

# NETC News

volume 12 number 1 winter 2002

A Quarterly  
Publication of the  
New England Theater  
Conference, Inc.

## 2002: Another Year, Another Great Convention

From beginning to end, the NETC Convention this year was a rousing success. The Wayfarer Inn in Bedford, New Hampshire, provided a picturesque and comfortable backdrop for the events of the weekend. The Thursday evening pizza party, followed by the performance of the University of New Hampshire Theatre Sports group, was well attended and a fun and energetic beginning to the conference.

On Friday, registration was jam-packed with high schools arriving in preparation for the workshops and fun of the Olympiad. Kudos to Tara McCarthy and Ramona Zappala for organizing the desk and running it so smoothly. By 9 a.m., the lobby was pulsing with the music of the Warm-ups workshop led by Lisa Antonecchia. Elsewhere, the Freestyle Scene Design competition was underway. This set the format for the day: between sessions, the hallways and lobbies would

**continues on page 7**

## 2003 CONVENTION Theater: The Essential Art

The centrality of theatre to our quality of life will be celebrated in the 52nd annual NETC Convention November 7,8,9, 2003, at the Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island. The three-day Convention will expand the focus of theatre from not only events on stage, but also in the various arenas of education, politics, community building, therapy, rehabilitation, and many more venues and professions. Each division of the organization—Children and Youth, Secondary School, College/University, Professional, and Community Theatre—is invited to provide a great diversity of workshops, performances, lectures, and special events through which theater practitioners, students, and educators can share and expand their knowledge and expertise.

Building on the great success of the Theatre Olympiad, which debuted at the 2002 Convention,

**continues on page 2**

## NETC Goes for the Gold and Wins!

The newest event at the NETC Convention is the Olympiad and it seemed to be a resounding success. High school students from all over the New England area competed in various competitions, such as Power Lighting and the 5 Minute Play Dash. Panels of judges watched the participants and filled out evaluation forms which were then given to each student at the end of the day. The enthusiasm and excitement were contagious. Some events, such as the Dance Decathlon, were so popular that observers crowded around the doors to catch a peek at the proceedings. Gold, silver and bronze medalists in each event were awarded plaques at the Closing Ceremonies. Though not everyone took home a plaque, the judges all agreed that everyone who participated was definitely a winner. Below is a list of the events and the awards:

**continues on page 2**

## Young Playwrights in Six Hours

In less than six hours, seven high school playwrights from four New England states created stage worthy ten-minute plays and monologues thanks to the guidance of Dana Yeaton, director of the Vermont Young Playwrights Project. Also on hand were Kate Snodgrass of Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Jack Welch of SelectPlays.com, plus six professional actors. At the day end showcase of selections, one of the young authors viewing the presentation of his monologue reflected that the actor did a great job. Dana turned to him and said, "No YOU did a great job. Those are your words." The author—tears in his eyes—when asked if he'd sleep tonight, merely replied that he'd have difficulty sleeping for weeks to come. Working with young playwrights is Dana Yeaton's special talent. He, Snodgrass and Welch are interested in expanding his innovative and well-respected process. For more information contact Kate Snodgrass at Boston Playwrights' Theatre, 949 Commonwealth Av., Boston MA 02215. E-mail address: newplays@bu.edu.

## inside this issue

### Special Features:

Responses to  
The Forum  
page 10

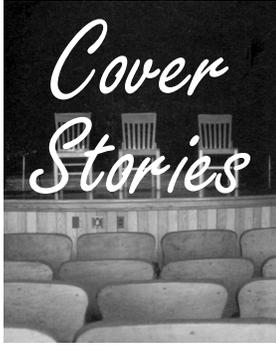
Ovations  
page 4

Opportunities  
page 6

Area News  
page 8

Upcoming  
Events  
page 13

new england  
**NETC**  
theatre conference



## 2003 Convention continued from page 1

secondary members will again have the opportunity to develop and test their theatrical skills in a challenging and supportive atmosphere under the guidance of master teachers.

Among other initiatives, the convention planners are investigating the possibility of master classes for adults, as well as professional development units for K-12 teachers.

Furthermore, publishers and design and technical vendors will feature products and demonstrations applicable to a variety of theatrical situations. Please contact Lisa Antonecchia, Huntington Theater Company, for inquiries: [lisaanton@hotmail.com](mailto:lisaanton@hotmail.com)

The city of Providence, which recently underwent an architectural and cultural renaissance, and the presence of a number of theatre schools and companies (including the Trinity Repertory Company) will offer Convention participants an enriching and artistic experience.

Inquiries concerning proposals for workshops, performances, presentations, and papers should be sent to: Ann Marie Shea, Ph.D.

Professor of Theatre  
Department of Visual and Performing Arts  
Worcester State College  
486 Chandler Street  
Worcester, MA 01602

### NETC 2003 Convention Co-Chairs:

Suzanne Ramczyk

*Professor of Theatre, Bridgewater State College*  
[sramczyk@bridgew.edu](mailto:sramczyk@bridgew.edu)

Ann Marie Shea

*Professor of Theatre, Worcester State College*  
[Ashea@worchester.edu](mailto:Ashea@worchester.edu)

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*Technical Director, Community College of Rhode Island*  
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Frans Rijnbout

*Assistant Professor of Theatre, Regis College*  
[Frans.rijnbout@regiscollege.edu](mailto:Frans.rijnbout@regiscollege.edu)

For more information please visit NETC on the web at: [www.NETCOnline.org](http://www.NETCOnline.org)

