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ELECTION SEASON: 2011 SLATE

by MARCIA MILGROM DODGE, Co-Chair of the 2011 Nominating Committee

I had the privilege of co-chairing the 2011 Nominating Committee with my esteemed colleague, **Oz Scott**. It was my first time taking on such a responsibility for our Union and I took our charge very seriously. The committee, which consisted of Board Members and Members At-Large, included **Matt August**, the very pregnant **Tracy Bersley**, **Joe Calarco**, **Jonathan Cerullo**, **Igor Goldin**, **Richard Hamburger**, **Sheryl Kaller**, **Susan H. Schulman**, **Henry Wishcamper** and our President, **Karen Azenberg**. We convened over the course of two months vetting potential nominees. The list was long and the discussions lively. I want to thank the Committee and the superb SDC staff for their conscientious and thoughtful service.

We are proud to present this very exciting 2011 Slate of Executive Board Nominees:

AT-LARGE **Chay Yew**
Incumbent Director

Tom Moore
Incumbent Director

Sheldon Epps
Director

Leigh Silverman
Incumbent Director

Ethan McSweeney
Incumbent Director

Warren Carlyle
Director/Choreographer

Seret Scott
Incumbent Director

Pam MacKinnon
Director

Karma Camp
Director/Choreographer

John Rando
Director

Mark Lamos
Director

Andy Blankenbuehler
Director/Choreographer

Lisa Peterson
Incumbent Director

Liza Gennaro
Choreographer

Rob Ashford
Incumbent Dir/Chor

NORTHEAST REPRESENTATIVES **Evan Yionoulis**
Director

Bob Moss
Director

Tracy Brigden
Director

SOUTHWEST REPRESENTATIVES **Janet Miller**
Director/Choreographer

Rick Lombardo
Director

Patti Columbo
Choreographer

Per the SDC By-laws, Article VII, B: *Any Member-in-good-standing has the right to be a candidate for a position on the Executive Board by submitting a written petition containing the signatures of ten (10) members-in-good-standing to the Executive Director, which must be received sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting. The deadline for all petitions is Thursday, September 15, 2011. Notification of this deadline was emailed to all Members active on the SDC email list at the end of August. Please contact Executive Assistant Elizabeth Miller at EMiller@SDCweb.org if you plan to petition.*

VOTING FOR YOUR REGIONAL REP by KAREN AZENBERG, President

When your ballot arrives in the mail in October it will have a different look from years past. The recent By-laws referendum changed the way in which our Regional Representatives are nominated and there was a lot of discussion as to whether the entire Membership should vote for all the Regional Representatives. The majority of us work in many different regions around the country, not simply in the regions in which we live. It was clear from the conversations that Full Members should vote in all categories as

the Regional Representative candidates will be presented in a separate section from the At-Large candidates. Please be sure you vote in all categories, Regional as well as At-Large. Be sure that you vote for the correct number of candidates as indicated on the Ballot. You must vote for the exact number required in all categories or your ballot will be invalid.

Once you receive your ballot, get to know ALL the candidates. Read their statements and decide which candidate can best represent you on the Executive Board. As in any election your voice is only heard if you do vote. Make yours an informed vote.

The Regional Representatives being elected this year will represent the Northeast and the Southwest. On our "new and improved" ballot

IN THIS ISSUE

Election Season: 2011 Slate

by MARCIA MILGROM DODGE

Voting for Your Regional Rep

by KAREN AZENBERG

A Tribute to Tony Stevens

by CAROL SCHUBERG

Remembering Ed Hastings

by TOM MOORE

Immediate Application

by LAURA PENN

2011 "Mr. Abbott" Award Recipient

George C. Wolfe: A Glimpse Into the Room

by EVAN SHOEMAKE

New England Swing

by RANDY ANDERSON

Shakespeare Agreement

by EVAN SHOEMAKE

SDC/Broadway League Talks

by MAURO MELLENO

SDCF: Observership Observations

by KIMBERLY SENIOR, DANIEL JAQUEZ

Are You Eligible for Health Benefits

by JOHN EVERSON

Member Status Update

Strike and Default List

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A TRIBUTE TO TONY STEVENS

by CAROL SCHUBERG, Member

I had the great privilege of being **Tony Stevens'** assistant for 16 years. Tony always said our association was like a marriage and it really was.

He taught me volumes about directing and choreographing, but also about life and living it fully, viscerally, and with grace. And he taught me about kindness, fairness, and loyalty which at times can be in short order in this business we call show.

Tony was one of the few left who had a direct link to **Gower Champion, Peter Gennaro, Bob Fosse, and Michael Bennett.** He used to lovingly quote Peter Gennaro (with Peter's lateral lisp) and say, "Never too tired to dance!" Many of the amazing and funny stories Tony would tell are legendary. For example, the time Fosse literally handed Tony his black derby and told him to show Gwen Verdon "Me and My Baby" for the very first time on stage (with all the gypsies in the show watching from the wings.) Tony always said, "That was the BEST I ever danced in my life."

Tony combined these brilliant influences with his own vision and the work became inspired, funny, sexy and soulful. His choreography was so fulfilling to dance you never wanted to stop doing it. He had this intuitive way of seeing someone for who they really were and challenging them to be even better. One thing I continue hearing from people regarding Tony is this: "He changed my life." He truly possessed the power to transform lives and most often the conduit was through a show, his choreography, his direction, and his belief in that person.

At the Tony Stevens Tribute dance class I taught on August 7, there were 85 people there dancing their hearts out for Tony. I saw in their faces and in their dancing that joy and that cathartic experience of living life full out. That's what Tony instilled in all of us. You see that joy in the faces of the Aggie Boys in the locker room number that Tony choreographed for the movie of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.*

A week after Tony died, I watched the final run-through of the company of *A Chorus Line* that is now in Japan. I sat

there and thought about how Tony and Michon Peacock, along with Michael Bennett, originally gathered all those dancers together one Saturday night in January of 1974 in an East Side studio after their Broadway shows. They shared their experiences about why they started dancing and their lives as dancers. These taped sessions became *A Chorus Line.*

Tony and Michon originally gathered these Broadway gypsies together because they wanted to empower and give a face to dancers after the unfortunate experience of the pre-opening closing of *Rachel Lily Rosenbloom (and Don't You Ever Forget It)*, which Tony choreographed. Well, they certainly did give dancers a face and a united front. That's Tony's legacy and brilliant contribution not only to our theatrical community, but to everyone. He really did have the power to transform souls, and the transformations continue, even now...

