

spotlight

November/December 2020 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



**AACT
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2020
Reschedules**

**AACTFest
2021**
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**Fostering
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Chris Surface
AACT President

It's the most wonderful time of the year, even though it will be a bit different than we are accustomed to.

Normally, around now, we would be prepping for our holiday productions, and getting ready for one of the busiest times of the year. For some of us, shows will go on as usual, others will do something virtual, and some will be unable to do anything at all. We will all open our doors at different times for different reasons, and there is no single right "time" for everyone. The important thing to remember is that we are all working through this together. We have a nation full of colleagues who are there to help us navigate our path.

Community is the cornerstone of AACT. Think about this for a moment: one definition of community is *a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals*. Have you taken this opportunity to reconnect with your fellow theatre practitioners in other parts of the country? If you haven't, now is a great time to do so. Call that friend from 1,500 miles away, and see what they're doing in *their* theatre. Share what *you've* been doing. You both may learn something that can help your theatres thrive.

2021 is going to be a good year for all of us. We will see more theatres come back to life, and a renewed love of the performing arts from our communities. And don't stop planning for the great things that you and your organization can do. I've been careful in my own theatre to not place specific dates on in-person events, and let patrons know that we will present them when it is safe to do so.

All of us here at AACT send you our best wishes as you celebrate this season with friends and family, in whatever way that you do!

Best,

contents

Features

8

Insights from "Fostering Inclusive Theatre"

Kelli McLoud-Schingen shares insights from the AACT online training session she facilitated earlier this year

10

AACTFest 2021 in Louisville

Given the uncertainty the pandemic has brought to theatres as they consider the possibility of applying to perform in AACTFest 2021 in Louisville, important changes in the national rules have been made to ease risk and cost

14

National Awards Nominations

Nominations open in November for the AACT 2021 National Awards, presented each year to recognize outstanding contributions to community theatre

15

AACT NewPlayFest 2020

Two productions whose original dates were disrupted by the pandemic have been re-scheduled for 2021, with casts still intact

17

TANYS Festival Goes Virtual

The Theatre Association of New York State schedules TANYS Tough: The Power of Theatre – 2020 Virtual Festival, a newly-imagined, completely online festival experience, for November

19

Unleash Your Creativity with the Fall Webinar Series

The AACT Fall 2020 Webinar Series is offering arts enrichment courses for actors, directors, theatre educators, and administrators, with an emphasis on enhancing skills and expanding perspective

News

AACT Corporate Partners	24
Announcements	7
Friends We'll Miss	16
Legacy Gifts	14
New Roles	20
Spotlight Award	18
Spotlight on Discounter	20

Networking

Advertisers	26
Artie's Advocacy Tip	26
Calendar	26
Insurance Points	25
New Play Contests	23
Opportunities and Resources	22
President's Letter	3
Web Power	21

On the Cover

Walking With My Ancestors, written and performed by Ama Oforiwa Aduonum, presented at AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania by the Coalescence Theatre Project of Bloomington, Illinois. The Coalescence Theatre Project mission is equality and inclusion in the exploration of identity and a place in the global community.
Photo: Paola Nogueras

Contacting AACT

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



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VIII Dennis Gilmore
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IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2021)

X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army) (2021)

Upcoming Meetings

AACT Executive Committee Meeting

The AACT Executive Committee will meet virtually on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm (eastern) via Zoom. Minutes will be posted afterwards to aact.org/minutes. Please contact President, Chris Serface at president@aact.org with any questions and/or agendas items you would like to address directly with the Executive Committee.

AACT Winter Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2021

Time: 9:00 AM - Pacific, 10:00 AM - Mountain, 11:00 AM - Central, 12:00 PM - Eastern (US and Canada)

The Board of Directors Meeting will be held February 20, 2020 - 11 AM - 3:00 PM (central) via Zoom. The AACT Board, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams will meet virtually for the 2021 AACT Winter Meetings.

Board of Directors will receive a unique invitational link directly from the AACT Office.

Observers -The Board of Director's meeting is open for all members to observe. The meeting can be accessed by this link: aact.org/winter

AACT Committee Meetings will all be held virtually before January 22, 2021. AACT staff will coordinate with each committee chair to set up meeting times. Committees are to meet at least once before January 22, 2021

Committee Reports are due January 31, 2021. Please submit reports using the following webforms:

- Report on Region: aact.org/report-region
- Board/Committee Report: aact.org/board-report

NOTE: Before joining the meeting, please review the AACT Virtual Meeting Rules and Procedures.

Questions regarding Meetings? - Contact Quiana Clark-Roland at quiana@aact.org or call 817-732-3177

AACT Staff

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director

David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director

Kathy Pingel, NewPlayFest Dramaturge,
Education Coordinator

Ron Ziegler, Festivals Coordinator, Education Coordinator

Karen Matheny, Membership Coordinator

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Stephen Peithman, Webmaster /
Spotlight Assistant Editor

Susan Austin, NewPlayFest Coordinator

Spotlight

Spotlight is published bimonthly by the American Association of Community Theatre for its members and is annually distributed to an expanded list of known community theatre organizations and interested individuals.

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Insights from “Fostering Inclusive Theatre”

Kelli McLoud-Schingen

Earlier this year, I had the honor of facilitating an online training session, “Fostering an Inclusive Theatre,” for AACT members and guests. Well over 100 participants registered for this session, indicating a great deal of interest in the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It’s clear that both individuals and organizations are looking for tips and tools on how to do it right. How to even begin. During the session, we enjoyed a rich exchange of frustrations, successes, and innovative solutions. In the end, there was an expressed desire for more—more conversation, more training, more tools, more tips, and more guidance.

