

NETC News

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Publication of the
New England Theater
Conference, Inc.

Report on 2004 NETC Auditions

It is our pleasure to report another successful weekend of auditions were held on March 13, 14, 15, 2004 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Natick.

With 990 applicants who ranged in age from 18 to 60+, producers were treated to an incredible pool of very talented performers and technicians. Our applicant numbers were slightly up from last year and we had about the same number of producers (58). It is important that we work to increase the pool of staff and technical applicants for which there are many well paying positions.



Auditions are ready for
Saxtons River Playhouse

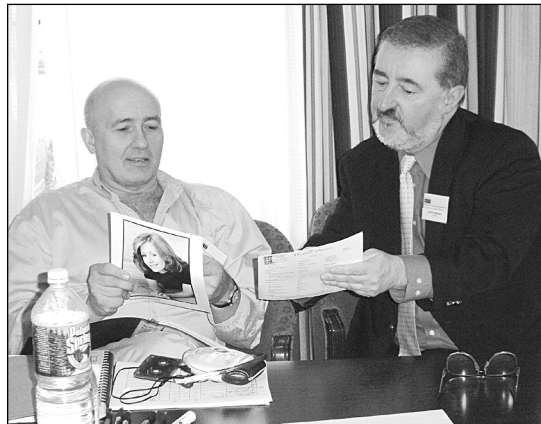
Special thanks to the volunteer staff: Lorraine Stevens, Barbara Horrigan; Gamalia Pharms and Charlie Schwartz as well as Hank Zappala and the three guides who kept the hundreds of candidates on time for their auditions. Our thanks also to Todd Gordon, accompanist and Angela Ruggerio, choreographer. As you can see, it takes a staff of 10–12 people to make this event as successful as it is.

For those unaware of the audition process, NETC would like to provide some basic information.

The auditions begin with the initial release of the application in late October, early November. It is available on the web as well as in hard copy, with applications mailed to over 500 college campuses throughout the country. Almost simultaneously, 400–500 theatres, casting agencies, theme parks, etc. are sent producer applications. Submissions begin as early as November, but the bulk of the applications arrive 2 weeks prior to the deadline date, usually the first of February.

Staff is recruited and/or hired at least 3 months prior to auditions and hotel arrangements are also finalized. During the time between early January and the deadline,

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New Bedford Festival Theater plans *Beauty and the Beast*

Theaters that Audition Respond

A number of the theaters who were auditioning in Natick were contacted and asked to respond to the experience. Among those who replied was Will Rhys of Goodspeed Musicals in East Haddam, CT. Will said, "I attended the Technical interviews only. I felt the room was set up very well, and the interviews were very comfortable in the space. I also think that the work done by the NETC staff before the interview day (schedule, resumes, information on NETC, etc) was quite helpful and well laid out."

Yet another response came from Zan Sawyer-Dailey, the Artistic Director of Actors Theatre of Louisville. Her response was, "The NETC is extremely well organized. The people are helpful and efficient and it moves quickly and smoothly. The quality of the talent is generally high and well prepared. It would be very useful to have people who are only interested in summer work separated out from people who want year round work. For several of us in the Acting Only auditions we are looking only for people who can take year round opportunities. About 65–70% of the folks we saw were summer only and that is a killer for us to have to sit through. We traditionally find several candidates for our program at NETC look forward to it again next year. Try to get the weather to warm up a little. I don't like it so cold. OK?"

Overall, the respondents were positive and planned to return to the 2005 NETC auditions.

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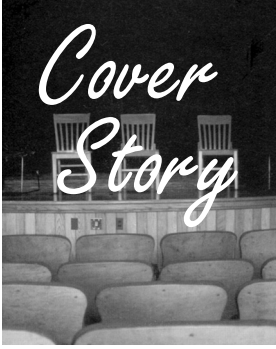
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new england
NETC
theatre conference



Report on 2004 NETC Auditions

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over 1100 pieces of mail are opened and processed. All properly completed applications are filed and all information is typed into a general database to allow for managing the data as well as providing a way to assign audition slots and stand by slots (3 minute segments). Interestingly, we have 3 times as many candidates from outside New England than from within.

The two weeks prior to the auditions are filled with countless phone calls, emails and letters asking everything from "How do I change my appointment," to "How may bars of music should I include in my audition."

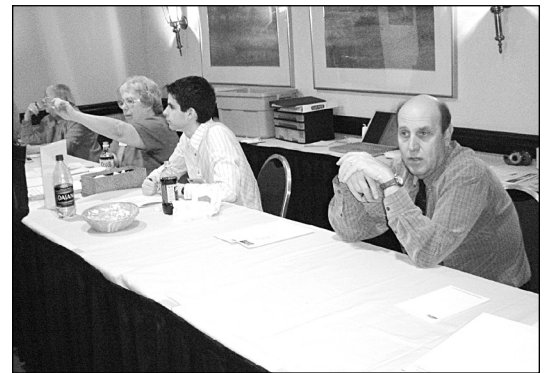
Finally, all resumes are sorted by appointment day and time and copied into 7 booklets, which are given to each producer attending. Over 1000 name badges are printed as well as 400 dance call numbers; 50 table cards are printed to identify the producers and theatres in the callback/interview room. Nearly 30 hotel rooms are emptied of beds and reset to accommodate theatres who wish private callback space and keyboards moved into the rooms of theatres doing musical call backs.

The days of the actual auditions are smoothly run, thanks to all the pre-planning and organization. Tremendous amounts of nervous energy is displayed the entire three days as candidates vie for the limited number of available jobs and the producer attempt to sell their program to the best candidates. At three times during each morning or afternoon, callback lists are posted and candidates begin the task of getting to the appropriate producer at the proper time. At the end of each audition day, many musical candidates are called back for dance and demonstrate every level of skill imaginable from none to highly developed. Each day begins at about 7:30am and ends

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Waiting for the call to audition



Joe Juliano and the NETC Auditions Staff



The packets are ready for the auditions



The producers take a pause in the theater auditions



A little last minute directing

Boston Area Festival of New Musical Theater Works Held in May

May 7, 2004, marked the beginning of the sixth *Birth of a Musical*, the annual festival presenting musicals and operas in development by New England authors. Festival events ran from May 7 through May 16 at venues including North Shore Music Theatre, Suffolk University and The Boston Conservatory.

Birth of a Musical nurtures New England authors through six weeks of dramaturgical feedback, rehearsals, and rewrites, culminating in staged readings open to the general public. Produced by the Boston-based New Opera and Musical Theater Initiative (NOMTI), the festival has been cosponsored by North Shore Music Theatre since its inception in 1999. The Boston Music Theater Project at Suffolk University added its sponsorship in 2001, and the Musical Theater Division of The Boston Conservatory joined the team this year. The ASCAP Foundation also has supported the festival since its founding.

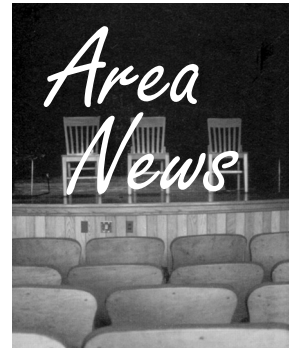
The highlight of *Birth of a Musical* is its staged readings of new works, which are selected from anonymous submissions reviewed by theatre professionals. This year's festival featured *The Mission* by Kevin Bleau,

The Chimes by Neal Hampton; and *The Woman Upstairs* by Brian Lowdermilk and Kait Kerrigan.

"Since its beginnings, the festival has presented work that pushes the envelope of musical theater, as well as more mainstream pieces," said Michael Wartofsky, Associate Professor at Berklee College of Music and founder of both NOMTI and *Birth of a Musical*. "Its main purpose is to serve authors by letting them see, at a crucial moment, how an audience interacts with their work. For the audience, the festival affords a rare and fascinating view of how a work is born."

In addition to the staged readings, the festival included master classes and performances by prominent professionals from the musical theater world, a cabaret of songs, and a premiere by New England Light Opera.

The New Opera and Musical Theater Initiative (NOMTI) nurtures and supports New England writers and composers of musical theater and opera in the creation of new works. NOMTI conducts New England's only weekly workshop for writers and composers of musical theater and opera. In addition, NOMTI sponsors performances and other activities designed to refine members' craft, support the creation of new works and build audiences for these works. For more information, visit www.nomti.org.



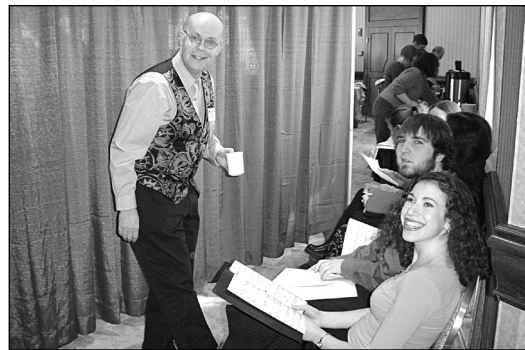
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after 9:00pm for many of the staff, producers and candidates.

The NETC Auditions provide an important service to the national and local theatre industry by providing a way to connect theatre professionals with numerous actors and technicians. It has always been a successful program of NETC, but it is equally successful for the producers and candidates who attend.

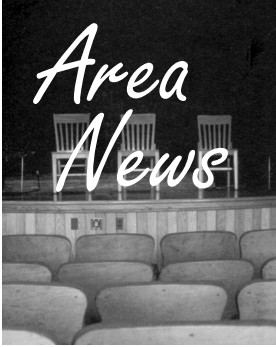
As always, we received numerous complements and much praise for the efficiency of the process and the respect shown to applicants and producers alike. Producers continue to say that the NETC auditions are the best run of any they attend. We should be very proud of our accomplishments.



The accompanist learns what's coming up next



A break for the producers in the music theater auditions.



NETC Wedding Congratulations to Linda & Luke!

NETC celebrates the best of all collaborations—the wedding of two NETC colleagues—and are happy to announce the marriage of Linda Murphy to Luke Sutherland on February 9, 2004.