Tony served as a Member of the Executive Board in the early 1990s.



THE STUFF OF LEGEND: REMEMBERING ED HASTINGS

by TOM MOORE, SDC Executive Board Member

When Ed Hastings died at 80 on July 5, the theatre lost one of its finest Directors and the last of the founding directors of the American Conservatory Theatre. Although well known

for his many exceptional productions of contemporary and classic plays in theatres across America, including the Guthrie Theater, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the Denver Center Theatre, Santa Fe Stages, and the Hartman Theatre, as well as many theatres in New York; and a respected director of opera, staging productions at the Santa Fe Opera, the St. Louis Municipal Opera, and the San Francisco Opera, among many, it is Ed's major role in what would become the A.C.T. legacy (a legacy that helped transform the American theatre) that will long be remembered and celebrated.

As theatres across America have multiplied exponentially since the 1960's, it is sometimes easy to forget the incredible

vision, bravery and persistence that led to the founding of those first American resident theatres, and indeed the American resident theatre movement itself.

It was in Pittsburgh in 1965 that Ed joined forces with the brilliant and visionary genius **William Ball** to pursue the idea of an American repertory theatre in tandem with an American conservatory of advanced theatre training. Wooed by both Chicago and San Francisco, it was the fledgling A.C.T.'s appearance at Stanford University with a dazzling rotating repertory that convinced the leaders and philanthropists of San Francisco to commit the money to provide a home for this singular company. Among the impressive productions in that first repertory was an enormously popular *Charley's Aunt* with René Auberjonois, directed by Ed Hastings.

From that stellar beginning, with only a brief hiatus, Ed was at the center of A.C.T. for 27 years, as Executive Director and then as Artistic Director from 1986 to 1992.

The story of those first years of A.C.T. is the stuff of legend.

In the first season alone, the company performed 27 FULL SCALE productions in rotating rep between the Geary and Marines theatres, with casts often performing in two productions on the same night. Actors have legendary stories about quick conversations with their fellow actors as they quickly ran up Nob Hill between the two theatres juggling their entrances and exits.

It is hard now to even imagine this prodigious output, when rotating rep is all but lost in our country and theatres are hard pressed to even present a season of 6 or 7 productions.

The professional partnership with Bill Ball was exceptional and remarkably productive. Although their personal and directing styles could not have been more different, their collaborative work was the very heartbeat of A.C.T. The flamboyantly theatrical Bill Ball paired with the quietly theatrical Ed Hastings would make theatre magic for many years and provide some extraordinarily diverse productions as well as invaluable diverse theatre training in the Conservatory. The results of that training can be seen in the legion of actors now populating the American theatre.

continued on page 10

$$x_0^{-1} \delta \left(\frac{x_1 - x_2}{x_0} \right) Y(u, x_1) Y(v, x_2) - x_0^{-1} \delta \left(\frac{x_2 - x_1}{-x_0} \right) Y(v, x_2) Y(u, x_1)$$

$$= x_2^{-1} \delta \left(\frac{x_1 - x_0}{x_2} \right) Y(Y(u, x_0)v, x_2).$$

$$\chi_{W_L}(q, \mathbf{x}) = \sum_{\mathbf{k} \in (\mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0})^n} \frac{q^{\frac{k^T A \mathbf{k}}{2}}}{(q)_{k_1} \cdots (q)_{k_n}} x_1^{k_1} \cdots x_n^{k_n}$$

$$\chi_{W_L}(x, q) = \chi_{W_{L+\frac{1}{2}}}(x, q) + xq^{\frac{L}{2}} \chi_{W_{L-\frac{1}{2}}}(xq^{k-1}, q).$$

IMMEDIATE APPLICATION

by LAURA PENN, SDC Executive Director

In June, I traveled to SUNY Albany to watch my brother defend his doctoral thesis. Needless to say, it was a different kind of theatrical experience. The campus is stunning, beautiful in its simplicity and complexity at the same time. It was designed by renowned American architect Edward Durell Stone. He envisioned this campus the same year he designed The Kennedy Center. But I digress.

Walking through the campus, into the Math building we were directed to a classroom for the presentation. For 90 minutes I sat with my family, and a collection of Math professors and graduate students. My brother Michael, standing front and center, convinced us all that his hypothesis for this very particular vertex algebra equation was true. I believed him and yet, I confess, I understood virtually nothing. I did grasp the context for the event, I understood who the players in the room were – his advisor, other colleagues, the PowerPoint, the x's and y's positioned over and under lines (division right?). But seriously, I had no idea in any material way what was going on.

Later that day, over a lovely lunch at a vegan Thai restaurant (all Math professors working with vertex algebra should also be vegans don't you think?) I asked Michael, "So tell me, what do you do with this formula? What now?" He replied, "Oh, there is no immediate application." I paused. "Really?" No immediate application. Fascinating phrase. I inquired further and before I knew it I was in rigorous discourse with the Math department from SUNY Albany. Why am I so impressed with these mathematicians, in awe of their intellect and knowledge? Partly because they do something I could never imagine. My mind simply doesn't bend that way. But also because culturally, I grew up in this culture where those who did things such as math were much more impressive and important than those who put on a show.

Suddenly I thought of math and theatre as the same in this way. Michael's knowledge and what he figured out about that equation does in fact have value. The act of thinking and considering something new that may or may not lead anywhere is the very act that advances humanity. The act of teaching the next generation (he has joined the faculty at Tennessee State) to use skills and knowledge to consider something altogether new is critical. The same exact sequence of events takes place for great artists and their impact on civilization equals (although I might say sometimes exceeds) that of mathematicians. We learn to speak, to write, to read. We also learn to add, subtract, divide and multiply –

some minds open one direction others another. If we are lucky we learn to draw, sing, dance. For some, our imagination is encouraged and an impulse emerges to begin to focus on creating. We become curious about how something works. A math problem or the human condition – the act of questioning, of wondering remains the same. Most often for artists, in its early stage, the creating is seemingly something with no immediate impact other than to impress our parents. And still someday, that young person will write the next great play, a play which will change the course of someone's life and deeply impact our civilization. But in our culture, the young person inquiring about the logic within a mathematical phrase is viewed as more serious, more respected.