What I learned from participant engagement:

1. People are hungry for ways to create more inclusive/non-racist theatre companies.
2. Boards are not representative of the community, or lack diversity in age and ethnicity.
3. AACT-member organizations and individuals’ efforts at creating inclusion range from inactive, to being at the very beginning of the journey, to those who have fully researched, executed, and realized practices and policies where BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) artists and technicians will thrive.
4. Many participants thought that the answer to the need for diversity was simply more ethnically diverse talent on stage (see “Next Steps,” below).
5. Most companies arrived with the thought that, when it comes to inclusiveness, “If we build it, they will come” and didn’t realize the need to do more than just hold the door open.

What I know will be important for success:

1. Developing relationships and creating trust is essential. Cross-racial contact is tricky. It can be perceived as “white saviorism,” or as being used or experimented on. History is fraught with example after example of this.
2. Developing an infrastructure for travel and flex schedules to accommodate folks with less financial and transportation access (this will also apply to abilities and seniors).
3. Cultural humility – recognizing and owning that you don’t know what you don’t know.
4. Identifying and inviting BIPOC leadership, and not measuring them against whiteness. Don’t invite them in and expect them to be like you. Diversity comes with a diverse approach to the work.

5. Decentering whiteness and colonized theatre. Organizations need to unpack their mission, vision, stories they tell, leadership, audition practices, and staff selection, to ensure that it doesn’t privilege “the way it’s always been” over diversity of thought and culture.



Kelli McLoud-Schingen

What I recommended as next steps:

1. Company Readiness:
 - a) Ask yourself why you want diversity, and why now. If your answer is because everyone else is doing it, you are not ready.
 - b) Assess your personal and cultural readiness. This can be done with free or paid cultural assessments, or by working with an external consultant.
 - c) Explore diverse voices in your scripts. If you find one that calls for diversity that you don’t have, consider collaborating with another theatre company whose artists are predominantly of the culture you want to engage, or with a local organization whose members are.
2. Company Culture:
 - a) Hire an external consultant to provide anti-racism and cultural competence sessions for your board, directors, and staff. If money is an issue, see if there is an EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) department at a local university who would be willing to do the training, free of charge.
 - b) Offer an inclusion internship to students of color at a

local high school, community college, or university for work in technical theatre.

c) Volunteer in the communities that you want to engage.

3. Company Policy:

- a) Company leadership (board included) needs to explore the ways in which whiteness is centered in director and designer selection, auditions, show selection, communication styles, time management, access to opportunity, and more.
- b) If you offer compensation, commit to parity across the board. Equal pay for equal work.
- c) Create policy that encourages long-term involvement, commitment, and loyalty. But that means that you have to be what you desire.
- d) These are turbulent, frightening, exhausting, but exciting times. We have an opportunity to be on the right side of history, so that when our children, nieces, nephews, neighbors' children or our children's children ask us what were we doing for racial justice in 2020, we can say that theatres from Broadway to the Barn House were working hard to reconcile unintended exclusion, and working towards fostering more inclusive theatre communities—even during COVID-19.

We are all in different places along the continuum of approaching the work, but what I saw and heard during the AACT training was that we were all committed to the journey towards inclusion, and our communities will be better, stronger, and recognize and make better use of the amazing talent around us, because of it. ♦

Kelli McLoud-Schingen is the Artistic/Executive Director of World Stage Theatre Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma [okworldstage.org] She received her theatrical training at Aurora University, Roosevelt University, and the Oxford School of Drama. Kelli has directed for stages in The Netherlands, Chicago, and Tulsa, and has performed as an amateur and professional actor in England, Chicago, Minneapolis, Houston, and Tulsa. Kelli founded Tulsa's World Stage Theatre Company, which was named the 2019 Oklahoma New Theatre of the Year by the Oklahoma Community Theatre Association. She is also head of KMS Intercultural Consulting, LLC. [kmsintercultural.com].

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Your gift helps connect local theatres and individuals with networking, resources, educational experiences, and support to suit the needs of those involved in community theatre. You may donate to AACT's Programs and Services or to the Endowment Funds.

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AACTFest 2021 – A Celebration of Theatre

June 14-19, 2021
Louisville, Kentucky

The bi-annual AACTFest cycle showcases the best of community theatre in America, with the state-to-regional-to-national process that for decades has selected the 12 productions to perform at the national festival. Despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, AACTFest continues with a one-time-only invitational system, culminating in the national festival, June 14-19, 2021 in Louisville, Kentucky. The AACTFest 2021 National Companies will perform in the state-of-the-art Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts (aact.org/center)

AACTFest 2021 Invitational

AACT understands the uncertainty the pandemic has brought to theatres as they consider the possibility of applying to perform in the 2021 National Invitational AACTFest in Louisville. To that end, important changes in the national rules have been made to ease risk and cost.

For more information, visit aact.org/invitational. The *AACT-Fest 2021 Handbook* is available at aact.org/handbook.

AACT Invitational Traveling Adjudicators

Since there are changes to the 2021 AACTFest process, adjudication will also be different in several ways. Adjudicators who will select the 2021 National Companies for the invitational festival will first review the theatres applying to participate, and those selected will receive an in-person visit from the adjudicators. The ten traveling adjudicators will be chosen from across the nation, hired by AACT, and assigned to see five performances outside their home state.

As in previous AACTFest National Festivals, performances are restricted to 60 minutes. However, if a theatre decides to enter a



Rock and Roar Creative

production already planned for performance in its season, the show need not be cut to be adjudicated at the theatre. The caveat is that a script indicating possible cuts for the National Festival must be submitted to the adjudicators when they travel to see the production. Of course, theatres may also mount a production specifically for the festival, rather than entering a show from their season.



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The theatre can request a public adjudication immediately following the performance, where the traveling adjudicators address the entire company and remaining audience members for the standard 7-10-minute assessment. Whether or not the theatre opts for a public adjudication, there will be a 30-60-minute discussion with the director after the play, or the following day. If the director wishes, it will be his or her prerogative to include the entire company in the discussion.