Linda is a Past President and member of the College of Fellows. She is the Associate Director of Education at the Huntington Theatre Company. Luke is a member of the Board of Directors representing the College/University Division and was a Co-Chair of last year's Annual Convention in Providence, Rhode Island. He is the Technical Director of Theatre at the

Community College of Rhode Island.

Linda and Luke have been long-time colleagues. They met at the Theatre Department at CCRI in 1989;



Luke Sutherland and Linda Murphy

but their romance began just two years ago, on February 9, their first date. As good friends, they never realized that their professional relationship would actually transform into a personal one. Our best wishes to the Newlyweds!

Broad Brook Opera House Hosts World Premiere Musical

The Broad Brook Opera House, located in the village of Broad Brook in East Windsor, Connecticut, and currently the home to the St. Martha Players, recently announced the world premiere production of *In Good Spirits*.

Written by western Massachusetts writer and composer, Howard Odentz and arranged and orchestrated by Stefan Billups, *In Good Spirits* is a rollicking original musical farce about a haunted theater, its somewhat passed-their-prime residents, and the new community theater company that moves in to take over. With twenty original songs and a colorful cast of characters

for area actors to breathe life (or after-life) into, this new musical comedy is sure to tickle the funny bones of cast, crew and audiences alike.

The production will be directed by area performer and director David A. Gilfor, with musical direction by Amy Roberts-Crawford and choreography by Foster Reese. Performance dates are September 10th through October 4th, 2004. A cast album will also be recorded with this original ensemble cast.

In related news, the St. Martha Players recently completed renovations to the historic opera house, which includes updated stadium style tiered seating, as well as air conditioning. It is the goal of the Opera House owner, Tom Kuhns, and the board of directors of the Players to continue to remain a strong presence in the Broad Brook community for years to come.

Announcing the Third Annual High School Theater Olympiad!

The third annual High School Theater Olympiad will take place at the NETC Convention on Friday, November 12th, 2004 in Portland, Maine. Planners of the Olympiad are working to make this a fun and worthwhile event for high school students and their teachers. The Olympiad events will take place on Friday, November 12th but teachers and students are encouraged to take advantage of the great room rates, wonderful sessions and performances throughout the three and a half days of the conference. Teachers will need to pre register students this year for most of the Olympiad events. Teams of high schools will compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in dance, set design, musical theater (singing), lighting, costume design, Shakespearean performance, and improv. Multiple

sessions of each event will be scheduled so that more students can register and compete while still keeping numbers down for each session. With the exception of musical theater, no advance preparation is necessary. Just come with a willingness to learn and have fun! The Musical Theater Venue requires that each registered student bring two copies of an up tempo song and two copies of a ballad. An accompanist will be provided. Watch for the flyer that should arrive at your school in late May or early June about the Olympiad and save the dates! We need help in planning and executing the Olympiad and in sponsoring other events that would be of interest to the Secondary School community. We would love to hear from you! Linda Potter, Chair of the Secondary Division at lpotter@mail.ab.mec.edu or 978-263-0173 or Jeff Watts, Co-chair of the 2004 NETC convention at jwatts@msad49.org or 207-474-9039.

Collaborations in the new Theatre Pavilion Highlight the 2004–2005 Season

The Huntington Theatre Company announced two unique collaborations to augment the first season in the new Theatre Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA). The African American Theatre Festival will take place in the Virginia Wimberly Theatre in January 2005, and the Boston Theater Marathon, will take place in the Virginia Wimberly Theatre on May 22, 2005, both hosted by the Huntington. WCVB TV5 is the exclusive television partner of the Huntington's 2004–05 Season, and *The Boston Globe* is the print media sponsor of the inaugural season at the Theatre Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA).

Founded by Jacqui Parker in 2001, the African American Theatre Festival (AATF) is the celebration of the voice of color. It is the dance, song, poetry, and stories (classic and present) of and by people of color and their contributions to the landscape of American theatre. Producer Jacqui Parker is the Artistic Director of the Our Place Theatre Project, which provides year round intensive training in theatre arts for youth and adult artists of color in the greater Boston area. "We are passionately committed to bringing quality theatre to the stages of Boston," says Parker. "And having the Huntington Theatre Company host the AATF next year allows us the opportunity to further realize a dream long-deferred!"

The Elliot Norton Award-winning Boston Theater Marathon (BTM), now in its sixth year, is a daylong event featuring 45 10-minute plays, where audiences come and go on a day pass. Produced by Artistic Director Kate Snodgrass, BTM supports New England playwrights by connecting them with New England theatre companies. Utilizing hundreds of actors and directors, the BTM is "...an astonishing display of Boston area acting, playwriting, and directing" (*Boston Herald*). Previously held at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre, BTM will enjoy a new and expanded home at the Virginia Wimberly Theatre. "We're very excited to move the Boston Theater Marathon to the Pavilion where we can introduce an even larger audience to our wonderful writers," says Snodgrass. "With 45 theatre companies involved, the more the merrier."

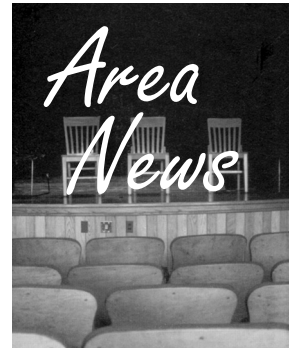
The Theatre Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA), a partnership between the Huntington and the BCA, is scheduled to open in fall of 2004. In addition to providing a second stage for the Huntington and expanding the performance venues of the BCA, the Theatre Pavilion will serve Boston's theatre community by providing a home for important productions and events. "The Huntington is hosting the African

American Theatre Festival and the Boston Theatre Marathon in order to help build a stronger theatre community in Boston," says Managing Director Michael Maso.

The Huntington has expanded its 2004–2005 Season to include two shows in the Virginia Wimberly Theatre at the new Theatre Pavilion, as well as five in the Boston University Theatre. The Huntington's 2004–05 line-up includes:

- August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*; September 17–October 17, 2004, Boston University Theatre
- *Sonia Flew* by Melinda Lopez; October 8–November 28, 2004, Virginia Wimberly Theatre; World Premiere
- *Burn This* by Lanford Wilson; November 12–December 12, 2004, Boston University Theatre
- *The Rivals* by Richard Sheridan; January 7–February 6, 2005, Boston University Theatre
- *36 Views* by Naomi Iizuka; March 11–April 10, 2005, Boston University Theatre
- *Culture Clash in AmeriCCa*; Created, written, and performed by Culture Clash: Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Siguenza; March 18–May 8, 2005, Virginia Wimberly Theatre
- *Falsettos*, Music and lyrics by William Finn; Book by William Finn and James Lapine; May 20–June 19, 2005, Boston University Theatre

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Nicholas Martin and Managing Director Michael Maso, Huntington Theatre Company is Boston's leading professional theatre. Throughout its 22-year history, the Huntington has produced a dazzling array of classic and contemporary plays and musicals for a growing audience of 175,000, including 17,500 subscribers. The Huntington is in the midst of artistic and organizational expansion, including plans to commission, develop, and produce new American plays. Plans include the building of two new performance spaces in collaboration with the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA), the first new theatre building to be built in Boston in more than 75 years. The Huntington will focus its new play development at the new Theatre Pavilion, while continuing to perform primarily at its home base, the 890-seat Boston University Theatre on Huntington Avenue. The Huntington has been the professional theatre in residence at Boston University since its founding in 1982.





Hole in the Wall Theater Finds New Home

Hole in the Wall Theater (HITW) has found a new home at 116–118 Main Street in downtown New Britain, CT. The theater anticipates beginning performances in its new home by fall.

Barbara Arnold, President of HITW's Board of Directors says, "Our new home is everything we need in a performance space, no pillars, 18 foot ceilings, up-to-date heating and air conditioning systems, easy access, and plenty of parking at a municipal garage within one city block. Best of all for our patrons and members, parking is free nights and weekends when the theater is most active." The new space offers many amenities for this 32 year old theater company, not the least of which is location. Says Arnold, "We made a commitment to stay in New Britain and we are thrilled to be part of downtown."

At this point, HITW is working with an architect and general contractor to finalize the floor plan and building requirements. Construction will begin once the theater has obtained the necessary permits. The company has also begun an aggressive fund-raising drive,

seeking funds from patrons, theater members, and local foundations, as well as corporate sponsorships that will supplement the building funds in its treasury.

Since losing its home at 10 Harvard Street last June, HITW has presented several productions at Trinity-on-Main, a new performance space sponsored by Vision New Britain. These offerings included a staged reading of a new play, *Bottom Bitch*, written by theater member Deirdre Patterson, and *Tales from the Hoot*, written and performed by Bob Ierardi, a longtime HITW member who now performs off Broadway in New York City.

Says Arnold, "We're looking forward to getting back to doing theater and creating art for the Greater New Britain community. This is what we are, this is what we love. With over thirty years of letting in the light, we are determined that our light will not go out. In fact, we are determined that it will shine more brightly."

For the latest news on HITW plans, and for announcements on timing and location of performances, please visit HITW's website at www.hitw.org.

2004 Convention Update

DONALD HOLDER— NETC MAJOR AWARD WINNER

We are please to announce the Major Award winner and Keynote Speaker will be **Donald Holder**. Don is a two time Tony Award winning lighting designer for Broadway's *The Lion King* and most recently for *Movin' Out*. Despite a string of Broadway credits, Don is not a stranger to New England as his regional credits include Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, Yale Rep and American repertory Theatre. In addition to the keynote, Don will lead a workshop.

The Special Award recipients include:

Connie Congdon, playwright in residence at Amherst College, whose achievements include the play, *Tales of the Lost Formicans* will be our guest speaker at the Sunday Brunch.

David Leong, producer of the Theatre Department at Virginia Commonwealth University and fight director for Broadway and films, will present a workshop.