No immediate application. That is what "they" say of theatre isn't it? Certainly it is true in our K-12 education system. Arts programs, if indeed there are any, are the first to go on the list of unnecessary expenditures. The arts only hit the top ten lists when it is the list of cuts, often referred to as "frills" in our civic discourse, or worse yet are viewed as useless. Arts don't result in measureable outcomes. Theatre is elite and/or entertainment – not essential. Not for and of the people. But math? Got to have it, right? Imagine if someone were to propose eliminating the Math program at SUNY Albany because it has no immediate application?

This month's newsletter features our upcoming Abbott Award winner **George C. Wolfe**. This illustrious Award is the only one of its kind given by peers to a Director or Choreographer for his/her impact on the form, contribution to the craft and vision as an artist. Can you even imagine a world with no George C. Wolfe, the artist? Today we see the impact of his work across the country, across forms and throughout our culture. He has risen to a place where certainly we see the immediate application of his work. One need not even have seen *The Normal Heart* to have felt its application, although those of us fortunate enough to have experienced it live will never forget that night in the theatre.

Here is wishing everyone a great fall. We have Broadway negotiations coming up, the Fichandler Awards in D.C. on October 24th and of course, on October 3, here in New York City, The Mr. Abbott Award.

Stay in touch.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE THE ROOM

by EVAN SHOEMAKE, Business Representative

2011 "MR. ABBOTT" AWARD
for Lifetime Achievement in the American Theatre

presented to

George C. Wolfe



Early in his career **George C. Wolfe** was quoted as saying "it was a given that once I got into the room, I was supposed to open the windows and doors and let in other people." He not only let everyone inside, he gave each person the strength to soar to heights greater than they may have previously believed and along the way stepped over, around, under and through barriers as he forged an artistic path that few, if any, before him could have led or after will be able to follow as he marched toward his place as one of the great American theatrical directors.

This is the story of one George being honored "by" another George, two figures in the American theatre, each telling the stories of his America. George Abbott directed shows that were definitive, iconic, traditional American theatre pieces. George Wolfe has directed equally iconic theatrical productions, pieces that tell stories of a newer, evolving, less idyllic America. As **Loretta Greco**, original stage director of *Lackanna Blues*, says, "Under George, the Public [Theater] always resembled the world -- in core ideology, in the voices he championed, and across his staff who worked almost as tirelessly as he did. I'm convinced it's why the audience grew to be one of the most culturally diverse in the country -- and why entering the lobby at certain time always felt like one big, fantastic party."

Most of us in the theatre know George C. Wolfe, or at least we think we do. We know him as writer, Tony winning director, actor, creator of groundbreaking theatre, artistic director of the landmark Public Theater and film director. What most of us would not know is that, according to his friend and colleague **Ruben Santiago-Hudson**, "George makes a mean pot of gumbo; his friends know that. Lots of people scrimp on the seafood but not George, he gives you everything." Though I'd actually love to taste this legendary gumbo, ultimately this is an indirect way of saying that what most of us think we know or knew about George C. Wolfe as a theatrical artist may not be true. Honoring him with a Lifetime Achievement Award couldn't be more appropriate considering the impact he has made on the lives of those around him.

After hearing from several of George's collaborators from various stages of his career a picture of this man emerges, a variation on a theme, if you will, which is that of a brilliant mind sometimes misunderstood but rarely mistaken for its brilliance. George, as noted by Santiago-Hudson, is "a visionary, but what's even greater than that is his clarity, his clarity of passing

that vision along and helping you to understand that vision and bringing it to life." To succeed in bringing his vision to life, though, one must know "that if you come to work with George, all he will accept is your absolute best. Whether you fall short or you soar, he will accept it but all he'll accept is your best." Choreographer **Tome Cousin**, who recently observed Wolfe on *A Free Man of Color*, adds "[George] never seems to apologize for who he is, what he says or how he acts."

A common thread in the tapestry of George Wolfe's career is the impact he has and role he plays for those he brings into his creative experiences. "He will be very demanding that you reach as far you possibly can and if you do fall he'll be right there, he'll never let you hit the ground. You'll be very safe in his room. He won't accept mediocrity and he will call you out if you come in half-stepping. But if you fall, you fall on him," says Santiago-Hudson. Director/actor **Joe Mantello**, in an altogether separate interview with Director **Thomas Kail** recorded almost the exact sentiment: "George says 'I'm going to be there to catch you, go ahead, fly, I'm going to be there to catch you.'" For the woman who has been collaborating with George since early in each of their careers, **Hope Clarke** reminds us "It's a process; it's a give and take. He allows you freedom but he is the head of the feast and [your choices] need to go along with what he has set up in his mind to do."

It seems that George's vision, his understanding of exactly what he wants but his restraint in telling his collaborators is what allows everyone to explore and find their way, always with the security that they can't fail and that George ultimately has everything under control. With *A Free Man of Color*, both Cousin and Clarke express their admiration of the environment George created for the production. Tome noted how "George created an atmosphere of equality amongst a cast that featured seasoned name actors and first time novices. Each cast member was given individual attention yet allowed to observe and learn in his own fashion."

It might be easy to understand why George C. Wolfe should be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award because it's impossible to deny his immeasurable contributions to not only the American theatre but also the American psyche. But what makes him a great director and what has led him to such great heights of professional and personal success? "He just believes he can do anything he wants to do. He believes in what he believes in and if it doesn't work out it just doesn't but he's not afraid to just go for it," says Hope. "Also, his

incredible work," she adds. "It's literally on the genius level. Watching him direct or write, you just learn so much and that learning experience was a turning point in my career." With equal admiration, Greco adds, "As a director working with George you couldn't find a producer more savvy to conjuring event, more passionate in championing the work at hand, more astute in reading the chemistry of a room, or more entertaining during late night note sessions."

George C. Wolfe is a complex man, not always praised but undeniably respected in the communities in which he works. "People are intimidated by what [George] has accomplished and who he is but he is only difficult to those that don't accept and are uncomfortable with his brilliance," says Santiago-Hudson. "He's going to challenge everybody because of his refusal to accept mediocrity." George has been challenged throughout his career but faced each one with strength of character and willful defiance. But to only characterize him in this manner would be inadequate because to those people with whom he's worked closely, those folks he let in through the window, he is simply more than just a great director. To them George is less a director and writer and more of a guiding force, a mentor, a sage waiting patiently for

You'll be
very safe in his
room. He won't
accept mediocrity
and he will call you
out if you come in
half-stepping. But
if you fall,
you fall on him

Ruben Santiago-Hudson

you to find the path to glory that he believes you can achieve. Cousin believes "George embraces his eccentricities allowing his creative genius to shine" while Mantello states, "He instills a confidence in everybody and you'd do anything for him."