The 2021 invitational process eliminates a great deal of expense for applicant theatres. Travel is not required, since the cost for the traveling adjudicators will be absorbed by AACT. (The theatre's only expenses would be for mounting a show in their home theatre.) The National Companies selected by the traveling adjudication will each receive a \$3,100 stipend to assist with travel to Louisville.

AACTFest 2021 National Festival Adjudicators

AACTFest 2021 in Louisville will feature three experienced and nationally-known adjudicators, Allen Ebert, Executive Director at Children's Theater of Madison in Madison, Wisconsin; Faye M. Price, Co-Artistic Producing Director and Co-Center Director of Pillsbury House + Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Amy Wratchford, Managing Director of the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia; and alternate adjudicator Rick St. Peter, award-winning stage director, producer, and educator. For more information on the national adjudicators, visit aact.org/21.

Paola Noguerras



Dean Bruce and Libby Wellman in *The Terrace Playhouse Youth Theatre Troupe* production of *This Side of Heaven* at *AACT YouthFest 2019* in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. *The Terrace Playhouse* is the community theatre for the United States Army Garrison in Ansbach, Germany

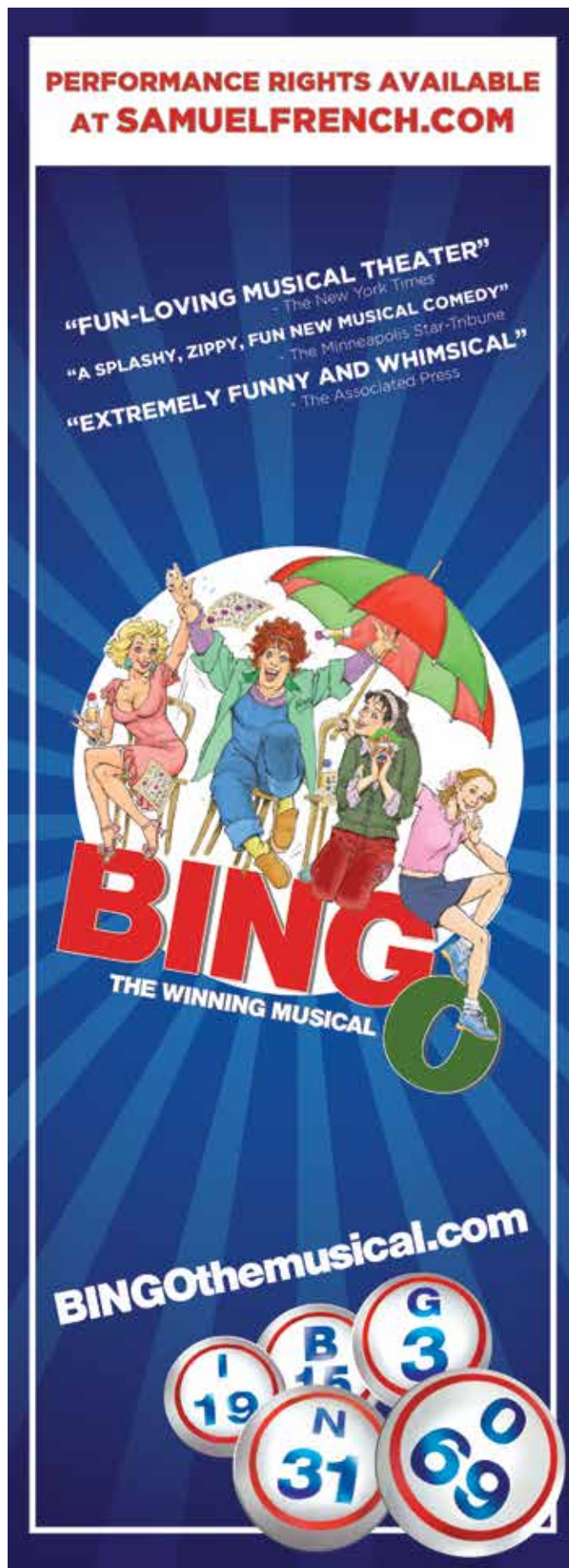
AACT YouthFest 2021

Youth theatre companies from around the country are being selected to perform at AACT YouthFest 2021 in Louisville. These youth groups will be adjudicated in an open forum that fosters a learning and educational experience for all. Travel and Lodging Grants are available to the groups selected, who will also have workshops, activities, and social events just for them.

For information, visit aact.org/youthfest.

The national festival is a celebration of theatre. Make connections, new and familiar friendships, and plan to rejoice in your life in theatre. Put AACTFest 2021 on your calendar, and come celebrate with us.

continued on next page ►





Registration

Early registration is open (aact.org/21). AACT members will receive a 15% discount on registration fees. Should your plans change, refunds will be available until May 1, 2021.

Early Bird Rates (Sept 1, 2020 - March 1, 2021)

AACT Member	\$ 280.00
Non-Member	\$ 360.00
AACT Youth/Youth Company Discount (18 and Younger)	\$ -50.00



This improv workshop at AACTFest 2019 was observing social distancing before 2020. AACTFest 2021 workshops will practice safety protocols as directed by the CDC and the state of Kentucky at the time of the festival

Call for AACTFest 2021 Workshops

AACT is scheduling workshop presenters to share their expertise at AACTFest 2021. Workshop Proposals must be received by November 15, 2020, via the online RFP (Request for Proposals) at aact.org/workshop-rfp.

Topics may include, but are not limited to: COVID-19 recovery, outreach, reinventing productions, audience safety, and communications; Licensing; Acting (various styles and techniques); Fight Choreography; Musical Theatre; Directing; Starting a Special Needs Theatre Program; Theatre for Youth; Administration; Technology (IT); Technical Theatre; Improvisation.

Workshops are well received when those in attendance have a chance to learn by doing, so please keep that in mind as you put together your proposal. Most workshops will be in the traditional 75-minute format, but the committee is open to ideas for longer or shorter presentations. The committee is also interested in suggestions for new and exciting workshop topics that could be presented by someone you know to be knowledgeable, with good communication skills. Note: AACT does not provide honorariums for general session workshop presenters.