## NETC Goes for the Gold continued from page 1

### Dance Decathlon

**Gold:** Rick Cekovsky, Southington High School

**Silver:** Kimberly Wakefield, North Haven High School

**Bronze:** Caitlin Farrell, Pomperaug High School

### Free Style Set Design

**Gold:** North Haven High School

**Silver:** Bucksport High School

**Bronze:** Pomperaug High School

### Power Lighting

**Gold:** Jim Shumway, North Haven High School, 38 seconds

**Silver:** Emily Cosby, Randolph Union High School, 1:02

**Bronze:** Rob Herman, North Haven High School, 1:19

### Costume Design

**Gold:** Kim Wakefield, North Haven High School

**Silver:** Kelly O'Connell, Brittany Sidway, Pomperaug High School

**Bronze:** Jeanana Sandella, North Haven High School

### 5 Minute Play Dash

**Gold:** Fryberg Academy, Team #10  
Ryan Killen, Amy Wright-Mead, DJ Garcia, Shannon Palmo, Emily Turley, Kate Dagen

**Silver:** Fryberg Academy, Team #13  
Jon Anderson, Meghan Harrington, Brad Hamlin, Erica Martineau, Jake Straw

**Bronze:** North Haven High School, Team #5  
Nicole Scasino, Michelle DelGuidice, Rob Hermann, Maria Bontempo

### Improv Comedy High Jump

**Gold:** Maine Central Institute  
Forrest Peterson, Steve Parkhurst, Matt Nichols

**Silver:** Bourne High School  
Stephen Cox, Sam Hartson, Josh Midgett, Alyssa Norton

**Bronze:** Fryburg Academy  
D.J. Sarcia, Shannon Palme, Meghan Harrington, Amy Wright-Mead

### Musical Theatre Marathon

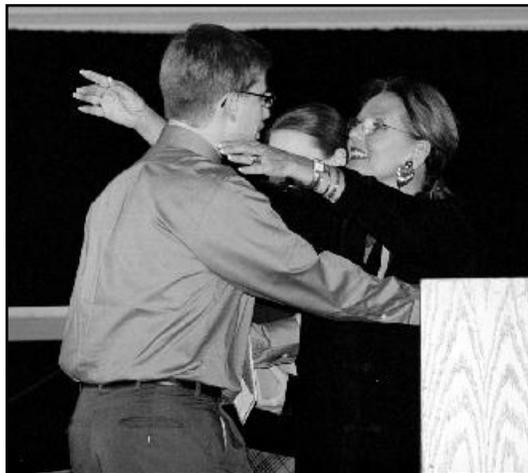
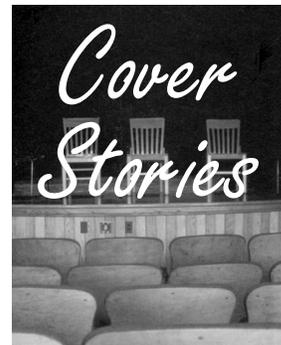
**Gold:** Tyler Richardson, Maine Central Institute

**Silver:** Cole R. Lundquist, Bucksport High School

**Bronze:** Kate Zarolinski, Maine Central Institute

Congratulations to all the participants! NETC encourages high school's to compete in next year's events!

# CONVENTION 2002: Another Year, Another Great Event



Special Guest Dawn Wells hugs a lucky winner of her Film Actors' Boot Camp scholarship.



Gassner Chair Steve Capra introduces Special Award Winner and Keynote Speaker Jean-Claude van Itallie.



Kearsarge Arts accepts their Moss Hart Trophy (a nice paperweight on anyone's desk).



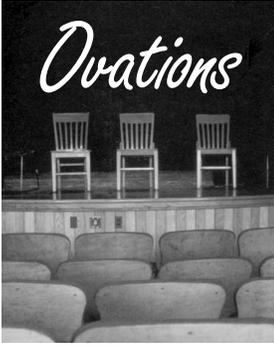
Convention Chair and longtime friend of Arthur Lessac presents the Leonidas A. Nickole Award for Excellence in Education to Mr. Lessac, who was forced at the last moment to allay his plans to accept in person—fortunately, Leo himself was able to accept on behalf of Mr. Lessac, in what many thought was the most moving, inspirational moment of the evening.



Moss Hart Chair Dick Rousseau presents Staples High School their Secondary Division Moss Hart Award.



College of Fellows Dean Sig Jensen and College of Fellows member Suzanne Ramczyk welcome longtime member and Executive Secretary Tom Mikotowicz, PhD into the College of Fellows.



## Moss Hart Trophy Winner to South Africa

This year's winner of the Moss Hart trophy was the Kearsarge Arts Theatre for Children which performs at the North Sutton, New Hampshire High School. The KAT Youththeatre in collaboration with the M. Ed in Integrated Arts at Plymouth State College produced an original musical, *A YOU AND ME WORLD*, in late July.

Over eighty five children, including sixteen students from foreign lands, appeared on stage in this musical collage of the words of children from over thirty six different countries.

The Kearsarge Arts Theatre (KAT) is a non profit organization dedicated to children and to the development of the highest caliber performing and visual arts. During a four week intensive summer workshop, youths age 4-18 develop their talents in theater, dance, music and the visual arts.

The concept for this production began two years ago when KAT artistic director, Trish Lindberg participated in the Salzburg Seminar in Austria with people from all over the world. It was during a keynote speech that she was inspired by the thought that one day all people would be able to live together in peace. The relevancy of this project appeared to have taken on more importance since the events of September 11.

Trish Lindberg along with five support staff gratefully accepted the Moss Hart trophy at the NETC banquet in Bedford, NH. Ms. Lindberg extended her thanks to the New England Theater Conference for recognizing unique and outstanding productions throughout the six state region. She also announced that portions of *A YOU AND ME WORLD* will be touring in South Africa next summer.

Dr. Donald Wharton, president of Plymouth State College, presented the Moss Hart trophy to Ms. Lindberg at a faculty meeting recently. The award will be on display at the Silver Cultural Center at the college for the remainder of the year.

## The 2001/2002 Moss Hart Award Winners

### The Overall Winner as well as the winner in the Youth & Children's Theatre Division

*A YOU AND ME WORLD*, Kearsarge Arts Theatre Company for Children, New London, NH, Conceived and Directed by Trish Lindberg

### Community Theatre Division

*THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL*, Actors' Collaborative, Foxboro, MA, Directed by Judith Calabria Post

### Professional Theatre Division

*THE CLEARING*, Wellesley Summer Theatre, Wellesley, MA, Directed by Nora Hussey

### Secondary Division

*INTO THE WOODS*, Staples High School, Westport, CT, Directed by David Roth

### HONORABLE MENTIONS:

#### Children/Youth Theatre Division

*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*, Perform It! Young People's Stage Company, Tuftonboro, NH, Director Jan Helling Croteau

#### Community Theatre Division

*INTO THE WOODS*, Arlington Friends of the Drama, Arlington, MA, Directed by Suzanne Bixby

#### Secondary Theatre Division

*THE WIZARD OF OZ*, Bourne High School, Bourne, MA, Directed by Mary L. Collela

## Arthur Lessac Receives Leonidas A. Nickole Award

At the Awards Banquet, Deborah Kinghorn told us about Lessac's long and distinguished career and about the powerful impact he had made in her life. In a truly moving moment, Leo Nickole himself came up and accepted the honor for Lessac, who was unable to attend due to illness. However, Lessac writes this to all the NETC members:

"Esteemed Colleagues: I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this special honor. I proudly accept this award and will treasure it always. One doesn't set out to be the recipient of such accolades. I've always simply sought the truth of tone, of sound touching bone and sending song and dance through the body. I've tried to allow these truths to lead to newfound behavior and discoveries in character, performance and indeed, life. For you to honor that search delights me beyond measure and I will continue to try to hold myself to the bar of excellence you've bestowed on me."