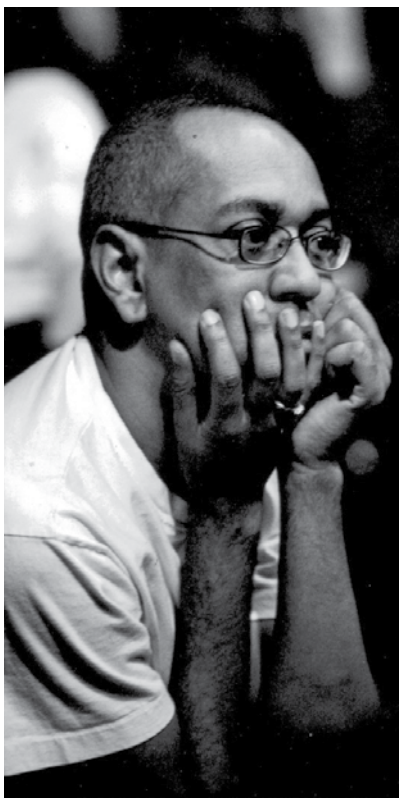
George C. Wolfe is considered one of the pillars of the American Theatre and if you don't believe *me*, just ask *him*, at least according to those who love him dearly. When asked whether George is aware of the impact he's had in the theatrical industry his longtime collaborator Hope Clarke laughed and said, "George knows, don't even think he doesn't. He knows exactly what he has accomplished, there's no confusion about that." She's right, there is no confusion about what George has accomplished and it's certainly apparent why he is the 2011 "Mr. Abbott" Award recipient.



SDCFoundation presents The "Mr. Abbott" Award to **George C. Wolfe** on Monday, October 3, 2011 at the Edison Ballroom in New York City.

GET TO KNOW

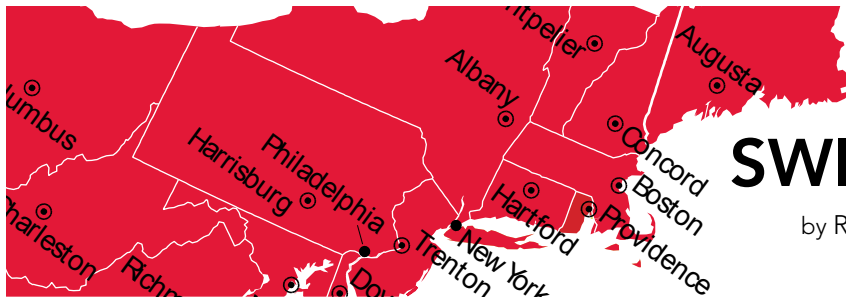
GEORGE C. WOLFE



George C. Wolfe's incredibly distinguished career in the theatre has significantly impacted the theatrical community and the world at large. His rise began in 1989 when he won an Obie for his direction *Spunk*. Three years later he burst onto the Broadway scene with a Tony nomination for the hit musical *Jelly's Last Jam*. He subsequently directed both parts of the landmark drama *Angels in America (Millenium Approaches and Perestroika)* and won his first Tony Award for *Millenium Approaches*. He also served as the Artistic Director of the Public Theater from 1993 to 2004 and helped develop new works. He won his second Tony Award for the groundbreaking musical *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. He began directing for the screen with the HBO film *Lackawanna Blues* and made his feature film debut

directing Richard Gere and Diane Lane in *Nights in Rodanthe*. He has directed several major Broadway productions including *Topdog/Underdog*, *The Wild Party*, *Elaine Stritch At Liberty*, *Take Me Out*, *Caroline, or Change*, *A Free Man of Color*, and the recent Broadway production of *The Normal Heart*. Wolfe's additional awards and distinctions include the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society's Callaway Award, four Obie Awards, the Dramatist Guild's Hull-Warner Award, a Bessie Award, the George Oppenheimer/Newsday Award, the Lambda Liberty Award and the Actors Equity Paul Robeson Award. He was honored as a Library Lion by the New York Public Library and named a Living Landmark by the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

Photos by Michal Daniel



NEW ENGLAND SWING 2011

by RANDY ANDERSON, Business Representative

With a combined population of 2 million, New Hampshire and Vermont make up a large part of what is traditionally considered New England. They also contain a very high concentration of summer theatres. Each summer SDC Members, along with a bevy of New York actors, head to the mountains to direct and choreograph productions in the bucolic towns that lace these two states.

This summer I traveled for 56 hours across 600 miles to learn more about this great source of employment for our Members. What I discovered was the deep and intoxicatingly charming tradition of summer theatre in New England.

My first stop was the New London Barn Playhouse in New London, NH. I pulled up just as the children's show performers were on lunch break. The porch was alive with 12 year-olds in make-up and partial costumes. SDC Member and Artistic Director of New London, **Carol Dunn**, met up with me and gave me the tour of the beautiful dark wood barn structure, complete with wagon wheel chandelier. The first thing she pointed out was the new air-conditioning. Standing on the set for *Drowsy Chaperone* (I was tempted to take a seat in that oh-so-comfy armchair, but resisted the urge to be rude) Carol talked about the company's commitment to education, especially to nurturing young Directors. In fact, the Assistant Artistic Director, **Lillian King**, an alum of the SDCF Observership program, recently joined the Union, and Josh Feder, Director of the Jr. Intern Program will be an apprentice at The Roundabout Theatre Company this season.

As we were getting ready to leave, one of the New London Barn board members sauntered in to say hello. He started to give me more history about the theatre, and then stopped himself, "What do you think of the air-conditioning? Pretty great huh?" I began to understand that not only was the air-conditioning a great improvement to the theatre, but it was also a mammoth undertaking. Playhouses like New London Barn exist because the people in the community love them, and they take great pride in the maintenance of these old structures.