Email your workshop ideas to Nancy Eppert at workshops@aact.org.



Volunteer Opportunities

In Louisville, the AACT team will work hard to ensure a rewarding festival experience for all who attend. However, we also rely heavily on the expertise, time, and commitment of volunteers to make that happen. Whether for a few hours or a full-week commitment, greeters, booth sitters, stuffers, and smiling faces are needed to help create the festival magic. If you are interested and can dedicate a few hours to volunteer, please email quiana@aact.org.

Host Hotel

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

Hyatt Regency Louisville

320 W Jefferson St

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Website: aact.org/hyatt

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Reservations: aact.org/reservations or 877-803-7534

AACTFest 2021 Discount Code: G-ACTT

Deadline to Reserve: May 31, 2021

For hotel amenities and more information, visit aact.org/aactfest-2021-hotel.

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Nominations Open mid-November for the 2021 AACT National Awards

AACT National Awards are presented each year to recognize outstanding contributions to community theatre. Nominations are accepted for persons of all ages. The 2021 Awards will be presented in June at AACTFest 2021 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Visit aact.org/national-awards to submit a nomination for 2021. **January 20, 2021** is the deadline to submit nominations.

The AACT Awards committee is encouraging community theatres to consider nominating individuals of all ages for existing awards whose criteria are based on merit rather than age or length of service.

Anyone may nominate a candidate for a National Award. To submit a nomination uniquely suited to your theatre "hero," visit the

AACT website for criteria for each award, a list of previous award recipients, and the online nomination form. [aact.org/national-awards]

AACT bestows 10 major recognitions, each focused on a different area of service, to honor those who have contributed significantly to community theatre nationwide:

- Art Cole Lifetime of Leadership Award
- David C. Bryant Outstanding Service Award
- Diamond Crown Organization Award
- Distinguished Merit Award
- Robert E. Gard Superior Volunteer Award
- Mort Clark International Achievement Award
- Shining Star Award
- Special Recognition Award
- Twink Lynch Organizational Achievement Award
- Corporate Award

Nominations are welcome anytime for the AACT **Spotlight Award**.

The Spotlight Award is presented locally by AACT and an AACT member theatre for long or special service that has had a significant impact on the quality of local theatre. Nominations are accepted for persons of all ages. For more detail and to submit a Spotlight Award Nomination visit aact.org/spotlight-award. ♦



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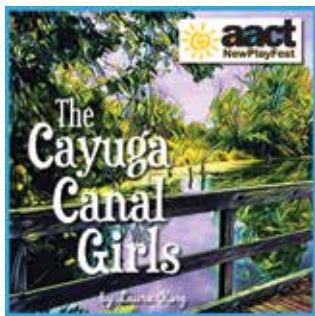
To learn more about
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at info@aact.org

AACT NewPlayFest 2020 Theatres Set New Performance Dates



In March of 2020, NewPlayFest was four shows into its six-show performance cycle, with successful productions at Boise Little Theatre in Idaho (*Casserole*, by Pam Harbaugh), Tacoma Little Theatre in Washington (*Shattering*, by Pat Montley), the Sauk Theatre in Michigan (*On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell), and the Manatee Performing Arts Center in Florida (*Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser). Next on the docket was a performance of *The Cayuga Canal Girls*, by Laura King, at Phoenix Theatre in Connecticut. Then, COVID-19 halted everything.



Fortunately, *The Cayuga Canal Girls* has been rescheduled for March 20 through April 3, 2021, contingent upon the state's determination of when live theatres can open. The play's director, Ed Basset, remains confident: "Our excitement remains high, and the cast is still working hard. The challenge for

us is keeping our audiences engaged, which we're doing via a live weekly podcast."

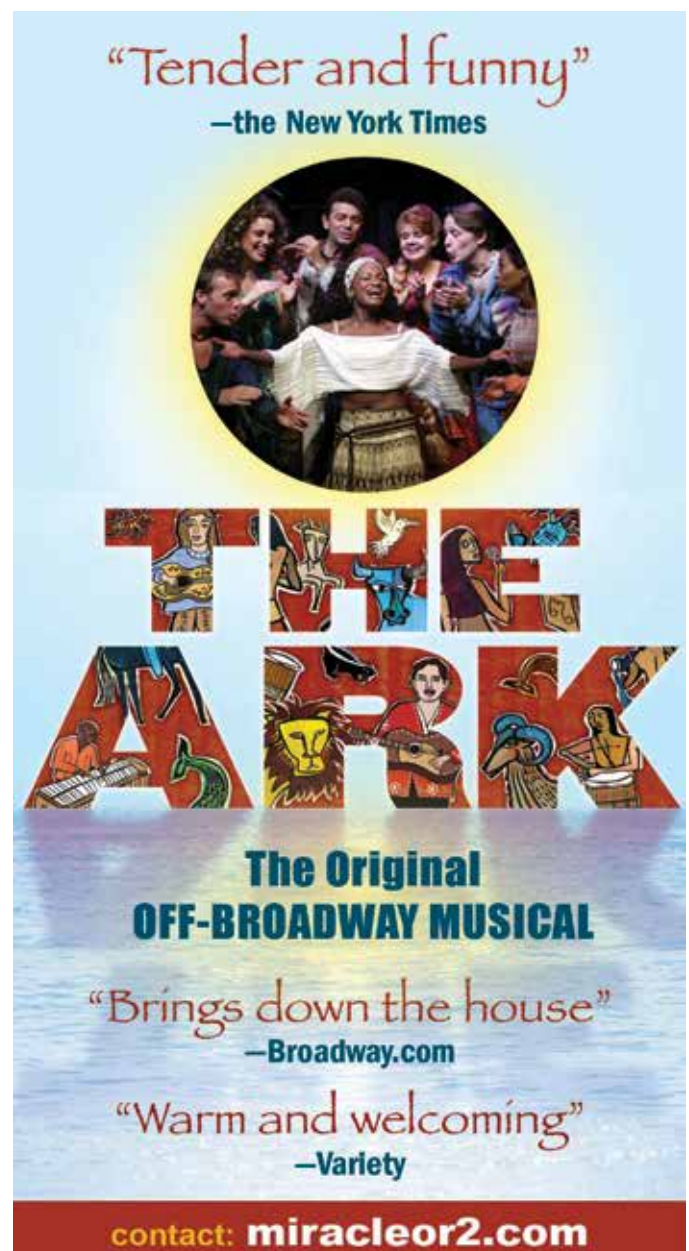
Playwright Laura King and the company had completed their workshop in February of this year. She observes, "When all is said and done, *The Cayuga Canal Girls* will have been 'in rehearsal' for more than 18 months—the longest gestation of any production I've been involved with. I'm grateful to Ed Basset and the wonderful company for sticking with this show through these troubling times. I can't wait to return to Oakville, Connecticut, to finally see this show!"



