Unlimited David Syner, Producer Los Angeles, CA	On the Run Productions
Baci Management d/b/a B&B Prod. Mary Card, Producer	Dublin Theatre Company Rick Robinson, Producer Dublin, CA	Perkins Productions Robert Perkins, Producer
BCBGMaxAzria Entertainment, Inc. Charles Cohen, Producer Beverly Hills, CA (producers of <i>The Ten Commandments</i> in LA)	Steve Hildebrand, Producer	Playhouse Theatre Group Tracy Flater, Producer
BINGO Chicago, LLC Carel Davis, Russ Tilaro, Agnes Corrado, Producers	International Theatres Corporation Thomas Scalen, Producer	Prince Music Theatre
BT Productions	Israel Oh Israel, International, Inc. Richard Bernstein, Producer	Shear Madness Las Vegas, LLC Terrence Williams, Producer
Darren Lee Cole, Producer	Lombardo Org. LLC, Matthew Lombardo, Producer	Gloria Hope Sher, Producer
Jack Cullen, Producer	Lone Star Performing Arts Association	Stage One Inc. (City Repertory Theatre of Wichita)
Drama Center, Inc. Gary Waldman, Producer Florida	L3 Productions Jon Cutler, Producer	Starlight Theatre, San Diego, CA Kimberly Layton, Producer
	Musical Theatre of Los Angeles	Twin Tiers Theatre Festival Rohit Kapur, Producer
		Valley Musical Theatre

DEFAULT *The Default list contains employers with whom serious issues have arisen and have been resolved to the satisfaction of SDC. Examples include initial refusal of these employers to recognize SDC, or failure to comply with the terms of an SDC contract. Members may work for employers on the Default List, however prior to commencing rehearsals the Member must work with staff to ensure employer obligations, such as posting bonds, have been met.*

A Woman of Will Company, LP Ashley Road Productions Jack Nadel, Julie Loshin, David Braun – Producers	Diverse City Theatre Victor Lirio, Producer	Rubicon Theatre
Altar Boyz Chicago Joe McGinnis, Altar Boyz Chicago LLC, Producers	Benjamin DeRuyter, producer	Abraham Salaman, Producer
American Music Theatre of San Jose	Edwards Entertainment Group Armstead Edwards, Producer	Sales Guru Consulting, LLC Karen Paull
Obie Bailey, Producer	MadCap Productions	Barbara Schottenfeld, Producer
Mark Balsam, Producer	Richard Martini, Producer	Shows By Jutta, Inc. Ned Toth, Producer
Brian Bantry, Producer	Myriad Productions, Grant Robbin, Producer	David Sonkin, Producer
Chanhassen Dinner Theatre	NET Theatrical Productions Albert Nocciolino, Producer	Special Entertainment Events Christopher Raphael, Producer
CLO of South Bay Cities	New City Stage Company Ginger Dayle, Producer	Allen Spivak, Producer Barrie & Lynn Wexler, Producers
Coconut Grove Playhouse, Florida	Stephen O'Neil, Producer	Robin Tate, Producer
M. Carlyle Productions Michael Carlyle, Producer New York, NY	Playhouse Theatre Group Tracy Flater, Producer Plowshares Theatre Company	Texarts Association
Clyde Winkler Entertainment Tom Clyde, Producer	Plowshares Theatre Company	Whole Art Theater



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1501 Broadway, Suite 1701

New York, NY 10036



**THE 2011 FICHANDLER AWARD: NOMINATE AN ARTIST
WHO IS TRANSFORMING THEATRE WITHIN THE EAST**

SDCF has opened the nomination process for The Zelda Fichandler Award, which grants \$5,000 to an outstanding Director or Choreographer making an exceptional contribution to the national arts landscape through theatre work in a region. In 2011 the award will honor achievement in the Eastern region (comprised of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington D.C., and West Virginia).

With this award, SDCF recognizes the profound impact and honors the legacy of the founders of regional theatre and celebrates the creativity and artistry of theatre around the country. Named after Zelda Fichandler, a pioneer of the American regional theatre movement, the award celebrates significant achievement in the field, singular creativity and artistry, and a deep investment in a particular region. This award is not for lifetime achievement; the intent is to honor an artist for both accomplishment to date and promise for the future.

The Fichandler Award is given regionally on a rotating basis. Past recipients of the award are **Jonathan Moscone** of California Shakespeare Theater in Orinda, California and **Michael Halberstam**

of Writers' Theatre in Glencoe, Illinois. Upon receiving this honor in 2010, Michael Halberstam proclaimed, "We owe our foundations to the visionary leadership of pioneers like Zelda Fichandler. I am thoroughly in awe of her legacy and I am honored to be chosen as representational of the kind of work she inspired."

Nominations will be accepted from all sources through August 1, 2011. Nominators need not be SDC Members, and self nominations are accepted. A short nomination form is available at <http://sdcfoundation.wordpress.com/>. A selection committee will select The Zelda Fichandler Award Recipient from nominated artists. The Award will be presented in Washington, D.C. at Arena Stage on October 24, 2011.