

spotlight

March/April 2022 \$5.00

american association of community theatre

**aactWORLDfest
2022**

**CTMC
2022**

**Spotlight on
Swings and
Understudies**

**TEAMS
2022**

AACT YouthFest 2023



Mr. Sandman • Lollipop • Sugartime • Allegheny Moon • All I Have To Do Is Dream • Dreamlover • Stupid Cupid • Lipstick on Your Collar • Luck • Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, and Keep Me • With This Ring

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Wonderettes

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Chris Serface
AACT President

Hello, friends--

I can't believe that we are already moving towards summer and the great things that it brings with it. This past winter certainly brought a new set of challenges and I sincerely hope that you were able to tackle the hurdles placed in your path. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we faced the double whammy of extreme weather and record COVID cases. Recovering from those certainly made for an interesting start to the year.

As you will see from this issue, AACT is moving ahead at full speed, with festivals, conferences, workshops, webinars, and roundtables. And for that I am grateful, because in the 12 years I've been involved with AACT, these events truly have changed who I am, helping me grow as an artist and an administrator.

Many of you have heard me tell my "theatre epiphany" stories, the moments that leave me feeling that I've grown in some way. For example, I attended an aactWORLDVEST in Venice, Florida, a few cycles ago, which had a performance I will always remember. A visiting company from Russia presented *The Miracle Worker* in their native language. While we in the audience didn't understand what was being said on stage, we knew the story and were transfixed by the powerful production. The acting, direction, and production elements were brilliant.

There are two moments that I keep with me from that experience. One was when I looked down the aisle at my fellow audience members and saw tears, matching my own, glistening on everyone's face. It is also the only time that I have witnessed a standing ovation, *en masse*. And it wasn't one person who began it—the entire audience rose to their feet at once, with thunderous applause.

Memories like these are among the reasons I attend AACT events. Personal and professional growth is another. I encourage you to take part in one of the many AACT events offered this year. I assure you, it can truly be life-changing.

Best,
Chris Serface

"We broke ticket sales records after the reviews came out."*

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Jeff Rane Uptown Players

contents

Features

8

aactWORLDFFEST 2022

Register now for this summer's festival in Venice, Florida, and delight in performances from top-quality theatre troupes from around the globe. Venice Theatre staff is committed to making a thrilling festival that's safe to attend

12

CTMC 2022

AACT is offering a choice of two Community Theatre Management Conference virtual sessions, one East Coast Session (March 4-6) and one West Coast Session (March 18-20). Gain new insights and solid, practical information on a wide variety of topics important to you and your theatre

14

Top Ten Reasons to Attend TEAMS Conference 2022

Hosted by the Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, TEAMS is an educational conference offering tracks in Technical Theatre, Educational Programming, Artistic Direction/Vision, Marketing, and Stage Management

16

National Directors Conference

Attendee Susan Goes shares takeaways from last November's conference for full-time paid staff of AACT-member theatres. More than 80 community theatre leaders from across the country attended the event, held for the first time in San Antonio, Texas

22

AACT YouthFest 2023

The 3rd National Youth Theatre Festival, a celebration of youth theatre, will be held in conjunction with AACTFest 2023, the National Theatre Festival, June 12-17, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky

25

Shining a Spotlight on Swings

David A. VanCleave, AACT's Education Coordinator, looks at the ways community theatres can work with swings, understudies, and standbys to protect our volunteers and uphold our stories in COVID times

On the Cover

Representing Brazil at aactWORLDFFEST 2022, Caio Stolai performs Circo Poeira (Dust Circus), with an innovative and emotional one-man performance. See pages 8-11 for information and more theatre troupes from around the world performing at aactWORLDFFEST 2022 in Venice, Florida, June 20-26

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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at david@aact.org to submit content. Contact Darlene DeLorenzo at darlene@aact.org or 512-267-4509 for advertising rates and specs.



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News

AACT Board Nominations	20
AACT Corporate Partners	32
AACT Roundtables 2022	24
Announcements	7
Legacy Gifts	31
National Arts Summit	21
New AACT Staff	19
New Roles	29
Spotlight Award	28
Youth Leadership Conference	23

Networking

Advertisers	34
Artie's Advocacy Tip	31
Calendar	34
New Play Contests	33
Opportunities & Resources	33
President's Letter	3
Spotlight on Discounter	30
Web Power	31

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IV-B Kristy Meanor
Wetumpka, AL (2022)

V Jamie Ulmer
Beatrice, NE (2025)

VI Sally Barnes
Broken Arrow, OK (2022)

VII Donna Fisher
Casper, WY (2022)

VIII TBD

IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2022)

X Dane Winters
Germany (US Army) (2022)

Upcoming Events**USITT22 Conference and Stage Expo**

Baltimore, Maryland
March 2-5, 2022
usitt.org/conference22

AACT Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) 2022

East Coast Session – Virtual
March 4-6
West Coast Session - Virtual
March 18-20
aact.org/ctmc

SETC 2022 Annual Convention

Memphis, Tennessee
March 9-13
setc.org

AACT Online Roundtables

Corporate Sponsorship
March 15
Volunteer Management
April 19
2022 schedule: aact.org/listings

AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere

The Café Mocha Murders, by Deanna Strasse
Golden Chain Theatre
Oakhurst, California
March 25-April 10, 2022
goldenchaintheatre.org