William Yellowrobe, Playwright in Residence at Trinity Repertory will also present a workshop during the convention weekend.

Additional workshops are being planned to address the interests of NETC division members in Youth and Children's Theatre, Secondary Theatre, College/University, Community Theatre and Professional Theatre. The Annual High School Olympiad promises to be another big hit this year. Two master classes are being developed for secondary teachers. Teachers may obtain CEU's upon successful completion of either course.

The theme for this year's convention is Basic Training for a New Theatre featuring new approaches to theatre training and stage production. The Convention will be held on November 11–14 at the Sheraton Twin Towers in South Portland, Maine, just off Exit 7 on the Maine Turnpike. The accommodations are exquisite and the room rates will be \$79.00 per night making the weekend very affordable. Make plans now to attend this years exciting convention.

NETC NEWS: CALL FOR ARTICLES!

We are seeking fun, informative, and insightful articles about recent or upcoming events in the New England theatre community.

Contact Peter Marsh, Vice President of Communications at PMarsh0613@aol.com, call 617-424-9275, or visit us on the web at www.NETCOnline.org!

Deadline for upcoming issue: August 20, 2004

Merrimack Community Theatre Wins NH Festival

Merrimack Community Theatre garnered five awards, including The Union Leader Trophy for Outstanding Production for their cutting of *The Good Doctor*, Neil Simon's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's short stories, at the 33rd annual New Hampshire Community Theatre Association's One-Act Drama Festival, held March 13 at Concord City Auditorium, which was held in conjunction with American Association of Community Theaters.

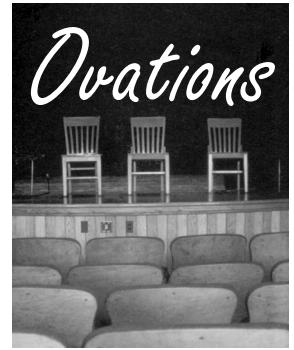
The Good Doctor also won for Outstanding Achievement in Directing for Kevin Riley, Outstanding Achievement in Acting for both Neal Blaiklock and Mari Keegan and Outstanding Achievement in Ensemble Acting for the production's entire cast—Blaiklock, Keegan, Len Deming, Melissa Groff, and Eric Skoglund.

The production will now go to the Regional Festival to be held on a date and location soon to be determined. The winner of the Regional Festival, which includes entries from the New England region, will proceed to AACT's national festival on June, 2005 at Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Mari Keegan also was lauded for Outstanding Achievement in Acting for her role in Nashua Theatre Guild's *It's Our Town, Too*.

The Community Players of Concord was named First Runner-up in Production for their show, *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* by Tennessee Williams. The show also won Outstanding Set Design for Craig Walker and the Stage Manager's Award for Sally Kelly, presented by festival stage manager Pat Napalitano.

Peacock Players of Nashua were also recognized for their staging of *On the Verge*, by Eric Overmyer with Outstanding Achievement in Supporting Acting for Erik Duchesne and Outstanding Costumes for Scott Severance.



Elliot Norton Award

In a ceremony at The Cutler Majestic Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre was honored to receive the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Musical Production by a Large Resident Company for its critically acclaimed 2003 production of *Pacific Overtures*. Presented by the Boston Theater Critics Association and hosted by WBZ-TV's Joyce Kulhawik, the Elliot Norton Awards recognize outstanding achievement in the Boston theater community. This is the third time in five years that NSMT has won Outstanding Musical Production, having received the award for *Hair* in 1999 and *Honk!* in 2000.

Caldwell Titcomb, President of the Boston Theater Critics Association, wished NSMT "the hardest congratulations" in Japanese as he presented the award to NSMT Artistic Director and Executive Producer, Jon Kimbell. "Our creative team, led by director Kent Gash, gave us a production we were terribly proud of," said Kimbell. "We knew we were taking a risk by producing this musical, but the risk was well worth taking."

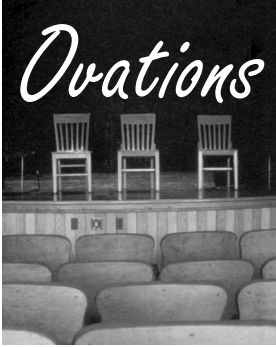
In addition to the Elliot Norton Award, NSMT was also the recipient of nine Independent Reviewers of New England (IRNE) Awards last month for *Pacific Overtures* including awards for Best Musical Production, Best Director of a Musical (Kent Gash), Best Musical Direction (M. Michael Fauss) Best Choreography (Darren Lee and Francis Jue), Best Lighting Design (William Grant III), Best Costume Design (Paul Tazewell) Best Sound Design (John A. Stone), Best Supporting Actor in a Musical (Raul Aranas) and Best Ensemble.

The New Burton Leavitt Theatre!

In September 2003, the Windham Theatre Guild proudly opened a beautiful, new home for their community theatre productions at 779 Main Street, in Willimantic, CT: The Burton Leavitt Theatre. Burton Leavitt and his father Nasin W. Leavitt, were the famous local musical team that wrote many operettas in the late 19th and early 20th century. Their most famous operetta, *The Frogs of Windham*, was performed in 1983 to celebrate Willimantic's Sesquicentennial Anniversary and again in 1992 for Windham's Tercentenary.

The 1983 production of *The Frogs of Windham* brought together a large group of talented people from the region who were hungry to continue doing community theatre work. Thanks to the "Frogs," the Windham Theatre Guild was born 19 years ago. The founding members of the Windham Theatre Guild chose to honor this very special man by naming their new home The Burton Leavitt Theatre.

In June, the Windham Theatre Guild will be kicking off their 20th year of bringing outstanding community theatre productions to the Windham area. The 2004–2005 Season begins with a re-mounting of one of the most successful shows ever in the Guild's history, *Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* running July 23rd–31st at Windham High School. Opening up the Main Stage Series at the Burton Leavitt Theatre will be the British farce *Run For Your Wife*, September 17th–October 2nd, followed by *Nun-crackers: The Nunsense Christmas Musical*, November 5th–20th; *Deathtrap*, April 1st–16th, 2005; and *The Cemetery Club*, May 20th–June 11th, 2005.



A Theatrical Journey— The High School Drama Festival Experience

A narrative on the journey of a winning high school play, by Bill Vinton, Director, St. Johnsbury (VT) Academy

Every September I start to think about the entire one-act play festival process in earnest, often at the prompting of my students—“What play are we going to do for festival this year? Is it funny? Or weird?” Because I’m typically in the midst of the initial stages of our fall musical, I usually respond, quite honestly, “I don’t have any idea—any suggestions?” This year was a little different. Late in the summer Alan Haehnel, the director at Hartford (VT) High School and well-known for writing all of his own plays, had sent me a draft copy of one his unpublished scripts and said, “here’s something I’m working on—want to try it?” And so the season began.

Never having worked with a playwright to bring a script to life, I felt invigorated and intrigued, and a bit anxious about the birthing process. So, the dialogue began: “What does this mean? What if we change this to...? Who is this character, any way?” And the replies came back, essentially saying, “Do as you feel best!” Thanks, Alan.

Auditions, and then first read-through, and the cast of sixteen, with four understudies, is mesmerized by the script, *Fearful Symmetry*. The students can’t stop talking about it, and how it might work, and what it means. The only problem we perceive is that the play, as we read it, lasts only twelve minutes. This doesn’t necessarily bother us, because the impact is still strong even on the initial reading, but we decide to explore ways to extend the play without killing it.

An intriguing thing happens. I come to rehearsal at the normal starting time, expecting to do the usual “gathering of the troops” to start our work, but on almost every occasion I find that before I arrive the cast has already been working, and working hard. I sit down and watch them work, not wishing to interfere with the magic of the four separate groups as they discuss and refine their motions and dialogue, running lines and scenes until they’re satisfied. I feel a little guilty when I step in to start my part of the rehearsal. We work together as a team to make this script come to life.

Regional festival arrives—we host, and it’s the world premiere of *Fearful Symmetry*. We know the play is intriguing and clever, but will it work for an audience? Will the things we added to make it longer slow it down too much? Will the audience “get” it? And, most importantly, what will the author—who will be in the audience—think of our efforts? To our delight it works! The dramatic impact of having four family groups moving

closely in unison, sharing the dialogue, living their lives in parallel as they confront the choice offered to them by the mysterious Stranger, keeps the audience almost literally on the edge of their seats. The response is enthusiastic, the discussions during both the directors’ and students’ forums intriguing. The talk-back we have with Alan afterward is informative and affirming—and he still doesn’t necessarily know any more about what the play is about than we do!

We have a couple of weeks to refine our work for the Vermont State festival, held in Randolph, Vermont. A big festival—thirteen schools in two days—but worth every moment. Host, Charlie McMeekin, and his students create a wonderful celebration of theater, and we are treated to an incredibly strong collection of plays—three of which are written by Alan. The cast and crew of *Fearful Symmetry* are in a groove and put on a wonderful performance. We’ve done great theater, have seen superb plays, and are incredibly satisfied to have been a part of this festival. The students agree that there are easily ten schools at this festival that should be finalists. We hesitate to open the envelope—not because of any fear of being or not being selected finalist, but rather because the experience of the state festival was complete in itself. But, we are surprised and honored to be one of the two schools chosen as finalists to represent the state of Vermont at the New England Drama Festival.

So, now we make our plans. First, we need to replace a cast member who will be in New Zealand during spring vacation—our superb understudies, who have been a complete part of the entire rehearsal process, fill in without a pause. Our light technician finds a way to get coverage for a community theater production of *Sound of Music* so that he can join us—a terrific relief! We explore transportation and housing options—cost is always a consideration. The father of one of the cast members volunteers to drive the bus and join us for the three days in Maine—a wonderful offer! We make a few telephone calls and find a local church that will allow us to use their basement as a place to stay—so kind! A slight glitch occurs when the minister at the church finds out that another event has been previously scheduled on Friday evening—but he makes a call on our behalf to another church and the problem is solved! We’re ready to go to Fairfield, Maine!