The award was sent to him, and when he received it, he wrote:

"The NETC trophy is very beautiful...it exudes a feeling of gentle elegance...and I love the glass motif."

We are glad to add this extraordinary educator to our distinguished list of award winners.

## Saugus Massachusetts Represents New England at the National Level

Theatre Company of Saugus and their production of "Interview" by Jean-Claude van Itallie was selected as "Best Production" at the New England Regional Festival (NERF) of Community Theatre, held September 21 and 22 at Concord City Auditorium in Concord, New Hampshire. They will represent New England and Region I at the American Association of Community Theatre's AACT/Fest 2003, scheduled for June 25-29 at the Warner Theatre in Torrington, Connecticut.

This year's NERF was hosted by the New Hampshire Community Theatre Association and co-chairs Chuck Emmons and Jerry White, assisted by Rob Dionne, Pat White, Sally Kelly, Kevin Riley and Dan Mellilo, made it an enjoyable two days. Hospitality was provided by the Nashua Theatre Guild and Community Players of Concord hosted a reception Saturday evening.

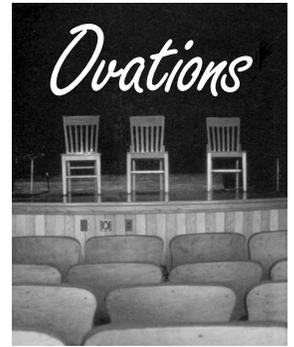
Festival adjudicators offered workshops in acting, voice and props in the morning, followed by afternoon performances of Steven Fechter's "The last Cigarette" by Gaslight Theater of Hallowell, Maine and KISTheatre of New Hampshire's "Feeding the Ducks" by Lowell Williams. The evening session began with Community Players of Concord presenting "Waiting for Lefty" by Clifford Odets, then Marsha Norman's "night, Mother" by Harvard Community Theatre of Harvard, Massachusetts. Workshops were repeated Sunday morning, then the final session included Hole in the Wall

Theater with William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Interview" by Theatre Company of Saugus.

NERF was adjudicated by Ron Cameron, a professor of theater from Sheridan College, Ontario and the University of Toronto; Kristina Bendikas, a performer and director currently teaching at the University of Albany; and Carol Smith Austin, a producer, writer and director now heading Genesis Productions in Boston.

At the Awards Ceremony held that evening, special Adjudicators' Awards went to: Harvard Community's Doug Cooper, John Murtaugh, Diane Seligman and Marisa McPherson for Set Design and Dressing; Hole in the Wall Theater's Denise Clapsaddle for Costume Design, Maria Wichlac for the Dance of the Fairies and Bill Arnold for his original score; Theatre Company of Saugus's Larry Segel for Achievement in Technical Design; and to Sharon P. Lajoie of Community Players of Concord for "Evocation of the Period". The stage managers' award, given by Festival Stage Manager Bob Foster, went to Concord's Carol Kyne. Saugus's Laura Schrader-Johnson won Best Director for "Interview". Acting awards went to Sharon Mason for "night, Mother", to Paul Bacon of "Waiting for Lefty" and to Cheryl Crocker for "Midsummer Night's Dream". For Best production, Hole in the Wall Theater was the second runner up and Harvard Community Theatre was first runner up.

AACT/Fest presents a forum for community theatres from the ten regions of AACT to enter productions for adjudication and advancement from the state level, to the regional level and finally, to the national level.



## The Leonidas A. Nickole Theatre Educator of the Year Award

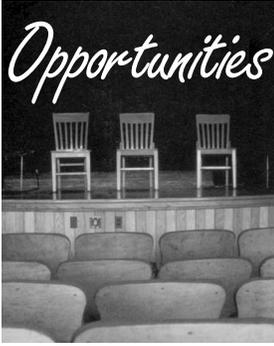
The College/University Division of the New England Theatre Conference is accepting nominations for the 2003 recipient of the Leonidas A. Nickole Theatre Educator of the Year Award.

First presented at the 2001 50th anniversary convention in Boston the award recognizes excellence in theatre education at all levels as demonstrated through dedication to theatre pedagogy, innovation in the field of theatre education, or achievement throughout a career in theatre education. The first award recipient was, appropriately enough, Leo Nickole himself.

After a long and productive career in theatre at Emerson College, Leo is now professor emeritus. A knowledgeable

enthusiastic of the musical theatre, Leo not only directed the musical theatre program at Emerson for many years, but also was the founder of the Musical Theatre Society at Emerson and served as its advisor for 30 years. Leo also served as chair of Theatre Education and Theatre Arts. Somehow he found time to direct over 110 theatrical productions in the college community and summer theatre. He has also served New England Theatre Conference long and faithfully as president and, since 1983, a member of the College of Fellows.

Any member of the NETC is invited to nominate a distinguished theatre educator at any level—children's, secondary and higher education. In addition to the nominating letter, two letters of support from theatre practitioners, who need not be NETC members, must be submitted. The letters should provide evidence of distinction in one or more of the above categories. The division will accept nominations for the 2003 award throughout the year until March 1, 2003.



## AATE/ATHE 2003 New York Conference

On July 31 – August 3, 2003, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE) and the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) will present “Tomorrow’s Stages: Blueprints for Transforming Theatre,” a joint national conference, at the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel.

AATE and ATHE, two nationally-recognized non-profit membership organizations, will combine their knowledge, expertise and vision to offer state-of-the-art learning opportunities.

The goal of this joint education forum is to impact the effectiveness of the profession of theatre education through a long-term vision of the role of theatre arts within the school, the community and society at large. Trends in pedagogy, arts funding, promotion and tenure, theatre training within the corporate worlds, and other topics of immediate concern to professionals at all levels of teaching and performance will be among the available session choices.

The format for this three-day conference will address the learning styles of all participants. Workshops, panels with papers, roundtables, performances, poster sessions combine with all conference presentations, awards ceremonies, and an opening reception offer variety and recognition to the work of the two organizations.

An exhibition hall will feature publishers and vendors with products applicable to theatre beginning on Thursday, July 31 through Saturday, Aug. 2. An exhibitor/advertiser prospectus is available on ATHE’s website at [www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org).