Proprioception, by Marilyn Millstone, set for performance by Rover Dramawerks in Texas, was cast and preparing for its workshop when director Carol Rice made the difficult decision to shut down. The production has been rescheduled for February 5-13, 2021, at the Cox Playhouse in Plano. Carol says, "We have had challenges keeping this production on the books, not the least of which is having to vacate our space to save money. We're moving back to city-run facilities for this show. Another challenge is keeping the cast together. By the time we finally go up, they will have been cast for nearly a year. One actor has

delayed a move to Los Angeles until the week after we close. Fortunately, everyone loves the script, and they're all raring to go."

Playwright Marilyn Millstone will be traveling to Plano for the production's workshop in January. She writes, "To me, what makes live theater so thrilling is the intimate connection between performers and audience. That intimacy is, of course, what this pandemic has crushed. But thanks to the constant support I've received from AACT national staff and Carol Rice at Rover Dramawerks, I know the curtain will rise again, that the indomitable spirit of theater people can never be crushed. It's that spirit that inspires me to write plays!" ♦



Friends We'll Miss

Venice Theatre's Artistic Director, **Allan Kollar**, died August 29, after a tough, six-month fight with cancer. Born on July 27 1964, in Marietta, Georgia, he was 56.

Allan worked full-time for Venice Theatre in Venice, Florida for 22 years. He was integral in raising the theatre's stature in the community, as well as nationally and internationally. He was hired by, and worked closely with, Producing Executive Director Murray Chase for those 22 years. Murray outlined just a few projects for which Allan was both the creator and the driving force: modernizing and computerizing the box office, establishing the bar as a licensed business, establishing and growing the concert season, establishing and growing the annual Cabaret festival, establishing and growing the annual NYC trip, establishing and nurturing the sister theatre/mentor program with Artists Collaborative Theatre in Kentucky.

Allan oversaw the growth of the Venice Theatre's volunteer force, the programming for the volunteer parties, the establishment and growth of the acting intern program, and the growth and management of the production staff.

He will be remembered for the heart and soul he brought to his work and friendships in the theatre community. Hundreds, if not thousands, of actors worked under his leadership as a director. He taught, encouraged, listened, made people laugh, and always put on a good show. In addition to being an accomplished director, he was an award-winning actor, both dramatic and comedic, who was a delight to work with and watch on stage.

Murray says, "Allan was one of the funniest, most passionate, most enthusiastic people I've ever met...and one of the most talented. He was like a brother."

Over the years, he built a family offstage and on in the theater. He met his wife, fellow performer Kim Gardner Kollar, at the theatre, and they watched their son, Charlie, grow up on stage before he left for college, where he is now studying musical theatre. ♦



Renee McVey

Allan served as co-emcee with Kristopher Geddie at the aactWORLDfest 2018 awards ceremony in Venice, Florida. Everyone at the festival was affected by his positive energy. Here he presents an Adjudicators' Award for Theatrical Excellence for Outstanding Performance to Eileen Paddock of The Loveland Center's production of Sound of Silence

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“TANYS Tough” – A Virtual Festival November 20-21

The year 2020 has delivered challenges unlike any seen before—including theatres everywhere having to cancel productions (or entire seasons) due to the coronavirus pandemic.



The Theatre Association of New York State (TANYS) made the difficult decision to cancel its November in-person annual festival. But, as the saying goes, the show must go on. So, like many others, TANYS is pivoting from in-person to virtual for the first time.

TANYS Tough: The Power of Theatre – 2020 Virtual Festival, a newly-imagined, completely online festival experience, will be presented November 20-21. It will include:

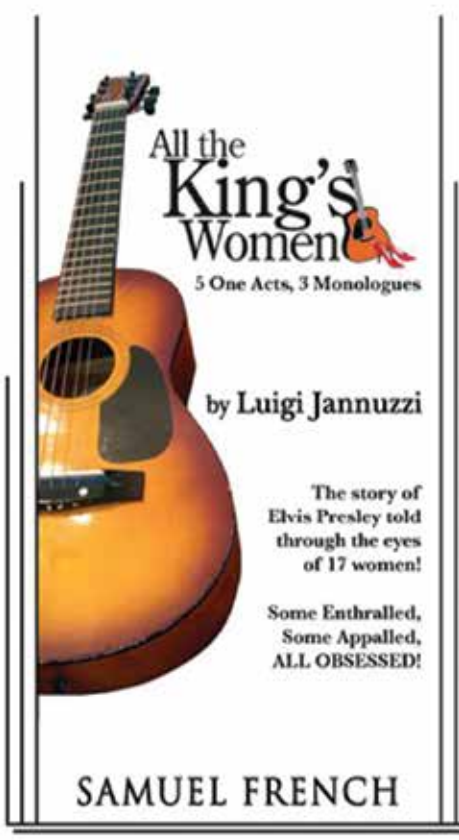
- **Keynote presentations from two stars of stage and screen:**
 - John Cariani, actor (Broadway: *Fiddler on the Roof*; *Something Rotten!*; *The Band's Visit*; TV: *Law & Order*, *Numbers*) and playwright (*Almost, Maine*; *Last Gas*; *Love/Sick*)
 - Mimi Kennedy, actor (stage: the original Broadway production of *Grease*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*. TV: *Mom*; *Dharma & Greg*; *Homefront*. Film: *Midnight in Paris*; *Erin Brockovich*)
- **A virtual performance of 26 Pebbles** by Eric Ulloa, performed by Indian River High School's Theatre of the Performing Arts
- **More than a dozen educational workshops**, conducted by theatre experts from across the U.S. and Canada. All workshops will be recorded and available to registered attendees after the event, for on-demand viewing
- **Presentation of TANYS 2020 Roving Adjudicator Merit Awards** (for productions adjudicated from November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020)
- **TANYS-imprinted items** that can be purchased in advance (and worn on-camera for the event)
- **Virtual networking** with fellow theatre lovers from across New York state and beyond

Theatre Association of New York State
Inspiring Excellence in Theatre Communities

Full info is available at TANYS.org. Registration is online-only at aact.org/tanys.

Deadline to register is Saturday, November 14, to secure a spot at this unique, socially-distanced celebration of theatre. Questions? Email tanysfest@gmail.com. ♦

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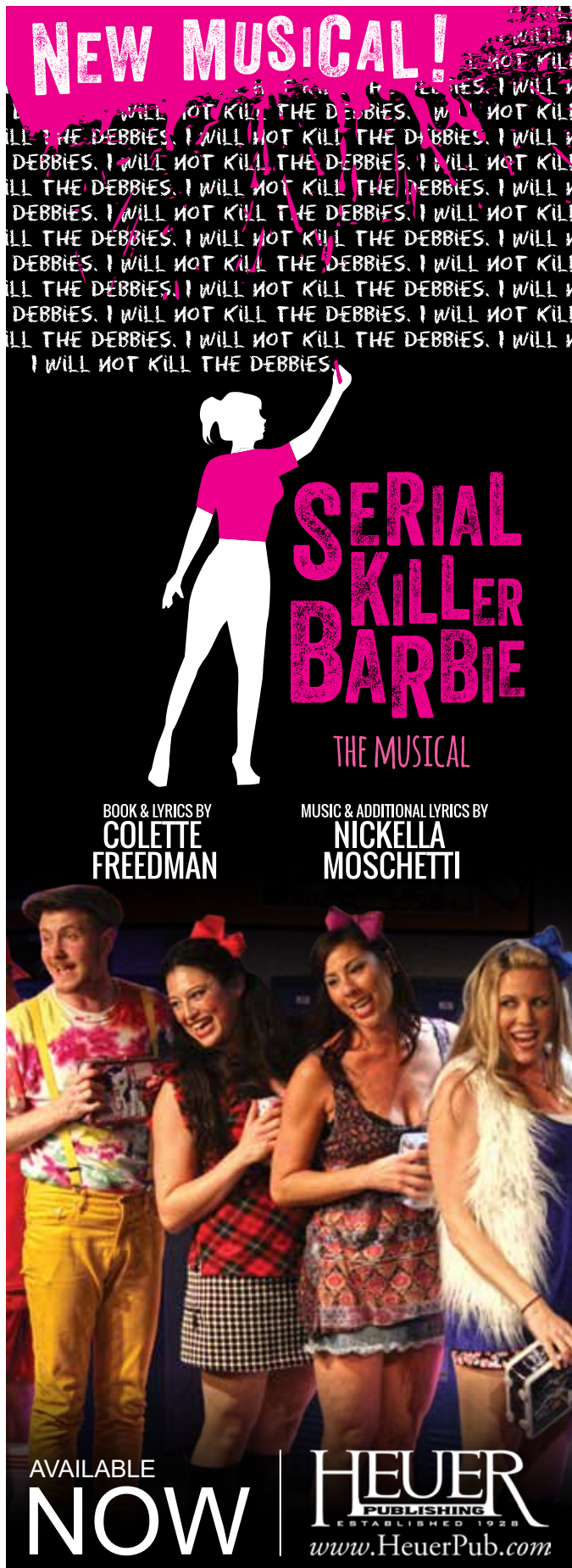
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Spotlight Award Honors Rebecca Donner

The AACT Spotlight Award partners AACT with theatres to recognize individuals and organizations for long or special service that have had a significant impact on the quality of their local theatres. Any AACT-member theatre may apply to present the Spotlight Award.

Halifax County Little Theatre, (HCLT), honored **Rebecca Donner** with the AACT Spotlight Award, for her loyal dedication and service to the theatre. The award was presented on July 7, 2020, by HCLT Board of Directors President, Sandy Slayton. The celebration included a video tribute from 40 theatre friends and family members, expressing their appreciation for Becky's contributions.

Sandy Slayton



Becky Donner receives her AACT Spotlight Award while celebrating safely at home

Becky Donner's service to Halifax County Little Theatre, South Boston, Virginia, spans more than 40 years. She has served on the HCLT Board of Directors since 1980, and on the Executive Board as Treasurer for 25 years.

"Becky works tirelessly onstage and behind the scenes, wherever needed, ensuring smooth operations at the theatre," explains her nomination form. "She is the go-to person, and can be counted on for any job, no matter how large or how small." Her service includes everything from usher to director, from box office sales to heading up the yearly membership drive.

HCLT strives to build relationships with diverse organizations and community leaders, a commitment spearheaded by Becky. She is seen as the driving force in the theatre's efforts to be more inclusive in the audiences it serves. Becky directed *4 Little Girls: Birmingham 1963* in 2016, *Jackie & Me* in 2017, and was instrumental in bringing *Ruby: The Story of Ruby Bridges* to HCLT's current season.