The day arrives—we get on the road, a little later than we had planned. We’re due for opening ceremonies at 1pm—we pull into the parking lot of Lawrence High

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Theater Offensive—Profile of a Pioneer

by Michael C. Sherrin, Freshman, Emerson College

Operating out of small office at the MIT Press, Abe Rybeck juggled a job and passion. Fifteen years later, the Theater Offensive is one of the leading theater organizations in the Boston area, producer of dozens of productions annually and a pioneer in the entertainment world focusing on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) topics. “I can’t believe we’re doing this,” said Abe Rybeck, 40, the founder and Artistic Director of the Theater Offensive. Abe achieved creating a life out of his art.

After high school, Abe and friends started the United Fruit Company working on political activism about apartheid in Africa, U.S. wars in Central America, and AIDS. Abe started to find his routine frustrating. He and his friends would sit and yell to be arrested. When the police arrested them, they would yell to be let go. Abe wanted to attract more attention and enjoy his efforts.

Abe started writing scripts and arranging Guerilla Theater performances: quick street theater performed in various locations. “People would say, what was that I just saw? I’m going to look back,” Abe described. Feeling more of a response, the United Fruit Performing Troupe was started. They performed throughout Boston for almost five years.

In 1989, Abe again wanted more. The current performance troupe could not perform during the winter and limited much of its themes to male gender issues. The Theater Offensive was born with an original musical Abe wrote called *Blame it on the Big Banana*, where drag queens venture on a cultural exchange to Nicaragua during the Sandinista Period.

Abe started organizing his efforts, forming a non-profit business with a regular staff, computers, and a database that he slowly filled with donors, performers, directors, and other workers. He found the most difficult part of starting his own theater company was keeping a staff. People often burned out after one project. Money was a constant concern. As organization increased, the staff became steadier and work became more efficient. The process went slowly, until a structured organization was built. “Infrastructure made a big difference [with everything]” Abe said, but he added that if he had started with the infrastructure he has now, the work might have suffered. Time may be devoted to approving invitations for a fund raiser instead of perfecting scripts. Abe is thankful he could concentrate on creating art in the beginning.

The early Theater Offensive quickly placed itself as a force in the GLBT community and a pioneer in theater. In 1992, they produced the *Out on the Edge Fest*,

one of the earliest GLBT theater festivals and the first with a majority of colored works. This was followed by *Spic Out*, the first Latino GLBT theater festival. Additionally, the Theater Offensive started a band/cabaret performance group called Adult Children of Heterosexuals. The group performed original songs

“Pour yourself into [your work]. If you can get satisfaction from that, then you’re on to something.”

—Abe Rybeck

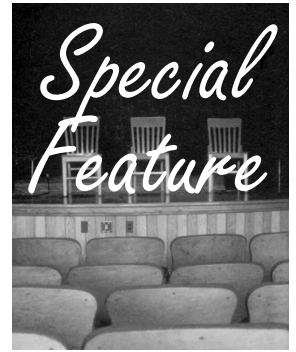
with dances, back-up singers, and stories. In 1994, True Colors Out Youth Troupe started; a performance group of GLBT youth and allies who write an original piece and perform for schools and conferences around Massachusetts. 1995 saw the start of Plays At Work, a forum to produce original plays by GLBT writers.

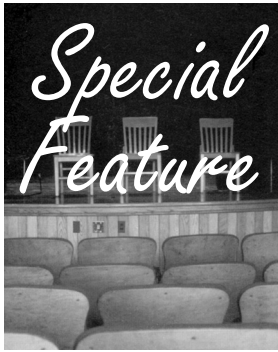
In 1993, the Theater Offensive’s band performed at the March on Washington, appearing after Jesse Jackson and before Eartha Kitt, which Abe referred to as “a peak experience. [I would] never need to perform again.”

But that thrill has not ended the continued work of the Theater Offensive. After 10 years, True Colors Out Youth Troupe continues to perform. Plays at Work has produced work from Leeta Nealy, Tom Cole, Kate Bornstein, and many others. The Theater Offensive keeps progressing in GLBT activism with Street Theater Named Desire, a guerrilla theater troupe that performs AIDS activism in the middle of night at gay cruising spots. ClimACTS, the Theater Offensive’s major fund raiser brought in \$140,000.

Even with numerous awards and avid supporters, Abe remembers the hard times and knows there is still work to be done. He remembers spending the entire summer of 1993 crying, once not even wanting to get off the floor. Abe credits imagination, tenacity, and an aptitude for joy with his success. He tries to highlight the good parts of his work. He learned to ask and get the impossible. Companies donate thousands of dollars worth of goods for auctions and individuals pay the same for even less in return. Certainly working with others is vital, but Abe accentuates learning how to apologize is more important than avoiding mistakes.

“Think about your audience and ask: does what your doing mean something to them,” Abe says. “Pour yourself into [your work]. If you can get satisfaction from that, then you’re on to something.”





“The Forum” Eighth Edition:

by *Suzanne M. Ramczyk, Ph.D.*

Professor of Theatre Arts, Bridgewater State College and NETC Executive Secretary

Dear Readers,

This edition features a cogent essay on auditioning, which is not only chocked full of practical advice, but also effectively undermines a myriad of commonly held—but misguided—notions associated with the necessary, but grueling, process. This eye-opening treatise, penned by former NETC president, David Allen George, charges the auditioner to re-examine her approach by viewing it as “a terrific opportunity for examination and empowerment of the ‘self’”—profound advice for any actor charting his way

through the seemingly heartless and impersonal world of auditioning. Read on, and I’m sure many of you will agree that essay should be required reading for any class in audition techniques, indeed, for anyone entering the field!

As ever, if you feel moved to respond to this essay, or if you would like to pen your own “Forum” piece, please email Suzanne Ramczyk at sramczyk@bridgew.edu, no later than August 15th, 2004.

*In this edition of
the Forum*

Auditioning; Everything is Personal

by *David Allen George*

Past President, NETC and Professor of Theatre Arts, Salem (MA) State College

Years ago I auditioned for a rather “important” casting director in Manhattan. When told I wasn’t suited for the role I didn’t attempt to disguise my disappointment. The director was kind enough to take a moment to say that it wasn’t ‘personal’. “We just can’t use you.” he said. Years later and many auditions ago I realized he was wrong. Auditioning is ‘personal’ and everything about the process needs to be prepared and presented... ‘personally.’

Auditioning is not acting. Critical acting steps must be incorporated in any audition. But the process is totally different. In that earlier ‘important’ audition, the material I used wasn’t me. The clothing I selected wasn’t me. Even the salutation I gave wasn’t me. I wasn’t me. Everything done was an attempt to be what I thought they wanted me to be. This is the biggest actor’s mistake when trying to make the audition ‘personal.’ Don’t try to psyche out the audition. Try to psyche yourself up for it.

Be yourself? The auditioned must be accessible and willing to show not only who they are but how they feel about themselves. Auditioning can and should be that ‘personal.’ I know very few actors who really enjoy auditioning. Think about it? Preparation, selections, competition, rejection and a hundred other variables make even some seasoned performers quake. But here is where the idea of taking it all ‘personally’ makes a big difference. Change your perception. View the audition as a terrific opportunity for examination and empowerment of the ‘self.’ Make it a step in a ‘personal’ journey rather than a final destination. Too often that destina-

tion appears catastrophic before things even get started. Michael Shurtleff states in his classic book *Audition* that the only thing the actor can’t control in the audition is actually getting the job. All other aspects of the audition from start to finish deal with the auditioner.

And the competition? Everyone is in the same boat. The only real competition is with you. All the negative messages, self doubts and turmoil generates from you. Think about it. In your last audition did some other talent walk up to you and tell you that the role was theirs and that you couldn’t act, weren’t as good looking, as tall, as classical or contemporary as they were? Taken up with all the negative energy of looking about in comparison and contrast of you to others in an audition is truly an out-of-body experience. When you should be focusing on being yourself and in the here and now you spend time giving your energies over to this type of competition? Do this and you put the whole experience in jeopardy. Focus instead on how effectively you are dealing with yourself and how this experience is going to be better than your last audition ever could have been.

And the preparation? Too often auditioners make selections and choices with the idea of playing fantasy roles, acting out a personal problem or worst of all to shock and amaze. Remember, they only want to see you. In choosing material it is advisable to use an approach suggested by colleague and friend, Professor Celena Sky April. She stresses selecting material that displays the auditioner’s dominant and recessive traits. Dominant traits are immediately visible in actions

taken on an everyday basis; the way we cope. Recessive traits are those shown only to the bathroom mirror. An auditioner's dominant traits might display a fast talker, who is quick judging others. On the recessive side the same auditioner might feel comfortable in showing the inner person who feels they ought to weigh their words more carefully and fears being judged. The dominant and recessive examination is both revealing and immediate and offers a real and believable range to play. Many actors complain they can find no material that suits them. Take the search 'personally' using dominant and recessive traits and material quickly surfaces and is easily accessible.

Entering as if you know you have the part or sliding into the audition oozing humility or appearing so 'cool' and detached that you look put out are false fronts that only hide you. Try not to 'make an appearance'. Ever entered a party that you really were looking forward to attending, the party where you couldn't wait to see friends and to be seen?

And that "killer" monologue? There is no "killer" monologue. Selecting material with this idea guarantees the material is showing but not you. Material may be everything but it should be everything about you. When auditioning, don't hide in your selections. Don't select big climactic moments or a monologue that is attractive to you simply because it is so emotional or full of alarming words and statements. Keep prepared monologues to a simple and identifiable story which has an effective beginning, middle and end. Even in a musical audition don't just share the notes you can sing but examine the lyrics and the story you sing to tell. When selections are action oriented and span the actor's dominant and recessive traits the work is 'personal,' genuine and can be honestly acted upon.