For more information about the upcoming New York Conference, contact [www.athe.org](http://www.athe.org) and [www.aate.com](http://www.aate.com).

## NETC Volunteers Welcome and Appreciated

On behalf of the NETC Board of Directors, I would like to extend an open invitation to our members—individual, group and student—to become more actively involved with NETC. Please consider sharing your expertise in any of the following: advocacy, education, membership development, marketing, publications, event planning, long range strategic planning, fund raising, grant writing, workshop leaders, reviewers, respondents, or new script readings

NETC has “big” plans for the future—and you can help to make them a reality!

For more information, E-mail or phone Linda Murphy, President, NETC at [murphlin@bu.edu](mailto:murphlin@bu.edu) or 617-273-1549

## New Musicals and Songs Sought

NEW MUSICALS and/or original CABARET SONGS by New England authors, are sought for the 5th annual BIRTH OF A MUSICAL FESTIVAL, to be held June 2003.

This is sponsored by New Opera & Musical Theater Initiative, North Shore Music Theatre, Boston Music Theatre Project at Suffolk University, and The ASCAP Foundation. Postmark deadline for submissions is February 15, 2003.

Application forms available online at [www.nomti.org](http://www.nomti.org), or by sending SASE to NOMTI c/o Michael Wartofsky, Executive Director, 40 Paul Gore Street #3, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Please visit NETC  
on the web at  
**[www.NETCOnline.org](http://www.NETCOnline.org)**  
to find out how you can  
get more involved  
in your community!

## President's Message

by Linda Murphy

*President, NETC Board of Directors*

"Starting Here, Starting Now" was indeed a celebration of theatrical creativity!!!! NETC celebrated its 51st year in operation at our 47th Annual Convention at the Wayfarer Inn in Bedford, New Hampshire, during the weekend of November 1-3. Excellent and exciting feedback regarding its success invites me to say that this truly was a convention to be proud of.

Performances, workshops, panels—the very well received Theatre Olympiad—our annual awards banquet and a thrilling keynote address given by our NETC Special Award Recipient, Jean Claude Van Itallie all contributed to a weekend of unforgettable theatre activity and events.

I am most proud of my NETC colleagues who make it all happen. Sincere thanks, as well as a standing ovation to Tara McCarthy, our Executive Director, for her boundless energy and efficient orchestration of every element of NETC activity, convention—et all! To the Convention Co-Chairs, Deborah Kinghorn, David Kaye and David Ramsey, my congratulations and appreciation. Special thanks to Hank Zappala, Ramona Zappala, Lisa Antonecchia, Adam Godbout (our TD), Peter Marsh, Linda Potter, Jeanie Furlan, Jim Quinn, Nina Schussler, Wendy Lement, Dick Rousseau, Jay DiPrima, Steve Capra and the many, many others who contributed to the success of the weekend.

See everyone at next year's convention as we meet in Providence, Rhode Island, at the Biltmore Hotel during the weekend of November 8-10, 2003.

## Call for Nominees to the Board of Directors

Each year one of the three positions of Director in each Division is up for election. If you are a member in good standing and wish to stimulate greater interest in your area, plan, prepare, and implement activities for your Division a position on the Board may be perfect for you. This coming election will also include the Officers of the organization. If you have a strong interest in helping to guide the NETC into the next 50 years please let us know. If you or another member of NETC is interested in joining the Board of Directors please send a resume and a letter of interest to Russ Swift, Chair of the Nominating Committee, 731 Livingston Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876.

## Advertisement, Theatre Arts Assistant Professor Tenure-track Line

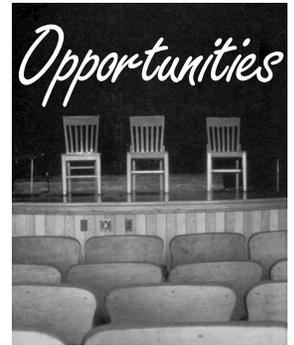
UMass Boston Performing Arts: Music, Theatre, Dance seeks to fill a tenure-track position in Theatre Arts at the Assistant Professor level. We seek a Theatre Generalist with a Ph.D. in Drama or Theatre; preference will be given to candidates with Classical, Renaissance (preferably Shakespeare), Restoration/Neo-Classical, or American Theatre specialties. Program of scholarly publication expected. Prior teaching experience beyond the TA level is desired; prior experience in acting and/or directing in the classical repertory is required.

Responsibilities include research and publication, teaching undergraduate courses in Dramaturgy (Theatre History, Play Analysis, other period and style courses), in Performance (Acting and/or Directing), directing mainstage productions, advising majors, and teaching in General Education.

The UMass Boston Theatre program has over 100 Theatre majors, a dozen minors, and about two dozen Dance minors. The Department presents two mainstage theatre productions and a dance concert each semester, offers some dance courses in association with the Boston Ballet, and is active in the Boston Theatre community. We are members of Region I of KCACTF and the New England Theatre Conference and are in process of establishing some Theatre and Dance residency programs on campus.

Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled.

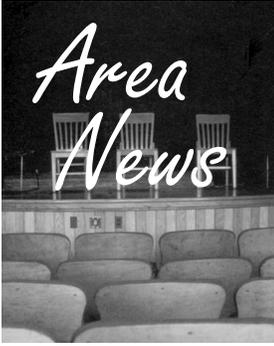
Send letter, CV, and three reference letters to UMass Boston, Human Resources, Search # 715, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125. An Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Title IX employer.



## CALL FOR ARTICLES!

The Spring 2003 NETC News deadline is February 1.

Email submissions to pmarsh0613@aol.com



## NETC Creates New Ties with Kennedy Center/American College Theatre

In cooperation with Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival Region I, the division will present on behalf of NETC two acting awards at the regional festival in January. KCACTF sponsors the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Competition, where in over 150 college students from the region vie for the opportunity to be one of the two nominees sent on to national competition in Washington DC in April. The New England Theatre Conference Award for Excellence in Classical Acting will carry a cash award of \$150. The second award is for excellence in comic acting, also with a prize of \$150. This will involve NETC in a featured role in the Irene Ryan competition in this region. These awards will be determined by the Semi-Finals judges and will be announced at the Saturday evening Awards ceremony.

Another joint program of KC/ACTF and NETC is the faculty workshop exchange. The program will provide an opportunity for ACTF participating campuses to share in the expertise of a visiting ACTF respondent, who may have a specialty to share. The workshop, distinct from the ACTF response, would "piggyback" onto the schedule of the visit to the campus. Interested campuses would be responsible for hospitality and any fees the visitor may require. Working out the logistics of this pilot endeavor is Wil Kilroy of the University of Southern Maine.