"Becky Donner is the shining star of our Little Theatre," says Board President Slayton. "She deserves all the accolades we can give her. Hats off to Becky!" ♦

Unleashing Your Creativity

The AACT Fall 2020 Webinar Series is offering arts enrichment courses for actors, directors, theatre educators, and administrators, with an emphasis on enhancing skills and expanding perspective. These new, affordable education webinars deliver superior professional/vocational development with no travel costs. Participants interact directly with artists, practitioners, educators, and consultants on crucial topics to enhance expertise and knowledge in all aspects of theatre making.



The full series began on October 9, 2020 and is continuing for 12 sessions. These curated workshops are covering a variety of topics within the industry. Each webinar includes 1 hour to 1.5 hours of streaming webcast including live discussion with the presenter, video demonstrations, and presentation materials.

Per-session registration is \$15 for AACT members and \$20 for non-members.

- Enjoy a user-friendly, convenient format and the opportunity to gather safely as a group, or to participate individually from home
- AACTEd hours are awarded for the completion of our online courses
- All sessions are recorded, and attendees will have access to the presentation for 30 days afterward

aact.org/webinars for course descriptions, further information, and registrations. ♦

The Summerwind Productions logo, featuring a man in a tuxedo holding a microphone, with the text "SUMMERWIND Productions" overlaid.

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AACT Members receive the following discounts:

- 50% discount on all digital perusals at stagerights.com
- 25% discount on digital materials fees for all musicals at stagerights.com

To redeem your perusal discount, visit stagerights.com, and enter code AACT2021 in the Voucher/Promo Code section at check-out.

To redeem your digital materials discount, visit stagerights.com, and enter "AACT" and your AACT membership number in the Promotional Code section (directly under Special Requests) on your Production Application.

Note: The Perusal Discount is valid through December 31, 2021. The Digital Materials Discount is valid on any musical production for any future date, when fully licensed by December 31, 2021. ♦

New Roles

Donna Stinson Williamson has been named Artistic Director of **South City Theatre (SCT)**, Pelham, Alabama, replacing AACT Fellow Sue Ellen Gerrells, who is retiring, effective January 1, 2021. Donna has been active in the local community theatre scene for 24 years, and with SCT for 10 years. In



CM Photography



addition to acting, she has been involved in directing, producing, set design, costumes, publicity, stage management, and most recently, fundraising. She has appeared in approximately 50 productions and directed 10, including the award-winning *Doubt*, *A Parable*, which represented South City Theatre at the 2017 Alabama Community Festival, winning Best in Show and advancing to the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC), and AACT's Region IV 2018 AACTFest. Donna has also adjudicated at Alabama's Trumbauer Secondary Theatre Festival, and judged competitive figure skating at the 2019 National Theatre on Ice Competition. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2001. ♦

AACT Web Power

AACT now offers three ways to learn online: Webinars, Member Roundtables, and MindEdge Learning. All three are accessible from “Events & Education” on the drop-down menus at aact.org.

Our newest addition is our **Fall 2020 Webinar Series** for actors, directors, theatre educators, and administrators, with an emphasis on enhancing skills and expanding perspectives. Participate safely as a group, or individually, and interact directly with artists, practitioners, educators, and consultants. Courses are designed to enhance expertise and knowledge in all aspects of theatre making, from set design to coaching beginning actors, from improvisational skills to voice strengthening, and more. Per-session registration is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members [aact.org/webinars].

Webinars cover a wide range of topics, and are available to all—members and non-members. [aact.org/webinars].

Member Roundtables are often open-topic, allowing the discussion to center on current issues of importance to the theatre community; others address specific issues, such as reopening strategies and season selection. You must be signed on to the website in order to register for these free sessions [aact.org/roundtables].

In addition, AACT partner **MindEdge Learning** offers self-paced online courses and certificate programs in subjects like Communication, Creativity & Innovation, Finance, Human Resources, Leadership, Management, Nonprofit Management, Small Business Management, Women in Business, and more. Courses can be taken for CEU's (Continuing Education Credits), and start at just \$79 each. AACT will also provide 1:1 AACTed Hours for each CEU credit completed [aact.org/mindedge].

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

NEW TOOLS FOR THE NEW NORMAL

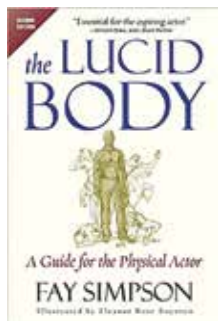
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The Lucid Body A Guide for the Physical Actor

Fay Simpson
Illustrated by Eleanor Rose Boynton
2nd Edition

Engaging Mind and Body to Develop the Complete Physical Nature of Characters

Actors are shape-shifters, requiring the tools to wade into unfamiliar waters and back out again. *The Lucid Body* offers a holistic, somatic approach to embodying character from the inside-out and, for the non-actor, offers a way to give hidden parts of the self their full expression. By identifying stagnant movement patterns, this process expands one's emotional and physical range and enables the creation of characters from all walks of life—however cruel, desolate, or jolly. Rooted in the exploration of the seven chakra energy centers, *The Lucid Body* reveals how each body holds the possibility of every human condition. Readers will learn how to:

- Practice a non-judgmental approach to the journey of self-awareness
- Break up stagnant and restrictive patterns of thought and movement
- Allow an audible exhale to be the key to unlocking the breath
- Develop a mindset to “hear” one’s inner body
- Analyze the human condition through the psycho-physical lens of the chakras
- Experience the safety of coming back to a neutral body
- Acquire a sense of clarity and calm in one’s everyday life

A step-by-step program guides the actor through the phases of self-awareness that expand emotional and physical range not only on stage, but also in daily life. This new edition includes a more diversified range of playwrights, non-binary language, and new chapters on stage intimacy protocol and physical listening. Exercises that have been honed for the past ten years have been made more concise. New somatic and neuro-scientific data has been added, with additional wisdom and insights from colleagues and Simpson's team of Lucid Body teachers.