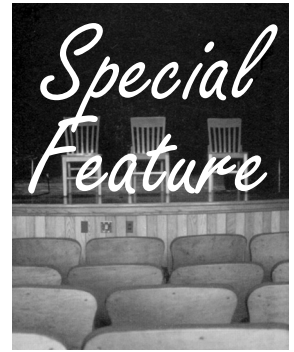
What will I wear? Dressing for the audition is 'personal.' An actor once told me he was his best in blue jeans and sandals. Dressing for the audition means dressing for the audition. Don't dress for the role. Don't dress for the effect. Don't dress to be sexy. Don't dress to shock. Take time to 'personally' examine your shape, silhouette, strongest body and facial features and your best colors all giving attention to the unique you. Imagine what goes on in the casting director's mind. Seated there for hours, sometimes days, this individual is just waiting for you to be the right one. You might expect the person behind the table to be more objective and look past the hair, heels or high jinks. Don't make this individual

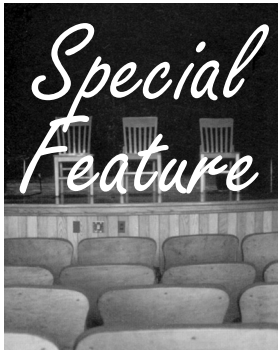
work harder than they have to. Clothing choices demonstrate how we feel about ourselves. So, if the blue jeans and sandals are a 'must' just be sure they are a suitable 'must' for the audition.

Casting in the first thirty seconds? If you haven't heard this before, it happens. Time, money and energy are always at a premium in the business. The expectation is not to waste any of the three. So, the auditioner arrives early, prepared, comfortable and ready to make an entrance. Don't go to extremes. Entering as if you know you have the part or sliding into the audition oozing humility or appearing so 'cool' and detached that you look put out are false fronts that only hide you. Try not to 'make an appearance'. Ever entered a party that you really were looking forward to attending, the party where you couldn't wait to see friends and to be seen? Not unlike a popular sitcom, it feels good to be where everyone knows your name. In an audition, despite the tensions, anticipation and expectations the best advice is to let go and focus on being available and in-the-moment. They have your headshot, resume and they know your name. Now they simply want to know you. In a six to eight week rehearsal period or on a film or television project you want to work with nice people. Who wants to spend time, money and energy working with someone who isn't? Look closely and you will see that over time many talented actors who are first and foremost nice people are getting the work. Talent is important. Have this and honest self-respect and respect for others and you too will be getting the work.

What about rejection? Many possible careers fall apart because the rejection was too hard to take. Think before folding up the tent and sliding into the wonderful world of retail. Everyone has talent. Everyone gets rejected. Not everyone is going to be cast. This is reality so deal with it. Often conversations with rejected auditioners start with, "What did I do wrong?" There is nothing 'wrong.' If you gave the audition your 'personal' best, you did your job. That one audition isn't going to pay the rent or follow you home to ruin your marriage, not unless you allow it to. Think about it. Did the casting director or agent make it a point of saying "No" just to ruin your day? Then why bother doing this to yourself? And remember too that most casting officials are great people who only want you to succeed. There are really very few "Simons" in the business.

You find over time that auditioning is not a necessary evil or some horrific ring of fire the actor must jump through. When approached as something 'personal' it can become a wonderful opportunity to really show yourself as a passionate and creative artist that anyone would be lucky to work with. Here's to your next audition. There is, after all, no one quite like you.





A Focus on The NETC Journal

by Stuart J. Hecht (Boston College), Journal Editor

In 1990 I was an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Boston College, hoping for tenure and promotion, when my Dean suggested I might strengthen my case by becoming involved in the Editorial Board of a scholarly journal. By chance, at roughly the same time the New England Theatre Conference decided to establish just such a journal under the Editorship of Charles Combs. I attended a planning session and became a reader for the annual *New England Theatre Journal*. The following year the Co-Editor, Jeffrey Martin, was on leave in England, so Combs asked me to serve in his stead. I guess it went well because when Jeffrey returned they asked that I stay on as a second Co-Editor. When Charles decided to step aside in 1993, Jeffrey became Editor and stayed in that capacity for two years. I then became Editor in 1996 and have remained as such ever since, with Jeffrey again serving as Co-Editor for the past few years, and Charles as a regular advisor and reader.

People ask how the *New England Theatre Journal* operates. Essentially, the Editor oversees the whole, but there is also the Book Review Editor and the Theatre in Review Editor. Our current Book Editor is Alycia Smith-Howard, formerly of Mt. Holyoke and now a professor at New York University; our long-time Theatre in Review Editor is Tom Mikotowicz, a Theatre professor at the University of Maine. There have been other wonderful editors over the years, most notably Sam Abel then at Dartmouth, who served as Co-Editor for several years, and Assunta Kent of the University of Southern Maine, who ably served as Book Review Editor for many years. The Book Review Editor posts on line a list of recent, significant scholarly books and asks for reviewers; she then selects who she thinks most qualified to review the given book. The Theatre in Review Editor functions slightly differently; Tom has pinpointed the most prominent professional regional theatres in New England and has assigned a regular reviewer to each. Unlike most journals that feature reviews of single productions, *NETJ* reviews the entire season for each company in order to assess their work and to provide future scholars with an accurate and detailed record of prominent theatre activity in the New England region.

The heart of any scholarly journal, though, are its scholarly articles. There are several ways in which we have found articles over the year. The most effective way has been to post Calls for Papers on line to various leading academic theatre list serves. What is remarkable about that is that scholars from all over the world have submitted articles to *NETJ* over the years, and we have published work by people in China, Israel, Ireland, Scotland and England, even Salamanca, in

addition to throughout the United States. Sometimes we find articles by attending conferences, sometimes because scholars are referred to us by colleagues elsewhere, occasionally we have even commissioned a work. We were most pleased to be asked by the NETC's College of Fellows several years ago to publish an interview with the late, great Eliot Norton.

It is most important to publish scholarly work in order to forward our knowledge of who we are and where we came from professionally. This in turn suggests where we presently are and where, perhaps, we are headed artistically and culturally.

It is most important to publish scholarly work in order to forward our knowledge of who we are and where we came from professionally. This in turn suggests where we presently are and where, perhaps, we are headed artistically and culturally. But it is also important to provide a venue where scholars can get their work published. Many leading theatre scholars have had their work appear in *NETJ*, such as Bruce McConachie, John Frick and Rosemarie Bank, and we have been fortunate to be able to publish the work of young scholars who later went on to become prominent, such as Stephen Bottoms, Kim Marra, J. Ellen Gainor, Jonathan Chambers, and Heather Nathans. It is equally important that, by publishing work, we have helped many forward their careers, often helping them achieve tenure. I have not done a formal count, but we tend to publish around seven articles per year for fourteen years—almost 100 articles in all thus far, and still counting! Add to that probably twice as many scholars who wrote book or theatre reviews and you can see the enormous impact we have had within university theatre circles. And occasionally a work gains special prominence. For example, Andrea Nouryeh's piece on African American women playwrights was written up in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which is to academics what the *Wall Street Journal* is to businessmen! *New England Theatre Journal* is also one of the few theatre publications that is included in the distinguished online database, the International Index for the Performing Arts. We are also listed in the MLA data base, and equally prominent source for scholars around the world. So we've come a long way and done much good, I think.

How does it work? The number of articles we receive varies from year to year, ranging anywhere from 15 to

Message from the President

by Tom Mikotowicz

President, NETC Board of Directors

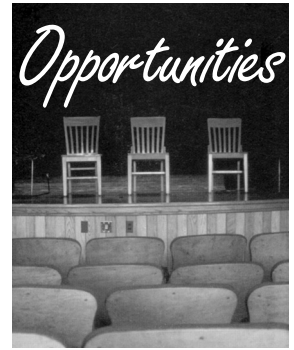
In this issue, I want to discuss the importance of membership! In the next few months, you will be receiving your annual membership renewal notice for NETC. This mailing is more than just a mere solicitation for a non-profit group. There are many valuable benefits to our membership, but I just want to mention a few of them.

First of all, there are many benefits of joining NETC. As a member, you enter one of the oldest regional theatre associations in the country. The benefits of this are that you get to “network” with many theatre professionals, who share a common interest in theatre. They may be in your division of theatre and may have the same discipline that you have, or not. There are five NETC theatre divisions: College & University, Community, Secondary, Professional, and Youth & Children’s. Actors, directors, designers, technicians and teachers from each of these areas come to our Fall conference and to the Spring auditions, where they meet

colleagues face to face, and share their knowledge. We also have other ways, however, that allow our members to share resources and communicate: a website, a directory, and a newsletter. These connections have proven to be invaluable to our members.

Additionally, we bring in well-known theatrical figures to our conference. These professionals have proven themselves on the nation’s stages, and they share their expertise with our members through workshops, panels, and keynote addresses. Their insight has always been inspiring to our membership. This coming convention in Portland will feature several significant theatre personalities, who have proven themselves on Broadway, professional regional theatre, and in film. Your membership in NETC entitles you to discounted and preferential treatment at the conference, the *NETJ* journal, as well as many other benefits to numerous to mention here.

Finally, your membership helps support our activities in supporting and encouraging theatre. We’ve been doing this for more than fifty years, and, with your support, we know we’ll be doing it for a long time to come.



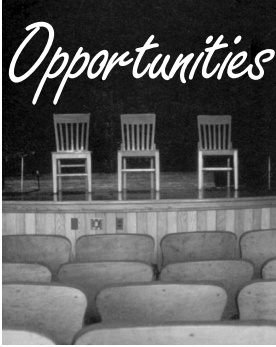
Focus on NETC Journal

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30 or more. Upon receipt the Editor and Co-Editor(s) read every article, evaluate and then discuss the relative merits of each. We then decide which are strong enough to then be read anonymously by prominent, readers who are expert in the area of the given article. Some of our readers are members of our Advisory Board, most are individual scholars nationwide. The readers do not know who wrote the articles so as to ensure objectivity. They write up a report according to guidelines we send to them and return that report to the Editor. We mostly rely upon our readers to tell us whether or not an article is original, whether it is accurate, whether it is timely. There have been times a reader hates an article but we still decide to publish it, and there have been times we have published an article on the strength of a particular reader’s recommendation. Our judgments are largely based upon our readership and the mission of the *Journal* itself, which is to balance ideas with application, which to us is at the heart of the meaningful theatrical experience. Our approach is essentially dramaturgical in the sense that we are concerned with how theatre functions within any given society and time, in terms that relate—directly or subtly—to ourselves in our own times.