## Cosacomica Tours

What happens when you throw together a soldier who's afraid of blood, a servant who takes care of no one but himself, a Doctor who makes managed care look good, and a septuagenarian with the libido of a teen? In Cosacomica's new production, Oh Gismonda, four of the classic Commedia Dell'Arte characters take you on a hilarious romp.

The characters are played by two actors, Don Jordan and Robert Ross Parker, using masks, music, puppets, and whatever else they can get their hands on, in a tour de force of physical and verbal comedy. To find out more about Oh Gismonda, visit [www.cosacomica.com](http://www.cosacomica.com) or email [info@cosacomica.com](mailto:info@cosacomica.com).

## America's First On-Line Dramatic Publishing Company Opens for Business and Premieres its First Play in Rhode Island

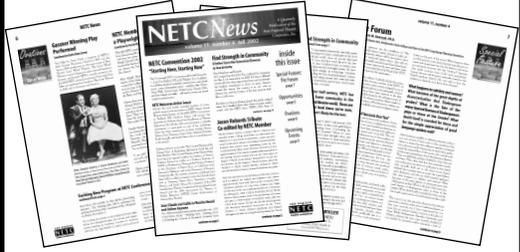
SelectPlays.com, America's first totally On-Line Dramatic Publishing Company was launched recently in Providence, Rhode Island. Jack Welch, former senior editor and managing director of Baker's Plays in Boston, is a founding partner. SelectPlays.com offers producers, directors and other theatre professionals from grass roots to off-Broadway, the chance to quickly preview potential selections for their seasons.

SelectPlays.com also offers a unique forum for playwrights, composers and other drama specialists to interact with those who are producing their plays via e-mail and chat rooms. Thanks to proprietary software created exclusively for Selectplays.com, playwrights have the opportunity to channel responses to theatre groups producing their plays without revealing their personal e-mail address and check on the sales of their properties, their accrued royalties and other pertinent data whenever they wish.

"It seems the future has caught up to the way scripts are viewed and playwrights are compensated," said A. Mahon Comeau, founding partner and E-commerce marketing professional. The initial offering of a dozen plays includes new works by Jack Neary, Brad Slight, Michael Scanlan, Jules Tasca, Brian Way and others.

**NETC NEWS:** 50 years of service  
new england  
**NETC**  
theatre conference

**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](mailto:pmarsh0613@aol.com), call 617-424-9275, or visit us on the web at [www.NETCOnline.org!](http://www.NETCOnline.org!)

## Bat Boy Returns

By overwhelming popular demand, SpeakEasy Stage Company in Boston will remount its production of *BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL* for an additional four week run beginning Friday, January 3, 2003.

All ten cast members of the original SpeakEasy Company will be back for these special added performances, which will once again take place in SpeakEasy's home at the Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street in Boston's South End.

The musical, which garnered rave reviews and played to sold-out houses through its October 2002 Boston run, is based on a series of articles that appeared in the *Weekly World News* concerning a pointy-eared boy "half-man, half-bat" found in a cave outside a small West Virginia town.

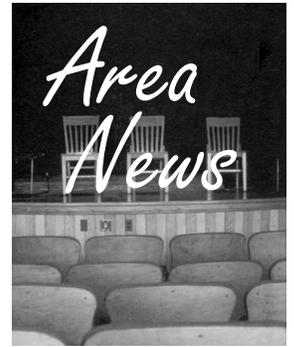
The show, which also won the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Off-Broadway Musical of 2001, chronicles Bat Boy's adventures, from his capture at the hand of three

local youths to his hilarious yet heartfelt struggle to find love and acceptance in the small town in which he now finds himself.

*BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL*, however, really came together in 1996, when Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming, two Los Angeles-based writer/entertainers hooked up with composer Laurence O'Keefe. The three men met in the lobby of the Actor's Gang, a theatrical collective in Hollywood, where Farley and Flemming worked the concession stand and at which they proudly displayed a picture of the *Weekly World News*' Bat Boy.

It was the Bat Boy picture that got the three men talking, and prompted Farley and Flemming to give O'Keefe a copy of their script reportedly complete with places for O'Keefe to insert his songs.

O'Keefe, however, took their show and transformed many of its scenes into full-blown production numbers that both send up and pay homage to some of Broadway's most famous musicals.



## Another Great Convention

continued from page 1

be lively. Then the sessions would start and suddenly the hallways were deserted, as people enjoyed the workshops or watched the Olympiad events. Workshops covering acting, movement, dance, directing, technical theatre, lighting, and many others provided a wealth of possibilities for participants.

That evening, Ronald Rand performed his one-man show about Harold Clurman. Mr. Rand was astonishing in his portrayal of the great man, capturing fully Clurman's movement, speech rhythms, dialect and the flamboyance and passion of the man.

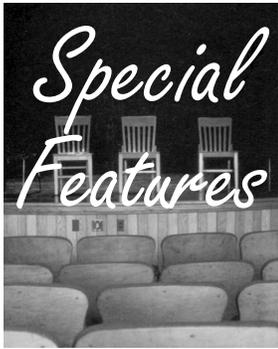
On to Saturday! Somewhat quieter because there were fewer high school students, the day was still filled with the buzz of good workshops and excellent presenters. Workshops were well-attended. NETC was again fortunate to get excellent presenters who voluntarily and generously shared their expertise with us. Remember, NETC is a volunteer organization. Even the presenters volunteer their time and their energies. This is what makes this organization unique and necessary to our region. Some of the workshops on Saturday included: Dawn Wells' film acting workshop, Gregory Abel's Master Class in Acting, Stan Wrobel's absorbing and gentle Feldenkrais workshop, Directing the Cast of Thousands lead by Linda Potter with Jeanie Furlan, and Dazzling Diction, lead by Suzanne Ramczyk. There were many more workshops and plenty to do and learn on Saturday!

The last workshop ended at 5:15, and at 6:00, the Awards Banquet began. Approximately 130 people attended the fully sold banquet. As we began dessert, Wendy Lement took the stage and began the awards portion of the ceremony, honoring theatre artists who have had a profound impact on us. Julie Harris, Arthur Lessac, Jean-Claude van Itallie, Norman Leger, Genevieve Aichelle and the New Hampshire Theatre Project, Marguerite Mathews and Gregory Gathers of Pontine Movement Theatre, and Jack Dacey, among others, were honored in speeches both moving and funny. After the awards were given, the Pontine Movement Theatre presented their original play entitled "Dearly Earned", the story of the impact of industrialization on New England.