After leaving New London, I headed farther north. In 1931, Grover Cleveland's youngest son Francis, along with his wife and some friends, founded The Barnstormers Theatre Troupe. Originally they spent the summers traveling from one New England town to another performing a new play, in a new town, each week. They quite literally barnstormed. Then, in 1936 they turned an early 19th century store into a permanent home. It was at this theatre, in Tamsworth, NH that I met up with Artistic Director Bob Shea. The playhouse has a breakneck summer schedule producing 8 shows in 9 weeks and I was surprised to learn that Bob's predecessor used to direct ALL 8 shows. Bob, a man who treasures his sanity, now hires outside Directors to take on some of the load, many of whom are SDC. Bob took me around the theatre and showed me their two rehearsal spaces as he filled my head with the fascinating history of the company. During our tour the chairman of the board stopped by to say hello. These communities are small and tight, and their pride is infectious. I'm not even 12 hours into my journey and my heart is swelling with love for these theatres. Bob left me to prepare for his curtain speech and I headed to the café/gift shop/hardware store/ice cream parlor for a cup of coffee and some idle conversation with strangers. The little square that makes up this town looks like a Hollywood set. The second I had this thought, the extras arrived. Only they were not extras. It was 7 p.m. and people

were strolling in from every direction; all going to the same place, the oldest professional summer theatre in America.

On my way back to Vermont, I stopped in White River Junction to visit Northern Stage. Run by Artistic Director and SDC Member **Brooke Ciardelli** and Producing Director Catherine Doherty, Northern Stage does what all the other theatres I've visited don't; they produce shows from September through May. Their philosophy is that people need something to do inside during the long New England winters. But, without the "summering" population, is there an audience to support a seasonal theatre on the Vermont/New Hampshire border? For the past 15 years, the answer has been a resounding YES. Brooke and Catherine took me on a tour of their new building, which is still being renovated. This fall the building will house their production offices as well as the costume and set shops and eventually it will house their new state of the art performance space. They too are very community focused and have a standing open rehearsal for every production as well as multiple post show talkbacks with the artists. The open rehearsal can sometimes frighten a visiting Director, but as Brooke tells me, "They do it and realize it's not as bad as they thought. It's important for us and for our community to be a part of what we're doing."

After too-short a visit with Northern Stage, I headed to the tiny hamlet of Weston, VT. The picture-perfect columned white structure of Weston Playhouse sits on the edge of a manicured town square. Run by Producing Directors Malcolm Ewen, Tim Fort, and Steve Stettler, the Weston Playhouse is celebrating its 75th anniversary by installing an orchestra pit, a handicap access lift and expanded dressing rooms. The theatre produces seven shows on two stages and offers an eclectic mix of musicals and dramas. After touring the theatre, I took an afternoon break to talk shop with the Production Manager Bridget Sullivan over milkshakes.

Only forty minutes away from Weston, tucked deep in the Green Mountains, is the town of Dorset, home of the Dorset Theatre Festival. I met up with Producing Director Michael Giannitti who gave me a tour of the alpine playhouse that gets year-round action as a home for the Dorset Players during the year and the Festival in the summers. After the tour I ran into SDC Member **Ari Edelson**, who was taking a break from his rehearsals of *Mauritius*. I asked Ari how he's enjoying the fresh mountain air and the 12 day rehearsal period, to which he exclaimed; "It's crazy, and exhilarating!" This seems to be a common refrain from everyone involved in summer theatre. It certainly would be how Dina Janis, the festival's Artistic Director would describe it too. She told me that now, in her second year, she's learning the timing and pace of the summer season. When the performance began I was treated to a pitch-perfect *Noises Off*, a show that is all about timing and pace, and just like the Festival's Artistic Director, they made it look so easy.

My final stop brought me to the most cosmopolitan location on my short tour. Burlington, Vermont boasts a modest population of about 50,000 people. There are half a dozen colleges in the area, one of which is St. Michael's College, which is home to St. Michael's Playhouse. I met up with Chuck Tobin, the Producing Artistic Director in his office. Situated next to the technical booth, his office is a veritable skybox overlooking the theatre. The theatre produces four shows each summer before the building is returned to its collegiate use. I asked Chuck about his audience and he told me they're sometimes unpredictable and sometimes don't like a show

continued at the bottom of page 7



SDC/BROADWAY LEAGUE TALKS TO BEGIN

BY MAURO MELLENO, Director of Contract Affairs

The SDC/Broadway League Collectively Bargained Agreement, which covers all first-class activity on Broadway and Tours, expired August 31st of this year.

The current Agreement has been extended through October 31st and any Broadway or first-class touring production beginning rehearsals after August 31st will be subject to retroactivity in regard to compensation and contributions to the SDC-League Pension and Health Funds.

Negotiations for a new multi-year contract are scheduled to begin September 14th between SDC and the Broadway League with Broadway veterans **Susan H. Schulman** and **Walter Bobbie**

as Co-Chairs of the SDC Negotiating Committee. At press, SDC has held two Committee meetings, the last one on August 18th with the following Directors and Choreographers in attendance: **Rob Ashford, Matt August, Jonathan Butterell, Walter Bobbie, Warren Carlyle, Hope Clarke, Marcia Milgrom Dodge, Danny Goldstein, Sam Gold, Thomas Kail, Dan Knechtges, Gregory Mosher, Jack O'Brien, Neil Pepe, and John Rando.**

SDC will continue to update you on these negotiations as the process moves forward.

BRAVE NEW WORLD THE SHAKESPEARE AGREEMENT

by EVAN SHOEMAKE, Business Representative

The global economy may be faltering and jobs difficult to come by but this isn't stopping SDC; we are taking this opportunity to expand while others are contracting.

Approximately two and a half years ago the SDC staff sat down to discuss the future in terms of organizing and spent considerable time discussing the various ways we could expand jurisdiction and secure additional employment for our Members. This discussion yielded a range of areas to explore but eventually the staff settled on first pursuing a contract specific to Shakespeare festivals/theatres. The work performed in this arena is special and in exploring this idea further we agreed it needed our attention first as it is an arena that is not only growing in popularity but also one that currently employs many of you on a regular basis.

Just as we are always seeking additional opportunities for our Members, we also recognized the importance and necessity of having a contract designed to fit the models employed by the theatres and festivals producing Shakespeare and other classics. We heard numerous times how important it is for these companies to have a contract that "works" for them and we recognized the opportunity to work with this community to develop something that fits properly.

Once the decision was made we conducted countless hours of research, spoke with a range of members, theatres, organizations and even traveled to the Shakespeare Theatre Association conference in January 2011 to get a closer look at this world and the people who make it a vibrant place to work. This trip to the Rocky Mountains, combined with the "mountain" of information we

accumulated, led to the creation of the Shakespeare Agreement.