Available in the AACT Book Store, aact.org/books

Third Annual Eric H. Weinberger Award for Emerging Librettists

Amas Musical Theatre

The Eric H. Weinberger Award for Emerging Librettists is a juried cash and production grant given annually to support the early work and career of a deserving musical theatre librettist. It commemorates the life and work of playwright/librettist Eric H. Weinberger (1950-2017), who was a Drama Desk Award nominee for Best Book of a Musical (*Wanda's World*), and the playwright/librettist of *Class Mothers '68*, which earned Pricilla Lopez a Drama Desk Award nomination.

The winner will receive \$2,000 to help with cost-of-living expenses. The winning musical will receive development assistance in the 2021 New Works Development Program of Amas Musical Theatre, culminating in an Amas Lab production with New York theatre professionals. Amas, which is administering the award, was the development home for several of Mr. Weinberger's musicals, and which produced the World Premiere of *Wanda's World* and the New York Premiere of *Tea for Three*.

Submissions are open and will close November 30, 2020. All submissions must be sent through an online application.. Only one submission per playwright/librettist will be accepted. The winner of the award will be announced late February-early March 2021.

The musical must:

- Be a full-length show (at least 80 minutes)
- Have no more than seven actors (actors may play multiple roles)
- Be complete and ready for readings, workshops and/or productions
- Have a demo that is an accurate representation of the music and style of the show (at least five songs)
- Have full underlying rights clearance of any pre-existing material used in the script (music, source material, etc.)
- Not have had a full production or be published in any way, even if with a different name

Amas Musical Theatre will not ask for any fees for entry or for any fiduciary involvement from the playwright/librettists at any point of the process.

The Winner:

- Will receive \$2,000 to help pay for cost-of-living expenses
- Will receive development assistance in the 2020 New Works Development Program of Amas Musical Theatre
- Will have the selected show rehearsed and performed by New York theatre professionals in an Amas Lab production


- Must be present in New York City for the development process
- Must give the right of first refusal for a world premiere of the selected show that will expire 90 days after Amas Musical Theatre presents the Lab production

Deadline: November 30, 2020

Online application only.

Details and application PDF:

amasmusical.org/eric-h-weinberger-award



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Pandemic Update Can Loss of Income Be Covered?

Ken Roberts

COVID-19 has had a traumatic impact on the revenue streams for small businesses across the globe—most especially, the performing arts. Here in the U.S., where lockdowns and distancing restrictions have become the norm, community theatres are struggling like never before. Organizations looking for remedies have turned to their insurance companies for help, only to learn that losses due to pandemics are excluded from coverage, and have been for many years.

So, where do we find income coverage for pandemics? The short answer is, we don't. That said, the insurance industry *is* studying ways to address that issue going forward, although an affordable solution will take time.

Within 90 days of the initial onset of COVID-19, it was clear why the insurance industry had chosen long before to exclude pandemic-related losses. The combined reserves for all insurance companies here in the U.S. was just under \$400 billion, and was designed to cover *all* types of business losses, not just loss of income. The first three months that our country was shut down created an income loss of *\$750 billion*, with the final loss projection for 2020 at approximately *\$1.5 trillion*. It's easy to see that the math just doesn't add up. And even if the industry were to consider coverage, it could not raise its rates enough to generate the reserves needed for such monumental pandemic-related income losses.

With this in mind, legislation has been introduced in Congress that would create a federal backstop for insurance companies, using a method similar to the way that terrorism insurance was addressed after September 11, 2001. Insurance companies would

be responsible for 5% of the loss, and the government would cover the remaining 95%. The cost to policyholders would be pennies on the dollar, just as terrorism coverage is today. However, this plan raises a new concern: the U.S. government has already run up a \$3 trillion debt with stimulus programs targeting individuals and families, as well as the Paycheck Protection Program for small businesses, and it's still not enough. Adding another potentially expensive program to the federal budget is not a popular course right now, and so legislation will likely languish in Congress and may never see a vote.

The good news is that the insurance syndicates at Lloyds of London have begun developing programs for U.S. businesses to address these massive losses in income. In the beginning, these programs will address only larger businesses. For example, one program offers minimum limits of \$1 million, at a starting minimum cost of \$35,000 per year. Since most community theatres don't pay anywhere near that much for *all* their insurance policies, solutions like this one won't help us much. That said, the industry must start somewhere, and, in time, a level of coverage may be made available for small businesses as well.

However, even if an affordable solution is created soon, it will only cover future pandemics—not losses attributable to COVID-19. Insuring \$1.5 trillion in losses retroactively is simply out of the question.

Our challenge now is to keep community theatre alive and thriving until new programs for pandemic coverage become available. ♦

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When	What/Who	Where	Information
Nov 19-22	Wyoming State Theatre Festival	WY Cheyenne	307-631-9253 visitcheyenne.regfox.com/ 2020-wyoming-aact-fest
Nov 19	AACF Executive Committee Meeting	Virtually via Zoom	817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/calendar
Nov 20-21	TANYS Tough: The Power of Theatre 2020 Virtual Festival	Virtually via Zoom	785-827-6126 aact.org/tanys or TANYS.org

For dates further ahead, check the website: aact.org/calendar

Artie's Advocacy Tip



Build a relationship with local, state, and national leaders

Whether arts advocates contact their representatives directly, or work with the media to present a continual positive image of the arts to the public, advocacy is essential to encouraging funding and support from government at all levels.

As a local arts group, your organization can make a difference in conveying the impact of theatre and arts education in your communities to local, state, and national leaders in both the public and private sectors. Without your help, they may not realize the ability of the arts to support jobs, engage kids in school, and change lives in your area.

aact.org/advocacy

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