On Sunday, the day began with a meeting of all interested in the Long-Range Planning Committee's activities. In this session, led by Suzanne Ramczyk, the focus was on identifying areas of growth and potential for the organization, and determining how to begin making that happen. Following this session was the brunch; a chance to talk with old friends and exchange email addresses with new ones as the circle of NETC continues to expand. Then the convention was over, and conventioners packed up and headed for home.

As you remember this year's convention, think about what you would like to see at NEXT year's convention. Send suggestions to Ann Marie Shea.

NETC thanks convention co-chairs, Deborah Kinghorn, David Ramsey and David Kaye.



## Responses to the Forum

Edition Number 1 by Suzanne M. Ramczyk, Ph.D.

*Professor of Theatre Arts, Bridgewater State College & Chair of NETC Long Range Planning*

First, thanks to those of you who responded to the first edition of "The Forum," which addressed what seems to be a trend towards the primacy of spectacle over text. (See NETC Newsletter, Volume 11, Number 3.) What follows are a few of the responses and the second installment of this column. Please keep the dialogue alive, by sending your responses to this second edition to [sramczyk@bridgew.edu](mailto:sramczyk@bridgew.edu) no later than Feb. 15th. We request that you include your name and title if at all possible. Remember, the following views are not necessarily representative of those of the Board of the NETC, nor of any of the organizations mentioned herein.

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Suzanne raises an important topic; we're losing artistry for accessibility.

Somehow, we need both. The phenomenon is everywhere. Even Mercedes is building "affordable" models that substitute the trappings of a fine car for an actually fine car.

—Jen Howard, *Community Theatre Division*

**If theatre cannot survive as literature, will it remain in any other form? Might it be conceivable that play-texts disappear, to be replaced by, say, play-postcards?**

---

To paraphrase a former public figure: "it's the economy, friend..." that is, both financial and cultural economies.

The financial economics of theater survival in the "new world order" require that theaters rely, maintain and grow their base of earned income (ticket sales) and therefore need to focus energies on productions with maximum public appeal. This can, though doesn't have to mean, lowest common denominator programming choices.

More complex and potentially problematic is the impact of new cultural economies, which are beginning to dominate the equation through not only the number and ubiquity of entertainment choices but also an increasing orientation towards non-social experiences such as internet and home entertainment systems.

Both of these factors tend to privilege spectacle over intellectual/emotional complexity. Subtlety in style and

complexity of message do not enable the principal delivery systems of contemporary culture. We want things short, quick and easy to understand (i.e., to judge). Simply, to invert another old paradigm, "form defines function" and the "forms" in which we live tend not to value nuanced and deep language. How many words is a picture really worth?

—Craig Watson, *Literary Manager*  
*Trinity Repertory Company*

(The views expressed herein are entirely his own, not those of Trinity Repertory Company)

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What is striking is that the canon has remained so because of literary merit. Indeed, the classics of drama have survived as literature in addition to being of great theatricality. Could it be that as our society's focus veers away from the word and more solely on the image that a language-based canon will disappear altogether? If theatre cannot survive as literature, will it remain in any other form? Might it be conceivable that play-texts disappear, to be replaced by, say, play-postcards?

Such a transition would be disturbing to the future of using language as a means to convey what live theatre conveys so well and so uniquely. Theatre may in fact be moving away from precise kinds of communication, and more towards the panoramic. This change would force us to reevaluate the classics, and create an explosion in new criteria by which to measure dramatic art.

—Jeffrey Marganian, *Theatre Arts Major*

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"Adjudicator, Respondent, Judge: Who Do We Think We Are Anyway?"

Many of you know the ropes: You log onto your email and click on the Region I ACTF's desperate call for last minute respondents; or, perhaps, you answer the NETC's call for "Moss Hart" reviewers; or, you are lucky enough to be chosen to judge EMACT's or the Massachusetts High School/*Boston Globe's* Drama Festival and GET PAID for doing so! And you are off and running, pad, pencil, mini flash light in hand. But, who are we: we venerable, omniscient, extraordinarily creative types who are seemingly capable of judging, evaluating, or responding to any work of theatre, be it a classic, a musi-

## Secondary Division News

Thanks to the efforts of David Kaye and Deb Kinghorn, the Secondary Division had a wonderful showing at the convention in the First Annual Olympiad. The brain child of David Kaye, co chair of the NETC 2002 Convention, the Olympiad was a competition for High School Students on Friday. Students competed in categories including musical theater, scenic design, comedy improv, costume design, and play writing. Over 275 students competed for gold, silver and bronze plaques. The Olympiad was a complete success and will be enhanced in Convention 2003.

Linda Potter is the newly appointed chair of the Secondary Division. She welcomes any support or help on the secondary division and invites all to send ideas or feedback to her at [lpotter@mailabmec.edu](mailto:lpotter@mailabmec.edu) or [lpotter@boxborough.org](mailto:lpotter@boxborough.org)

The Secondary Division Meeting at the convention was held with 6 people in attendance. Many issues and concerns were brought to the table and discussed. The following were some of the issues discussed:

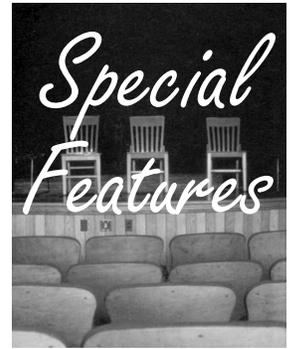
1. How to bring more secondary teachers and schools to the conference.
2. How to define the services that we market to teachers and secondary schools.
3. How to better use electronic mail in our efforts to reach and service secondary schools.
4. How to better organize the convention so that high schools students and teachers alike have time to learn and grow.

5. Discussion of planning day long workshops for high school teachers by region.
6. How secondary division member teachers can get to know each other and network on common issues through NETC.
7. How other divisions within NETC can help and mentor secondary teachers and high school students.

Since the convention, Linda has been concentrating on two main issues. First is the assessment of the Olympiad at the 2003 Convention. She has been talking with Deb Kinghorn and David Kaye about success and challenges at the 2002 Olympiad. She is working on a mailing to all high school teachers who came to the convention to thank them for coming, to encourage them to come next year, and to ask for feedback. Linda is looking into the possibility of using the UNH data bank of secondary schools later in the spring for a mailing on the 2003 Olympiad.