Often articles need to be revised by the authors. One of my jobs as Editor is to guide the author in how to strengthen his or her work, often drawing upon the reader’s reports to do so, but more often based upon the

Editor’s own judgment and insights. When the revision is received further changes can be recommended, though that is surprisingly often unnecessary given the clarity of our initial feedback. The article then goes to Tobin Nellhaus (who is also now a librarian at the Yale University Theatre Library), who does another proof-reading of each article and meticulously cleans up each essay in terms of following proper MLA formats, and who then does the actual layout of each article. Tobin then sends the galley copies to me to proof again. The copy is then sent to the University of Maine Press which does a mock-up version of the entire *Journal* issue; this “blue-line copy” is sent to me, which includes the articles and all the reviews and advertisements, again to proofread. When I am done I sign off on it and return it to them to print the final version. And while the format for the *NETJ* is pretty much set, our big decision has to do with the color of the cover. For this we always refer back to Charles Combs, for Charles always favored preppy-colored shirts, upon which we still draw our inspiration for every issue of the *NETJ*’s cover’s color selection. This is our little way of honoring our first Editor and guiding light, and reminds us of the special opportunity New England Theatre Conference has granted us all through their ongoing, unflagging support, enabling our organization to contribute in so meaningful a way to the intellectual life of the New England academic theatre community.



Unique Opportunity in Performing Arts Training in PEI July 19 to August 14, 2004

Artistic Director Duncan McIntosh is joined this summer by David French, Christopher Newton, Susan Hammond, Boko Suzuki, Kent Stetson, Stephen Heatley, Ron Irving and others in offering professional performing arts training in a unique and inspiring setting. Week-long workshops will be held from July 19 to August 14 in heritage buildings across rural PEI and on the campus of the University of Prince Edward Island. Class size is strictly limited to 8–10 participants and early application is recommended.

The Prince Edward Island Conservatory provides intense, high-quality, professional training for student, amateur and professional performing artists by acclaimed working artists dedicated to raising the standard of performing arts practice. This conservatory is designed to foster cross-disciplinary discussion among artists and patrons of art.

McIntosh is pleased with the response from his workshop leaders and interested workshop participants. "There appears to be genuine excitement about what we're doing on PEI this summer. People will come together on a beach or in a seaside bistro regularly throughout the week to exchange ideas and experiences with the other participants and workshop leaders, so it's idyllic. And all of the leaders are like-minded artists committed to raising standards." The PEI Conservatory takes place on, and takes inspiration from, the nature, history and community of Prince Edward Island. It was created in association with the University of Prince Edward.

Visit the Prince Edward Island Conservatory's website, www.peiconservatory.com. For further information about the Conservatory or to find out how to apply, visit the website, call Executive Producer Laurie Murphy at 902-892-6464 or send an email to apply@peiconservatory.com.

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StageSource's First-ever Boston Theatre Conference: August 7, 2004

"Risk, Reward, Results: Boston Theatre 2004 and Beyond", the first ever bi-annual Boston Theatre Conference will take place on August 7, 2004, 9:00am–5:00pm at Spingold Theatre, Brandeis University, Waltham. The Greater Boston theatre arena has changed dramatically over the last five years with the emergence of a significant number of new theatre companies and artists and the maturation of many of our existing companies and artists throughout the region. In the next 18 months, ten new performance spaces are scheduled to open creating a whole new set of opportunities and challenges. A meaningful convening of our professional and emerging theatre artists and organizations throughout New England at the Boston Theatre Conference will enable our community its first significant occasion to collectively take stock of our recent past, the current climate in which we create our art, and our future landscape. For more information, call 617-720-6066.

The Chevalier Theater

Boston Event Works is proud to announce exclusive representation of The Chevalier Theater! The Chevalier is a 2100 seat, legitimate theater, just minutes from downtown Boston and conveniently located at the crossroads of I-95 and I-93. Please visit www.chevaliertheater.com for details.

Playwrights Forum Award

Vermont Contemporary Playwright's Forum award & festival—August 14th. MOXIE Productions is presenting the New Work Award each year to an author of an original, unpublished play. Each year a new piece will be chosen from those submitted and given both a public reading and a staged workshop production. Deadline June 1st. Contact MOXIE Productions, P.O. Box 264, Waterbury Center, VT 05677 for info, application, and entry form.

Lyric Theatre of VT Summer Camps

The Lyric Theatre of Burlington, VT will offer a theatre camp on July 5–9 for ages 9–11 and on August 9–13 for ages 12–15. The camp will feature training in acting/singing/dancing. Scholarships are available. For info/application call 802-658-1484.

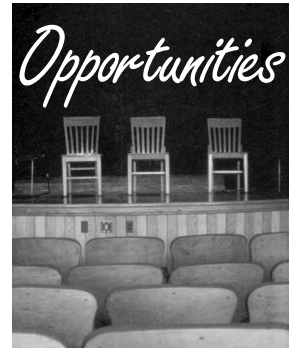
37th Gassner Award Competition Closed

This year marked the 37th NETC's John Gassner Memorial Playwriting Award. As usual, NETC received about sixty scripts, and—again as usual—about a third of these came from outside of New England.

The Gassner Committee, who read the scripts, is composed of playwrights, including former Gassner honorees. Thus year, three former winners are included: Bruce Post, who won the award last year for his play *Size Matters*, Clint Jeffries, who won in 1998 for *The Jockey*, and Bob Lehan, winning in 1976 for *Lovesong*. In addition, Morna Martell, a playwright, and formerly the Broadway critic for *The Hollywood Reporter*, is joining the committee.

The committee chairman, Steve Capra, has been reading Gassner scripts for fourteen years. "It's hugely encouraging to read these scripts," he told us. Some are erudite, some are naïf, some are epic, and some are minimalist. They're not all excellent—there'd be no point in a competition if all the entries were excellent. But many of them are, and on the whole, they make it clear that American drama is robust—hale and hearty by any standards."

This year's winner will be announced in the autumn (a thousand dollars goes with the honor). The deadline for entries to the 2005 competition is April fifteenth—but it's never too early to enter. For more information, see the NETC website, or call the office.



Short Courses for Teachers at UNH

The University of New Hampshire Department of Theatre and Dance is pleased to announce **Short Courses for Teachers** held in Durham, NH. Three, weeklong courses (meet 9am–5pm) will be held throughout June and July.

The courses are designed to provide a service to the State Departments of Education and to teachers and directors throughout New England who desire to: fulfill their Continuing Education state requirements, fulfill their In-Service requirements, earn graduate or undergraduate credits toward a master's degree or other degrees, and/or increase their knowledge and ability in practical classroom techniques. Each course is offered for 3–4 credits, can fulfill PDDs/CEUs, and incorporates the National Standards for the Arts and curriculum frameworks.

Puppetry & Creative Drama for the Classroom, held June 28–July 2, will provide elementary and preschool teachers hands-on techniques for utilizing puppetry and creative drama in the classroom. Practical activities to

help motivate students through puppetry, role-playing, improvisation, and story dramatization will be included in this participation class.

Accessible Classics, July 12–July 16, will explore creative ways for students to dramatize and improvise the major themes and actions found in great literature. The course will focus on *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Beowulf*, *Oedipus Rex*, and a title to be decided upon by the students enrolled. The course is designed for teachers of grades 8–12.

Improvisation & Theatre Games for the Classroom, July 19–July 23, will teach theatre exercises and games that are suitable for warm-ups, motivational activities, and skill building and are perfect to fill those odd five-minute time-gaps during class. These techniques will develop concentration, imagination, relaxation, sensory awareness, pantomime, voice, diction, movement, and improvisation. Recommended for grades 5–12.

Contact: For more information on **Short Courses**, tuition or credits contact Mike Wood at 603-862-3038 or mike.wood@unh.edu.

A Theatrical Journey

continued from page 8

School at 12:55pm. Our student hosts graciously welcome us, usher us to our seats, and the festival begins!

Twelve schools from six different states, each of which has its own, unique theatrical "culture." Yet, despite the differences, twelve wonderful plays. Fantasy, myth and fairy tales; Neil Simon's take on Chekov, and Chekov himself; Shakespeare spoofed and Shakespeare for real; Moliere and Kipling; tales of teenage angst and adult angst; and of course, Alan Haehnel. My actors do a tight, committed performance, and though they feel it's not one of their best, it motivates the usual questions and comments: "It was so neat when you..." "How did you

ever practice this?" and so forth. The directors' forums get better as the festival proceeds, as we discover that we really can share our thoughts and ideas about the plays we have seen with each other. The students come to know each other as they participate in workshops, a dance, and student discussion sessions. Quality shows, quality discussion, quality spirit. It's what art is all about.

Saturday arrives. Thespis would be happy to see what has happened over the weekend. After the final two shows and a sumptuous banquet we give heartfelt thanks to Jeff Watts, our host at Lawrence High School, and hit the road. We pull into St. Johnsbury, unload the bus and van, and put our play, and ourselves, to bed.



The Little Red Wagon New England Tour

The University of New Hampshire's Theatre Resources for You is pleased to announce this year's summer tour of The Little Red Wagon.

Bookings from event planners throughout New England are being accepted for performances that will be held June 16–August 14. The theatre troupe frequently performs for children and family audiences at schools, libraries, festivals, fairs, banquets, hospitals, recreation centers, state parks, camps, and churches.