This summer, the SDC Executive Board approved the contract and granted permission to begin beta-testing the new agreement at a select few theatres across the country. As many of you recall we employed this same approach with the Tier Agreement and based on the successful execution of that agreement we have opted to use the same method with the Shakespeare contract.

The structure of this contract is similar to that of the Tier in that theatres are placed into a Category based on the combination of four criteria. The contract also includes new provisions not yet seen in SDC agreements as well as provisions specific to the experience of working on a Shakespeare production. Stay tuned for a detailed account of the contract.

SWING continued from page 6

he's certain will be a hit. I pondered this as I headed out to grab a bite before the show. Upon my return to the theatre to see *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, I found myself drawn to a group of ladies in their 60's and 70's who'd gathered around the back of an SUV. I wove my way into the crowd and asked to nobody in particular, "Excuse me, is this a tailgating party?" The question

was met with cheers as they all raised their glasses. I was immediately invited to join them for a drink before the show and I now understood what Chuck was talking about. Who could have predicted a tailgating party before *The Marvelous Wonderettes*? As I flew back to New York, over the pristine New England countryside, I couldn't stop smiling. Not only did I

discover the wonderful beauty of this corner of the planet, I also tapped into the profound passion and deep commitment of the people who make theatre happen here every summer. It's no wonder why our Members love working at these theatres and I look forward to strengthening SDC's relationships and increasing our presence in this vital and important region.

We asked a couple of our 2011 Observership Application Evaluators to respond to their experience. We remain eternally grateful for their hard work as well as their gracious offerings below.

INSPIRATION AND PASSION by KIMBERLY SENIOR, Member

When I agreed to evaluate Observership applications this spring I had no idea how much it would inspire me. As a director and teacher, the advocacy of young Directors is a great passion of mine. I myself had so many wonderful mentors and teachers I feel it my duty to give back in the same way. I often meet with Directors, help them make connections, or act as a sounding board for creative projects and problems. So I didn't think many surprises would be in store when reading over the applications.

You know when you see a big, ensemble show like *Balm in Gilead* or *Our Town* and you are just so moved seeing all those actors on stage? That's how it was to read these applications. One after another moved me

and inspired me. One young Director has already traveled the world absorbing other cultures and is ready to learn to synthesize that with her American theatre experiences. Another has worked inside communities, creating work with them in order that they may hear their own voices represented. There were applications submitted from coast to coast, farm to city. The applicants were far ranging in their tastes-- from musicals to the avant garde; classics to devised work.

I was amazed at how much the field has changed in the past fifteen or twenty years. The world is so much closer with the widespread use of the internet and human interaction has become that much more complicated with social networking. The

breadth that these applications represented was astounding. Terms like "genre" and "style" no longer apply to the work. The new terms? Voice and vision. Ritual and story. Singular and collective. New words. Old words. Category defying.

In a culture and field which so often bemoans the death of the art, these applications gave me faith. What stood out to me most was the clarity of purpose articulated. The next generation of storytellers has something to say! They are paying attention, they are listening, and they are ready to speak. The next generation of theatre-makers is going to really wow us. Open your doors, get ready to listen, get ready to respond, get ready to teach, and get ready to learn.

Read about Daniel Jaquez's experience as an Observership Application Evaluator in SDC's November/December Newsletter.

SDCF NOTICES

Find us on Wordpress During the upgrade of SDCweb.org, current information on SDCF programs, including program guidelines and application forms, is best accessed at SDCFoundation.wordpress.com.

Observership Program Apply to the Observership Program through September 15, 2011 for Observerships through June 30, 2012. For program guidelines and application, visit SDCFoundation.wordpress.com. For tips on applying, see video at: www.facebook.com/SDCFoundation



IN YOUR WORDS...Two Questions for DAVID ESBJORNSON

When did you know you were a Director or Choreographer? What did that moment look like? Feel like?

David: I have always been cautious about calling myself a Director. I viewed my training at New York University as an experiment to understand whether I would find it as satisfying to me as performance.

Not only did I discover that directing embraced the craft of acting and design that I loved, but that the study of it was asking me to use parts of myself I didn't know existed. I found that I was realizing the glorious demands of this discipline and beginning to understand that however skilled I became at the art of directing there would always be a large portion of it that would remain mysteriously ahead of me waiting for me to catch up.

Even now, I see directing as less of title and more as moments of engagement where the best I have to offer is actively demanded

of me. This special time is both exhilarating and humbling. It is the place that makes the most sense to me--where I can feel useful and connected to others.

If a Mentor of yours were to see your work today where would they find themselves? How would they recognize their influence?

David: Most of us in this profession may be too young to have experienced the formal "one on one" mentor system that once dominated the English and American stage and produced so much great gossip.

We have largely relied on institutions and programs to create those experiences.

Still, no matter how you arrive at it, a mentorship is deeply personal and I have learned and benefited from so many well-respected, talented and inspired theatre people over the years. These special relationships always carry a responsibility to bring the best you have to the situation. You must always try and be worthy of another's time and attention.

From my Father I learned that theatre was a worthy and viable way through life.

From my undergraduate professor; that it must always be passionate and total.

From my graduate study; that every detail on that stage is a part of you and that you must claim and own it responsibly.

From my interest in painting; that one must recognize and embrace the unexpected.

From artists old and famous; that no matter how many times you put up a production you are as vulnerable as if it were the first time.

And from my peers; that a rigorous and open exchange of choices will ultimately create the richest process and a result that everyone can own.

I can only strive to make these insights and values live on stage each time I am privileged to work.



ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH BENEFITS?

by JOHN EVERSON, SDC-League Funds Administrator

October 1st marks the beginning of a new eligibility period for the SDC-League Health Fund. If you are eligible for benefits for the upcoming six-month period, you should have received formal notice by now from the Fund Office. If you believe that you are eligible, but have not received notification, please give us a call at 212-869-8129.

To be eligible for benefits, your employer(s) must make contributions of at least \$1,100 during a six-month period, either January through June (for eligibility at October 1st) or July through December (for eligibility at April 1st). When this level is met, you will be entitled to at least six months of paid benefits, with your period of eligibility determined by your first rehearsal date(s). If your contribution level is \$2,200 or more in a six month period, you will be entitled to a

full year of paid benefits. If contributions made on your behalf in a contribution period exceed \$1,100 but do not reach \$2,200, you may apply the excess to the next period to help meet the minimum eligibility level. Please note however, that excess contributions over \$1,100 may be carried forward one period only.