Linda is consulting with Susan Williams, an Arts funding specialist on solutions to remedy the waning Secondary School Membership. Hopefully, Linda will come to the January 18th Board Meeting with some concrete proposals for increasing and enhancing high school membership.

The second issue that Linda has been researching is the possibility of NETC awarding points for professional development for secondary school teachers who attend the 2003 convention. She is contacting representatives from all Departments of Education in the New England Region.



## Responses to the Forum

continued from previous page

cal, an opera, or some new experimental piece that challenges the bounds of theatre? Further, and perhaps more importantly, why are we viewed in such lofty ways; and why are we given so much power and credence, that sometimes our comments change the whole timbre of a production, or at least send directors and choreographers scurrying at the eleventh hour to change details of their productions that took six weeks or more of arduous labor to hammer out? Bottom line: Why should my or any other respondent's views bear more weight than that of a production's director, who has been immersed in her project for months, sometimes years? I propose, and I claim no originality in this thought, that respondents, adjudicators and judges have nothing more to offer than the opinions of any within a wide range of educated theatre goers and that their views should be viewed as such! I can hear the groans already. I ask you, however, how

many of you have sat through adjudications (which, from my experiences, many feedback sessions prove to be even though the ACTF encourages us to refer to them as "responses") that subtly or overtly encourage us to rethink major aspects of our productions? Or, and perhaps worse, how many of us have met with starkly negative feedback that seemingly undermines the very fabric of our work, or feedback that seems completely capricious? (Am I in dangerous territory yet?) I can remember a response to a production of mine ten years ago, in which the respondent commenced with the remark, "I don't like anything Eastern!" Not a good start for a response to a production set in a mythical Far Eastern country, for which Tai Chi informed the movement style. I have also co-responded with colleagues who have proffered what they did when they directed the same play they have just viewed. This can, of course, be the basis for interesting conversation, not, however, when offered with a sense of how the play may be directed in

continues on page 10



## Responses to the Forum continued from previous page

a more effective manner. Further, though respondents and judges encourage actors not to change anything in their performance unless cleared with the director, I propose that many young or developing actors cannot disregard the remarks of the illustrious judge. I have seen in my own productions the results of lengthy evaluations of the actors.

So, you may now be asking, “Is this just a diatribe against the very concept of judging or responding to theatre—against a practice so firmly rooted in and necessary to the tradition of academic, community, and secondary theatre, at least in New England?” Or, “Is Suzanne just suffering from a large serving of sour grapes?” As both the “adjudicated” and the “adjudicator,” (having served for all the above-named organizations) I can merely hope to

**No sooner had my excellent public school system taught me my auxiliary verbs and participles than the whole notion of a “grammar” school was dumped along with bomb shelters and inkwells. We may be the last generation able to use analytical skills necessary for handling the 60 lines of Salic law in *Henry V*.**

offer a few suggestions and to open up discussion addressing the role of the respondent or judge, either in this column or within our various organizations.

In an ideal world, all the organizations sponsoring competitive events would have the necessary funds to assemble the most capable, diverse, educated, experienced, and sensitive panel of judges or respondents that money could buy! Insightful responses would fall from their eloquent lips like manna from heaven! But, let’s get “real”! As we know, all these organizations rely mainly upon volunteerism. Even when paid, the honoraria rarely offset the expense in any way commensurate with our dedicated time and effort. Although at least two of the above-named organizations offer training for respondents or judges, (several of us have had the good fortune to study the art of responding with Carol Brandt, a true master and a trainer for the ACTF) respondents necessarily bring to their task a diverse range of experience, education, and bias! Thus, it is very difficult for any organization to offer any degree of consistency in levels, types, models, style, and quality of feedback. Indeed, many of you may ask yourself why “so and so” was even sent to your production, having no background nor

seeming interest in the style or genre of theatre you are presenting!

Thus, gentle readers, what are we to do if we are committed to enhancing the value of our respondent and adjudicatory role at theatre festivals? Must we throw our hands in the air with an existential angst-ridden Beckettian cry of “Nothing to be done!” I hope not. Surely, we must continue all efforts towards training and towards ferreting out the best and the brightest among our respondents. Perhaps, several organizations might consider working together to pool their resources to train and pay a select group of judges who meet certain minimum criteria. And, certainly, we respondents and judges must constantly remind ourselves that we do not represent any kind of authority, nor do we necessarily offer any insight that surpasses that of the director. Finally, I float the idea that we directors take full responsibility for feedback, viewing responses in the spirit in which they, ideally, are submitted: that the views expressed are no more than opinions offered by an educated or experienced member of the audience. And, please, we must remind ourselves that “nothing should be changed” until we have had a long talk with our director—ourselves!

And:

Textual abuse in part may be traced to the abandonment of the serious study of grammar. Grammar (the power that Scottish poets refer to as “glamour,” the power to cast spells by delectable verbal constructions) demands a knowledge of verbal building blocks, proportion, balance and even economy. And where has this been cultivated for the past several decades?

No sooner had my excellent public school system taught me my auxiliary verbs and participles than the whole notion of a “grammar” school was dumped along with bomb shelters and inkwells. We may be the last generation able to use analytical skills necessary for handling the 60 lines of Salic law in *Henry V*. Be it Shakespeare or even Mamet, the author’s grammatical devices support aural appeal of melody and diction, the lures that entice a listening audience to delight in the architecture of the piece as a whole.

But in a society possessed by attention-depriving demons (whimpy college texts, MTV, political sound bites, “pictures-at-eleven”) many find this study too tough and un-glamorous. So, if words don’t matter, if structure is a puzzlement, why bother to articulate or project any of this blather?

So bring out the blue pencil, cut the challenging passages, rev up the body mikes and order another fog machine.

—Ann Marie Shea, Chair, College and University Division, NETC

## NETC A Mighty Presence at the ACTF Regional Festival

College/University Division will be delivering the message of NETC to the next generation of theatre artists at the Kennedy Center American College Festival XXXV, January 29 through February 1 at Keene State College, Keene New Hampshire.

In addition to presenting to student actors for the first time the NETC Excellence in Classical Acting and Excellence in Comic Acting Awards, College/University Division will be sponsoring a workshop, "How to survive NETC Spring Auditions."

A major activity at the ACTF Regional Festival is the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship competition, where nearly 200 college students from all over the region vie for recognition. ACTF also offers showcases and competitions for student designers and directors. College/University Division hope to channel the energy and focus of this vast body of young talent to the NETC auditions.