The Little Red Wagon presents two new shows. Those who host the troupe may choose the best show for their event and audience. Both shows run 45 minutes. *One is Did I Ever Tell You, You're My Hero*, where PK–4th grade audiences are sure to enjoy hero-discoveries in this adventurous drama. The Wagon puppets and actors will present heroes from our communities, homes, and books. Children peek into a young girl's dream world as she drifts asleep while reading a comic book. In her dream, heroes are bigger, stronger, and faster as they courageously fight floods, fires and dragons.

Later, we discover that heroes don't just appear in books and dreams, but heroes live in our homes! Heroes conquer the bad and give wings to our dreams. The audi-

ence will sing-a-long and will become heroes in the drama alongside several famous figures; perhaps Hercules, Laura Croft, firefighters, and police.

The second show, *The Dancing Spider*, by Marilyn Osterman and Marilyn Kluge, is a musical, touring with actors, set, costumes, African folklore, drumming, and puppets! Ananse, a fictitious character, behaves as a human, has spider-like qualities, and lives in a community of animals.

This wise and witty hero-of-sorts dreams up ways to get others to do his work. Ananse finds himself in some hilarious predicaments and is able to outwit the leopard and lion. Yet from his cunning tricks, foolery, and greed, he learns valuable lessons about character and conduct. The culture and traditions of Ghana, West Africa, preserved through this folk tale, reveal timeless wisdom and will be treasured by audiences of all ages.

The Little Red Wagon is the longest running non-profit children's touring theatre program in the United States, presenting over 70 shows annually to more than 35,000 people. This grassroots model program, of 1971, was instrumental to the introduction of Theatre Education into public school systems of New Hampshire. To schedule The Little Red Wagon or for fees and information, contact 603-862-2150 or kstaten@cisunix.unh.edu.

Earn Professional Development Points

The 10 hour intensive in "Playing Shakespeare in the Classroom" was so successful at the 2003 Conference in Providence, that the 2004 Conference in South Portland, Maine, will offer another intensive for teachers wishing to earn professional development points. Several topics are under discussion. There might even be two parallel sessions with different topics.

By the time you read this, the decision will have been made and a flyer prepared with the specifics. Look for it! We'll keep the format of ten hours of instruction followed by the assignment of a short written paper in order to fulfill the requirements of all six New England states. And again the fee will be discounted for NETC members.

Production Interns

Stoneham Theatre is seeking two production interns for the 2004–2005 season, beginning approximately August 27, 2004, through May–June 2005. We have one full-time and one part-time position available. Job description includes varying positions on the run of mainstage productions, as well as some technical and/or administrative work. Possible opportunity to stage manage or design second stage and youth productions. Stoneham Theatre is a professional theatre company 8 miles north of downtown Boston, performing 8–10 productions annually in a newly renovated 350-seat proscenium house. A car is necessary. Stipends available. Please send resume and letter to Troy Siebels, Producing Director—email to troy@stonehamtheatre.org, or fax to 781-279-2374.

International Theatre Institute Travel Grants

Theatre Communications Group International Theatre Institute Travel Grants are designed to support cultural exchange and artistic partnerships between professionals in the United States and their counterparts in Russia and Eastern and Central Europe.

The program was developed by TCG (www.tcg.org) in collaboration with the International Theatre Institute (www.iti-worldwide.org) and is funded by the Trust for Mutual Understanding. For complete program info and an application form, see the TCG Web site.

Reagle Players' 36th Summer Season Announced

"Something's Coming:" that familiar West Side Story song heralds the news of Waltham's Reagle Players' upcoming summer musicals. The group's 36th season of Broadway musicals has recently been finalized.

Featuring guest artists, notable Broadway veterans and talented local performers, Reagle's season opener runs June 17–26 with the groundbreaking classic, *West Side Story*. Ken Leigh Rogers, directs this watershed musical which broke with many previous musical theatre traditions and norms. Laurie Leshner recreates the original Jerome Robbins choreography, including the famed "Dance at the Gym" and "The Rumble". *West Side Story* is a theatrical tour-de-force told primarily through dance. Leshner has staged this masterpiece numerous times at venues throughout the country. She authentically recreates the award winning, iconic Robbins choreography, deftly bringing to life the doomed and troubled world of rival street gangs—the Jets and the Sharks. With a score by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by a young Stephen Sondheim, the musical spins a *Romeo and Juliet* love story against gang and turf hostilities in 1950's New York City.

July 15–24 finds *Grease!* in its first-ever appearance on the Reagle stage. Everybody's favorite—this is a satirical homage to 1950's youth culture. Sandy and Danny and their gang lead audiences through the sights and sounds of the Greaser revolution. Critics archly described it as an era "when Elvis still had his pelvis, butter didn't melt in Sandra Dee's mouth, hair styles looked like James Dean's and Marlon Brando rode a motorcycle." Reagle Players has been granted special permission by the *Grease!* authors and licensing agent to interpolate four movie song

hits into their production. Reagle's "Family Friendly" version includes "Hopelessly Devoted to You," "You're The One That I Want," "Grease" and "Sandy." They join other instantly recognizable numbers in the score such as "We Go Together," "Freddy, My Love," "Beauty School Dropout" and "Those Magic Changes" among others. Frank Roberts directs this nostalgic show which ran 3,388 performances in its original Broadway run.

August 12–21 brings *The Music Man*. Winner of five Tony awards including Best Musical, Meredith Wilson's homey, small town snapshot is often described as a delightful valentine to America. Its turn-of-the-century tale is placed in the heartland of America where the denizens of River City, Iowa are hoodwinked by the ultimate bamboozler, the charming Harold Hill. An itinerant con man—Hill ultimately gets conned himself by "love" in the form of one Marian Paroo—the local town librarian. *The Music Man* is directed by Robert Eagle with choreography provided by Eileen Grace and Susan Chebookjian. The choreographers will reproduce Onna White's original Broadway dances.

The Reagle Players' Box Office kicks off its season with its "Grand Opening" on May 1, offering ticket sales for all shows in the summer lineup. Hours are 10–4, Monday through Saturday. After May 17th the hours are 10–7, Monday through Friday and 10–4 on Saturday. Tickets may also be purchased by phone at 781-891-5600. Ticket reservations by phone are subject to a \$2.00 service fee per ticket. Directions to the theatre and box office may be found on the theater's website at www.reagleplayers.com.



Weston (VT) Playhouse Announces 2004 Summer Season

The Weston Playhouse announced the 68th anniversary season of Vermont's oldest professional theatre. Continuing last year's festival format with mainstage performances at the Weston Playhouse and alternate performances at its "Other Stages" location.

The season begins on the Weston mainstage (June 24–July 3) with a modern slant on Molière's classic comedy *Tartuffe* in the celebrated verse translation by Richard Wilbur.

July features the first theatre in the country to do the hit musical *The Full Monty*, playing the Weston mainstage for a four week run (July 8–31).

A mile up the road at the newly expanded Weston Rod and Gun Club, the Playhouse opens its "Other Stages" series of intimate works in alternative spaces with Suzan-Lori Parks' Pulitzer Prize winning

Topdog/Underdog, playing June 30–July 18.

On the mainstage from August 5–21, the Playhouse presents *Big River*, the musical based on Mark Twain's American odyssey, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

At the same time (August 11–September 5) the Weston Rod and Gun Club will be transformed into a WWII USO as *Swingtime Canteen* entertains 'the troops.'

The summer season concludes on the mainstage with Michael Healey's *The Drawer Boy* (August 26–September 5). One of *Time* magazine's 10 Best Plays of 2001, *The Drawer Boy* has also won Canada's top prizes and earned numerous accolades following its US premiere at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre.

As always, the Playhouse's summer season will include the legendary *Act IV Cabaret*, an after-hours music and comedy revue.

Visit the Weston Playhouse website at www.westonplayhouse.org.



8-Day Intensive Workshops at Amherst College

July 12–17: BUTOH AND BEYOND

Eastern and western approaches to performance with Naoko Maeshiba. What is Butoh? This Japanese contemporary dance/theatre form has been fascinating many artists and audience in the West with its grotesque beauty combined with extreme intensity. The workshop reexamines the recognized characteristics of butoh and compares its approach to performance with western approaches to acting and movement. Naoko Maeshiba, performer choreographer, and theatre director, draws from her extensive background in Eastern and Western dance theatre forms in conducting this multi-faceted experiment. Participants will be introduced to the physical and spiritual training of butoh. Each day consists of a dynamic mind-and-body training, partnered stretching and relaxation exercises, followed by sensory and image work. These will be followed by experiments that ask the participant to consider: 1) the source of impulse - self or others 2) the conscious vs. unconscious state in performance 3) process vs. product 4) sense of time. Finally, students will use the two different approaches to create two short pieces that address the same theme.

July 19–24: BREATH, VOICE and SPOKEN TEXT with Leeny Sack

This work begins with the breath as a first and ongoing lesson in presence, change and the spirit of inquiry. The exaggerated and inward focus of this initial phase serves as ground and reference for all subsequent study. Vocal work is organized around the practice of vowels and consonants in connection with subtle energy systems and their application to the performance of spoken text. Spoken text is approached through specific elements including breath and somatic work, Skinner technique, and nonverbal sounding, in combination with highly provocative texts on sex, death, religion and politics. Sound in internal space (resonators), sound in external space environments), the concept of the Vocal Score (sound-memory and repetition), vocal collaboration, projects, and field trips are included according to course length and the progress, capacity and balance of each student and of the entire group.

July 26–31: EMBODYING THE OTHER IN DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE: story, spirit and subtle energy with Deborah Lubar and Laurie McCants

In this workshop, we will focus primarily on three things: 1. The manner in which true story can be mined for its gold, and transmuted into dramatic monologue; 2. The basic idea of subtle energies (demystified), and how the

innate fields of energy within which we each live and operate inform, dramatic character, the life of a story, and the human spirit expressed through theatre; 3. The development of character through an understanding and experiencing of subtle energies, and the vitality of the story as reflected through its unique language.