We believe that the SDC-League Health Plan continues to be one of the best in the industry. For freelance directors, Option A provides first-rate medical and hospitalization coverage that is portable from job to job. For those who have insurance through another source, Option B provides a tax-free \$2,200 medical spending account that can cover most out-of-pocket medical costs. Don't ignore this hard-fought-for benefit. It has something to offer all eligible SDC Members.



Q. Once I am eligible, what else do I have to do to obtain benefits?

A. Along with your eligibility notification letter, you will have received an Option Election form. If you have not already done so, please return this form as soon as possible, electing either Option A (for major medical and hospital insurance), or Option B (for the \$2,200 medical spending account) and we will send you additional enrollment materials. Note that if you are electing Option A, you are required to pay a semi-annual enrollment fee of \$200 for single participation or \$400 for family participation. Family coverage is available on a self-pay basis. While the Fund pays for your coverage, the cost of the premiums covering your spouse, partner, and/or children will be your responsibility. Call the Fund Office for details and rates. Your timely response is important. Our plans with Oxford and Kaiser require that all enrollments be completed no later than October 31st.

Q. I don't live either in New York or California. How can the Fund help me with my health insurance needs?

A. For those eligible participants who live outside the Oxford and Kaiser service areas, the Trustees have authorized a premium reimbursement arrangement. Quite simply, you may find the best health insurance plan (including dental insurance) available to you in your local area, and the Fund will reimburse your monthly premium up to the amount we pay for participants in New York.

Q. Can I enroll my family members in the Plan?

A. Yes. Spouses or domestic partners and dependent children may be enrolled for benefits under Option A on a self-pay basis. If you are enrolling in the Plan for the first time you may enroll your family members at the beginning of your eligibility period. If you currently are covered, you may enroll your dependants only during specified open enrollment months, or within thirty days of your marriage or the birth of your child. Call the Fund Office for premium rates and further details.

Q. I am a Staff Director in a LORT theatre and my theatre provides a health insurance plan for me. Can I still take advantage of Option B?

A. Yes, but only if your employer agrees to make health contributions to the Fund on your behalf. Please note that under the LORT Minimum Basic Agreement theatres may be relieved of their obligation to make contributions to the Fund for Staff Directors if they are already providing health insurance for those individuals. If you are a LORT Artistic or Staff Director and want Option B in addition to your theatre's health plan, you must negotiate with your theatre to make the appropriate health contribution for each production you direct.

Q. How do I know which Option is the right choice for me?

A. Only you can make the final decision about your health care needs and options. For most people the first priority is securing good major medical and

hospitalization insurance to cover you in the event of injury or illness. Option A provides such insurance through Oxford Health Plans in the New York City metropolitan area, through Kaiser Permanente in California, and through premium reimbursement in other areas. However, if you are already covered under another health plan, Option B can provide you with up to \$2,200 in tax-free medical expense reimbursements for each six months of eligibility.

Q. How are the Funds funded?

A. All of the Pension Fund's revenue and most of the Health Fund's revenue comes from contributions your employers are required to make when you work, and from investment income on our reserves. Dues and assessments that you pay to SDC go to support the negotiation and administration of contracts, but do not contribute to your eligibility for benefits through the SDC-League Funds.

While closely affiliated with SDC, the SDC-League Pension and Health Funds are legally separate entities from the Union, and are managed by a joint Board of Trustees. This Board is comprised of four Trustees from SDC (appointed by SDC's Executive Board) and four Trustees from Management (representing Broadway and Tours, Off-Broadway and Regional theatre producers). With advice from the Funds' actuary and consultant, and the guidance of the Funds' co-counsel and accountants, the Trustees have the responsibility for ensuring the fiscal soundness of the Funds, as well as providing the best possible benefits to you, the participants.

ON-LINE CREDIT CARD PAYMENT OPTION NOW AVAILABLE

We are pleased to report that in addition to making your payments for SDC dues and assessments, you may also make payments to the Health Fund on-line. Health Fund payments for your COBRA or family insurance premiums, or your semi-annual Option A enrollment fee may be made with your credit card by logging on to www.SDCweb.org and clicking on "Make A Payment" at the top of the page. If you have questions or need assistance, give us a call at 212-869-8129.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While we strive to provide eligibility and quality benefits to as many Members as possible, we realize that periodic lapses in coverage are not uncommon. If you need help, excellent resources are available, some of which are listed below. Please also refer to our website (www.SDCweb.org) for more extensive information. Click on "Health and Pension" at the top of the homepage, and then on "Health Resources."

New York State 50% COBRA Subsidy: Call the Fund Office for details.
The Actors Fund Health Insurance Resource Center - www.ahirc.org or (212) 221-7301, ext. 265

Ed will always be remembered as a fine director, but it is perhaps his legacy as a teacher and mentor that is his greatest accomplishment. Ed began the first new play development program at A.C.T. known as Plays in Progress, and in his search for diversity, created a Black Actors Workshop and the Asian American Theatre Workshop, which would later be known as the Asian American Theatre Company. He ambitiously forged international exchanges with China, Japan, Russia, Australia, and Yugoslavia, and closer to home, nurtured other young and emerging theatre companies in the Bay Area, such as Turtle Island Ensemble, Encore Theatre Company, and the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. With Ed, there was always room for another point of view, another theatrical direction, and another new vision.

With quiet dignity, grace, and elegance coupled with conviction, determination, and focus, Ed was at the very center of A.C.T.'s success and survival.

When A.C.T. foundered in 1986, with the resignation of Bill Ball, it was Ed coming back as Artistic Director that led to the theatre's stability and rebirth. He returned the theatre

to its original theatricality, and methodically and carefully led the theatre back into solvency.

And then just as things were falling into place, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake destroyed much of the venerable Geary Theatre, A.C.T.'s permanent home. Not willing to let the devastation also destroy his beloved company, Ed ingeniously found ways to continue a very ambitious production schedule for several years in many theatrical venues across San Francisco.

In 1992, tiring of administration, he retired from A.C.T. to return to his first love and passion, directing, freelancing from his home base in Santa Fe. It was the end of an astonishing era in the American theatre.