The informational session will deal with what the producing companies are looking for from those who audition. David Ramsay of University of New Hampshire, chair of the Professional theatre division, will lead the discussion. David will be bringing the perspective of the professional producer, having produced with Lakes Region Summer Theatre for 11 years as well as having served as adjudicator for the Kentucky preliminaries for Southeastern Theatre Conference for 3 years. David will be joined by other members of the professional division, providing perspective from the design and technical world, and the expectations of the director/choreographer.

College/University Division is happy to offer this opportunity to welcome fresh, well-educated talent into the membership of NETC.



## NETC 2002 Convention Enhanced by College/University Programming

The divisional meeting of College/University, held Saturday afternoon at the 2002 convention in Bedford NH, finalized many projects long in the planning by the division. Members were pleased to be joined by Dan Patterson of Keene State College, co-chairman of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival XXV.

A major topic at the meeting was the planning of the 2003 convention at the Providence Biltmore in Providence RI, co-chaired by four division members—Ann Marie Shea of Worcester State College, Suzanne Ramczyk of Bridgewater State College, Frans Rijnbout of Regis College and Luke Sutherland of Community College of Rhode Island. Planners are eager to build on the strengths of the 2002 event, and plan also to highlight the unique theatrical assets of the city of Providence.

The University of New Hampshire Theatre Sports group offered a workshop on Comedy improv at the past convention. UNH's David Kaye, one of the architects of the "Olympiad," presented a workshop on

Meisner technique. Theatre safety was the topic of a session from Luke Sutherland of Community College of Rhode Island.

On Saturday, Suzanne Ramczyk of Bridgewater State College provided a sample from her recently published on period style style, while Frans Rijnbout of Regis College guided participants through a workshop on movement, and Jim Murphy of Northern Essex Community College introduced the Whelan Tape Technique of Acting. Technical tips, cheap but safe, were offered by David Ramsay of UNH. Non-profit management concerns were probed by Jim Quinn of Bridgewater State and Hank Zappala of Emerson, with NETC Managing Director, Tara McCarthy of NETC.

The division looks forward to even greater involvement from the college students themselves, as we plan more joint ACTF projects and tailor convention roles for the next generation of generation theatre talents.

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*(for Group membership, please fill out  
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**Divisions:** Choose the division(s) that most closely correspond to your main area(s) of interest or activity.

- Children & Youth Theatre  
 Secondary School Theatre  
 College & University Theatre  
 Community Theatre  
 Professional Theatre

## School / Theater Affiliations:

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[Students must name full time school.]

## Craft or Specialty: (Please list)

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Group Membership entitles *two* delegates from your group/organization to receive the *NETC News* and to attend NETC events as members. Please print two delegates' names and information in this section:

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Complete and return with membership fee (check or VISA) to: New England Theatre Conference, Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. Questions? Call 617-424-9275. Thanks!

introduction to new york, sept. 2002

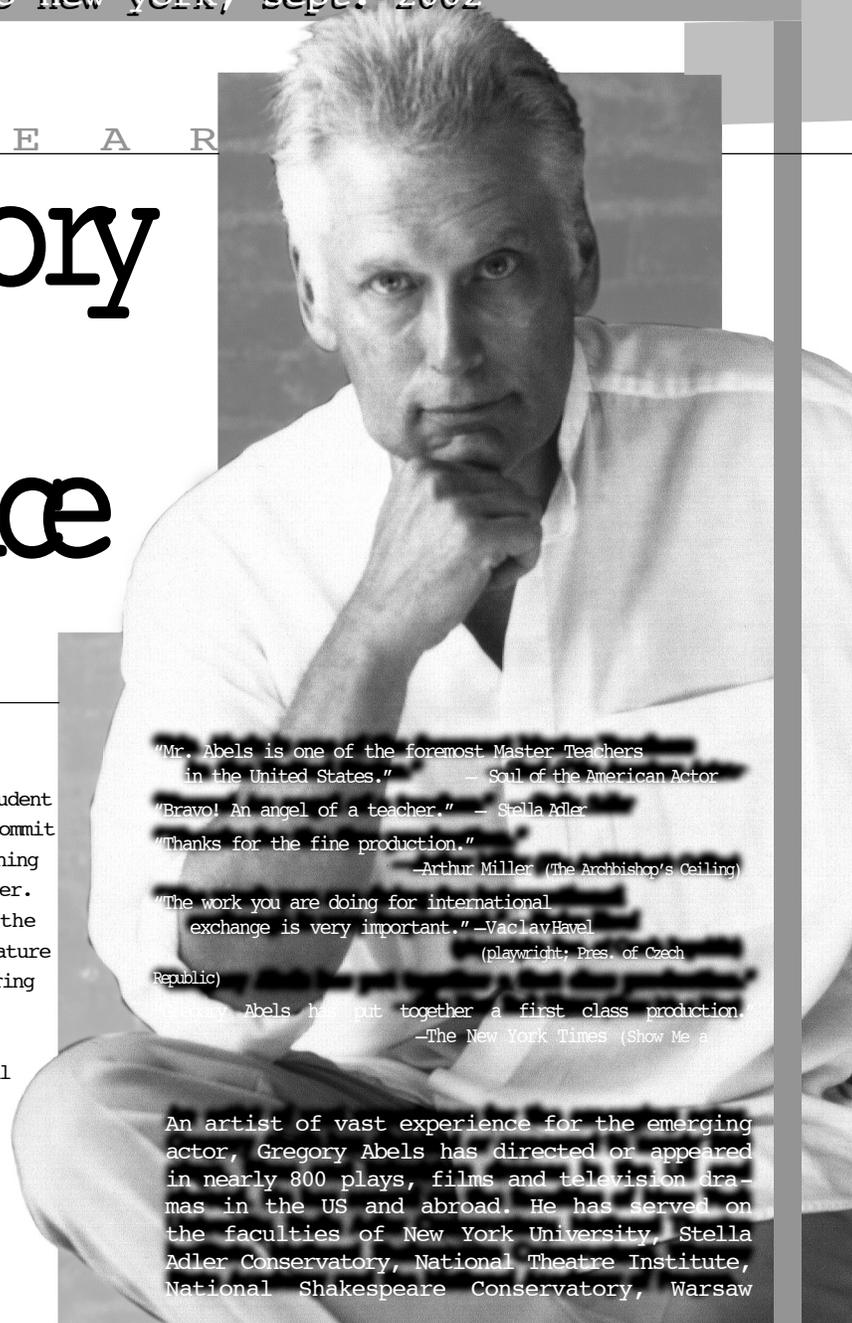
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