As preparation, all participants will need to come with a taped and transcribed true story of someone quite different from themselves whom they have interviewed. In searching for the right kind of story, what you are looking for are people who have made hard and courageous choices, survived difficult times, maintained a lit and resilient humanity, and—however ordinary and “unfamous” they may be—have the capacity to nourish and inspire us with their tale. Please do not bring a whole “life story”—just a small, shining fragment of the longer tale. In transcribed form (typed and double-spaced), it needs to be 2–5 pages, no longer!

August 2–7: SHAKESPEARE/MASK: the Bard, through Balinese and Commedia masks with the Artistic Directors of Pig Iron Theatre

Workshop participants will join Company Artistic Directors Gabriel Quinn Bauriedel, Dan Rothenberg, and Dito van Reigersberg for a series of experiments in theatrical style in order to find a new language with which to perform Shakespeare’s plays. Pig Iron attacks iambic pentameter with an eye towards discovery, play, and physical character. Using Balinese and Commedia masks, participants in this class learn to speak Shakespeare’s texts with the entire body. The workshop will focus both on mask training and research into how to marry mask work with Shakespearean language. Ariane Mnouchkine of the Theatre du Soleil believes that the mask on the face has the same theatrical distance as Shakespeare’s words on the lips. This workshop, part of Pig Iron’s on-going theatrical research, intends to plumb the extremes of these plays in order that an audience experiences them afresh. This workshop emphasizes physical discipline, risk taking, finding pleasure in performance and working collaboratively with fellow artists.

Workshops cost \$350. Optional room and board are available on the Amherst College campus for an additional fee. For further information, including instructor bios, go to www.kofest.com. You can also email Info@kofest.com or call 413-427-6147.

Theatre of Northeastern Connecticut

The Theatre of Northeastern Connecticut at The Bradley Playhouse will present *Jesus Christ Superstar*, August 6,7,13,14,20, &21 at 8:00pm and August 8 & 15 at 2:00pm. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$12.00 for seniors and students.

The theatre is located at 30 Front Street, (Route 44), Putnam, CT. For more information call 860-928-7887, or visit them on line at www.tnect.org.

Hovey Summer Shorts Festival

The 8th annual Hovey Summer Shorts Festival of new plays and songs will be presented at Turtle Lane Playhouse, 283 Melrose Street in Newton on August 26, 27, 28, Sept 2, 3, and 4th at 8pm. The festival will include the original works of eighteen local playwrights, twelve composers, and features ten minute plays, original songs and mini musicals. Admission is \$15. Call 617-244-0169 or 781-893-9171 for further info.

Ahmerst Summer Performances

This season is devoted to the theme of: "The Document, the Documenter, and the Documented: celebrating the preservation of knowledge and lamenting its loss—through performance, display and public forums."

July 11th at 8pm, one night only: *The Heroic and Pathetic Escapades of Karagiozis*, with Ralph Lee's Mettawee River Company of New York. A visit from our annual favorites with their new piece drawn from the nearly extinct folk puppet theater tradition of Turkey and Greece. All-ages event, outdoors on the Amherst College Observatory Lawn off of Snell Street. Bring blankets, lawn chairs and insect repellent.

July 16–18 at 8pm: *Out of the Garden*, a double bill of *Eve and Exile*, Ko Theater Works of Amherst, MA.

July 23–25 at 8pm: *The Alexandria Carry-on*, a collaboration by Laurie McCants, Theo Bleckmann, and F. Elaine Williams with Sabrina Hamilton and Rand Whipple.

July 30–August 1 at 8pm and special matinee on August 1 at 3pm: *Sounding to A*, Ko Theater Works.

August 6–8 at 8pm: *Poet in New York*, a one-man fantasia about gay Spanish poet and playwright Federico Garcia Lorca. Pig Iron Theatre of Philadelphia, PA.

Note: Due to the renovations being made in Amherst College's Holden Theater, all performances except the outdoor Mettawee production will be held in the Theatre in Emily Dickinson Hall on the Hampshire College campus. Box Office opens July 12. 413-559-5351.

Weston Drama Workshop, Inc.

The Weston, MA Drama Workshop will present *Can Can*, *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Children of Eden* in multiple performances of each running July 22–31. Matinees and evenings will be shown each date. All performances will be at the Regis College Fine Arts Center. Weston, MA. Contact them at www.westondramaworkshop.org or at the Box Office: 781-768-7070.

Mastermind Productions

Mastermind Productions presents Larry Shue's *The Nerd* August 5–7 at the Little Theater, 1 Lincoln Street in New Haven, CT. A man learns just how perfect his life can be, with a little "help" from his friends. Performances benefit two charities in the Greater New Haven area. For show times and ticket information, visit www.master-minds.org or call 203-988-4206.

Weston Friendly Society of the Performing Arts

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* will be presented by this group at the Weston Town Hall in Weston, MA. Auditions will be Sept. 8 and 9 at 7pm. Performances will be on November 20, 27, Dec. 2, and 3 at 8pm and November 21 and 28 at 2pm.

NETC proudly presents the New England Regional Community Theatre Competition

NETC, Community Theatre Division proudly presents the New England Regional Community Theatre Competition to be held at the Dana Humanities Center on Saturday July 31. Six organizations from around the New England states are expected to perform in one day of excellent theater. Each organization's production has been adjudicated at the state level to earn the right to compete for regional honors. On the July 31, three adjudicators will evaluate each show and the best production will win the right to continue onto the Am Association of Community Theaters (AACT) National Festival to be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan in June 2005. The Dana Center is a state of the art theater facility located on the picturesque campus of St Anslems' College in Manchester, New Hampshire, with easy access to Rt 1-93. Tickets will be \$10/performance session or \$15/for two performance sessions. If you would like to purchase tickets in advance, please contact Jennifer Howard (781-377-6731) 18 Burlington Street, Burlington MA 01803 Or send e-mail to jhoward@burlingtonplayers.org.

If your organization would like to reach a community theatre audience, we are accepting advertising for the playbill to be published for this event. Please contact Jennifer Howard for more information.



Salem State College Summer Theatre

Salem State College's Professional Summer Program offers six productions over the course of the Summer. The season opens with *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* as done by the Student Theatre Ensemble on the Mainstage, June 19th, 2:00pm and 7:00pm and June 20th, at 2:00pm. It will be followed by *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (abridged), directed by Paul Mitri on June 25–27 and July 2–4. Next will be the musical, *Nunsense* directed by David Allen George and featuring Anne Lucas as Reverend Mother. This will be presented on July 9–11 and July 16–18. The third selection will be *Moon over Buffalo*, directed by Peter Zachari and featuring Linda Burdt and David Allen George on July 23–25 and July 30–August 1. The season will close with *A Chorus Line* done by the Student Theatre Ensemble and directed by Paul Mitri on the Mainstage on August 12–14 and 19–22.

All summer theatre at Salem will be done at Callan Studio Productions with dinner or buffet packages at \$20/General or \$15/Seniors/Students. Dinner Buffet is at 6pm or Sunday Brunch is at 12:30pm and adds only \$5.00 to the ticket price. Call 978-542-6290 for information.

Who's Who at NETC

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Mikotowicz, President, *University of Maine*
Russell Swift, Executive Vice President,
Emerson College

Jim Quinn, Vice President for Administration and
Finance and Clerk of the Corporation,
Bridgewater State College

Peter Marsh, Vice President for Communication
and Development, *Mill River Union High School*

Suzanne Ramczyk, Executive Secretary,
Bridgewater State College

Hank Zappala, NETC Management,
Emerson College

Linda Murphy Sutherland, Past President,
Huntington Theatre Company

DIVISION DIRECTORS

College/University Theatre Division

Anne Marie Shea, Chair, *Worcester State College*
Luke Sutherland, *Community College of Rhode Island*

Secondary School Theatre Division

Linda Potter, Chair, *Blanchard Memorial School*
David Kaye, *University of New Hampshire*
Jeffrey Watts, *Lawrence High School*

Youth Theatre Division

Marty Johnson, *North Shore Music Theatre*
Nina Schuessler, *Harwich Junior Theatre*
Ron Jones, *freelance actor/director*

Professional Theatre Division

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Summer Theatre

Lisa Antonecchia, *Huntington Theatre Company*
Dana Knox, *Broadway in Boston*

Community Theatre Division

Charles Emmons, *New Hampshire Community*
Theatre Association

Jennifer Howard, Chair, *Burlington Players, Inc.*

Directors-At-Large

Kevin Russell, *Arts Boston*
Tim Fitzgerald, *Newton Country Players*

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Summer Theatre Auditions

Joseph Juliano, Jr., *Hamden Public Schools*

2004 Portland Convention

Jeffrey Watts, *Lawrence High School*
Carol Korty, *playwright*
Wil Kilroy, *University of Southern Maine*

NETC/New England Theatre Journal

Stuart Hecht, *Boston College*

Long Range Strategic Plan

Lisa Antonecchia, *Huntington Theatre Company*

College of Fellows, Dean

Sigurd Jensen, *Emeritus, Southern Connecticut*
State University

Annual Excellence in Theatre Awards

TBA

Moss Hart Awards

Richard Rousseau, *Colonial Theatre*

John Gassner Memorial Playwriting Award

Steven Capra, *freelance writer, director*

Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award

Jay DiPrima, *Mickey Dude Productions*

Marie Phillips Service to NETC Award

Bevie Lord, *Performing Arts Academy at the*
Orpheum

Leonidas A. Nickole Theatre Educator of the Year Award

Ann Marie Shea, *Worcester State College*

Constitution and By-Laws

Sigurd Jensen, *Emeritus, Southern Connecticut*
State University

Nominating Chair

Russell Swift, *Emerson College*

NETC Newsletter

Peter Marsh, *Mill River Union High School*

AACT Liaison

Patricia White, *Region I Representative*

KCACTF Region 1 Liaison

Wil Kilroy, *University of Southern Maine*

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