In the last few years, as Ed began to suffer the effects of Lewy Body Dementia, his thoughts would become fragmented and fractured, but when he verbally expressed them, these elegant, if broken thoughts would contain the most spectacular and beautiful theatrical imagery. A theatrical visionary to the very end.

The SDC Zelda Fichandler Award, given to a visionary Director now working in the American regional theatre, was established to honor the future but also to honor the founding directors of our first major regional theatres by recognizing the courage and tenacity it took to forge these theatres before every community knew it needed one. The SDC Executive Board wanted to ensure that the next generation of directors knew the stories of and appreciated the history that makes possible their careers as artists working in the American regional theatre. Ed was at the very center of that history.

Werner Heisenberg said: "If I can see far, it's because I stand on the shoulders of giants."

And so we are!

Ed himself will be deeply missed, but his legacy in those who experienced his productions, who worked and collaborated with him, who learned from him, and who were inspired by him will live on for generations to come.

Ed is survived by his brother George, several nieces and nephews, and his remarkable partner of 50 years, Eugene Barcone.

OTHER UNION NEWS NOTEWORTHY

NEW MEMBERS

Laura Eason
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Shana Gold
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Jessi D. Hill
Director
New York, NY

Matt McGrath
Director
New York, NY

John A. McMullen II
Director
Oakland, CA

Carol Schuberg
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Stephen Spósito
Director
New York, NY

John D. Tracy
Director
Oakland, CA

John Turturro
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Kara Lynn Vaeni
Director
Brooklyn, NY

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Adriana Baer
Director
New York, NY

Sara-Ashley Bischoff
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Michelle Bruckner
Director/Choreographer
Garrison, NY

Adam Cates
Director/Choreographer
Astoria, NY

Alex Correia
Director
Mount Vernon, NY

Connor Davis
Director
Westfield, NJ

Richard Elliott
Director
Martinez, CA

Jim Fagan
Director
New York, NY

Laura Teresa Garza
Director
San Antonio, TX

Michael Goldfried
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Naya Tabia Johnson
Director
New York, NY

Isaac Klein
Director
East Hampton, NY

Andrea Kron
Choreographer
Montvale, NJ

Kimberly Miller
Director
Moorhead, MN

Charles Pepiton
Director
Guiyang, China

Nick Saldivar
Director
Estero, FL

Kristen van Ginhoven
Director
Lee, MA

Stephen Kaliski
Director
Brooklyn, NY

IN MEMORY OF

Edward Hastings
Director
Santa Fe, NM

Tony Stevens
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

NEW or RENEWED IPA'S

New York Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF)

Cause Celebre (referenced to ANTC) *The Shoemaker*

Cause Celebre (referenced to ANTC) *The Pretty Trap*

The Exchange (referenced to ANTC) *Little Black Dress*

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	Prince Music Theatre
BINGO Chicago, LLC Carel Davis, Russ Tilaro, Agnes Corrado, Producers	International Theatres Corporation Thomas Scalen, Producer	Shear Madness Las Vegas, LLC Terrence Williams, Producer
BT Productions	Israel Oh Israel, International, Inc. Richard Bernstein, Producer	Gloria Hope Sher, Producer
Darren Lee Cole, Producer	Lombardo Org. LLC, Matthew Lombardo, Producer	Stage One Inc. (City Repertory Theatre of Wichita)
Jack Cullen, Producer	Lone Star Performing Arts Association	Starlight Theatre, San Diego, CA Kimberly Layton, Producer
Drama Center, Inc. Gary Waldman, Producer Florida	L3 Productions Jon Cutler, Producer	Twin Tiers Theatre Festival Rohit Kapor, Producer
	Musical Theatre of Los Angeles	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	Clyde Winkler Entertainment Tom Clyde, Producer	Rubicon Theatre
Altar Boyz Chicago Joe McGinnis, Altar Boyz Chicago LLC, Producers	Diverse City Theatre Victor Lirio, Producer	Abraham Salaman, Producer
American Music Theatre of San Jose	Benjamin DeRuyter, producer	Sales Guru Consulting, LLC Karen Paull
Obie Bailey, Producer	Edwards Entertainment Group Armstead Edwards, Producer	Barbara Schottenfeld, Producer
Mark Balsam, Producer	MadCap Productions	Shows By Jutta, Inc. Ned Toth, Producer
Brian Bantry, Producer	Richard Martini, Producer	David Sonkin, Producer
Chanhassen Dinner Theatre	Myriad Productions, Grant Robbin, Producer	Special Entertainment Events Christopher Raphael, Producer
CLO of South Bay Cities	NET Theatrical Productions Albert Nocciolino, Producer	Allen Spivak, Producer Barrie & Lynn Wexler, Producers
M. Carlyle Productions Michael Carlyle, Producer New York, NY	Stephen O'Neil, Producer	Robin Tate, Producer
	Playhouse Theatre Group Tracy Flater, Producer	Texarts Association
	Plowshares Theatre Company	Whole Art Theater



NEWSLETTER

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GEORGE C. WOLFE

THE "MR. ABBOTT" AWARD

FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE

your source for important notifications of all Union matters

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1501 Broadway, Suite 1701

New York, NY 10036



SDC is here to unite, empower and protect Stage Directors and Choreographers across the country.

As your Union, SDC is here to unite, empower and protect Stage Directors and Choreographers across the country. We negotiate contracts, enforce the terms of agreements, work to expand employment opportunities, provide for pension and welfare, and protect your property.

We also are here to advance the craft, support your development as artists and to celebrate your ambitions and your work in all its forms. We do this with strength and purpose.

In order to be as effective as possible we strive to educate our Members. So, with that, a teachable moment.

Respect for property rights is a top priority for SDC and the Membership at large. We protect your property rights at all cost so we cannot endorse or condone infringement upon another artist's property. Any Director who desires to alter the words of a licensed script needs to have the licensor's approval (the author's representative or the author).

In the past few months there have been a number of instances reported in the press where directors have taken it upon themselves to alter text in material ways without the author's permission. SDC encourages innovative and creative approaches to all productions but never in violation of author's rights. If you have questions about your property rights as well as that of your collaborators, please call anytime.

Postscript: New England Swing

At the present time, many theatres featured in Randy Anderson's article have been significantly affected by Hurricane Irene. Our colleagues in the Northeast as well as the Mid-Atlantic need our support as they work toward recovery.