AACT Staff

Quiana Clark-Roland, Executive Director
David Cockerell, Marketing/Communications Director
David A. VanCleave, Education Coordinator
Karen Matheny, Membership Coordinator
Winston Daniels, Operations and Events Assistant
Jill Patchin, Corporate Partners Manager

World Theatre Day 2022

March 27
world-theatre-day.org

National Arts Action Summit 2022 - Virtual

March 28-30
aact.org/summit

South West Theatre Conference 2022

March 31-April 3
Cailloux City Center for the Performing Arts
Kerrville, Texas
facebook.com/SouthWestTheatreConference

aactWORLDFFEST 2022

June 20-26
Venice Theatre
Venice, Florida
aact.org/worldfest

AACT Summer 2022 Board Meeting

June 24-25
Venice Theatre
Venice, Florida
aact.org/calendar

TEAMS 2022

July 29-31
Hale Centre Theatre
Salt Lake City, Utah
aact.org/teams

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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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aactWORLDVEST

Venice, Florida
June 20-26, 2022



A Note from Lori Chase, Festival Coordinator

As coordinator for aactWORLDVEST, my job is to make sure all the pieces come together to create a festival that you'll enjoy so much that you'll want to join us again—and again, and again.

I know that many of you are concerned about the ongoing pandemic and might question whether you should attend an in-person festival. Let me assure you that my colleagues and I are doing everything possible to keep safe everyone who walks through our doors. Our COVID-19 task force developed guidelines and protocols early in the pandemic, and we continually review these protocols and adapt our procedures to reflect current recommendations and regulations. Our staff is vaccinated, and we watch the Florida numbers daily. We are following CDC guidelines and will be requiring all performers at the festival to be vaccinated. And while no one knows exactly what pandemic challenges may face us in June, rest assured that we're committed to making the festival as safe as possible.

I have been asked why we aren't doing a virtual festival like AACTFest 2021. AACT used professional camera crews to record each show from various angles to give those stunning performances you saw on your screens. With an international festival, that is almost impossible—imagine trying to do that in 13 different countries.

Clearly, we must be creative to make this festival work, and we are doing just that. After all, if we in the theatre world can't be creative and adaptive, who can?

We are planning some new things for 2022. For instance, we are incorporating the Whova phone app. For those of you who attended the national festival, you know how wonderful this app is for scheduling your time, as well as communication.

We also are working on safe social activities that will allow you to relax and spend time with theatre people from around the world.

If you have never attended an international festival because you are afraid you won't understand the languages, you'll be happy to know that we are working to make that easier. Plus, many shows have few or no spoken words. And, of course, remember that the language of theatre is universal. You will recognize the feelings, be stimulated by the visuals and sounds, and your heart will soar with them.

Please join us in Venice, Florida, June 20-26, 2022 for a Festival in Paradise!

aact WORLDVEST

Performing at aactWORLDVEST 2022

Armenia: The **Yerevan State Puppet Theatre** returns to the festival with two shows. *The Wolf* is an Armenian fairy tale brought to life through puppets, shadows, humans, music, and beautiful lighting. You will delight in the childish wonder you feel while watching this playful piece of theatre.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime is presented by permission from the author of the book, Mark Haddon. The Armenian adaptation of this popular British novel was translated from English to Armenian by one of the troupe members.

Additionally, there will be a collaborative educational opportunity for young people to learn the intricacies of puppetry directly from the company's experts. Details will be announced soon.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime from *Yerevan State Puppet Theatre*

Brazil: Award-winning puppeteer and musician **Caio Stolai** returns with a repeat performance of *Circo Poeira (Dust Circus)*. This innovative production conveys joy, sadness, nervousness, and most other human emotions through the eyes of an old circus master recalling memories of days gone by (our cover photo). This one-man show was a standout in the 2010 festival.

Central African Republic: **Fédération Centrafricaine de Théâtre** presents Les Perroquets de Bangui performing *Les*



From Central African Republic, The Theatre Federation of Central Africa presents *The Parrots of Bangui*, performing *The Veterans*

Anciens Combattants. Translation: The Theatre Federation of Central Africa presents *The Parrots of Bangui*, performing *The Veterans*. This crowd-pleasing show examines the politics and history of the Central African Republic in a lively and comical way. Its hilariously entertaining performers appeared on the African equivalent of *America's Got Talent*.

Czech Republic: V.O.D. Theatre will present *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders*. Based on Vitezslav Nezval's book by the same name, it was also made into a fantasy/horror movie. This stage version of a young woman's coming-of-age story is told through beautiful staging, lighting, music, and visual projections.

Egypt: East-Voice Group for Arts from Alexandria, Egypt, will perform *The Seven Days*, a black comedy that addresses colonialism and oppression rampant in parts of the Arab community.



Egypt's East Voice Group for Arts will perform *The Seven Days*

United Kingdom: After wowing 2018 audiences with the romantic comedy *Bump*, **Scrambled Egg Theatre Company** returns with another hilarious comedy, *A Man of No Importance*. Through gibberish, impeccable comedic timing, brilliant music, and sound effects, you'll enter into the world of the spy.



England's Scrambled Egg Theatre Company returns with *A Man of No Importance*

France: Nez Nets et Cie brings us *La Vie Rêvée De Nous (Life Dreams of Us)*. This charming, funny production will have you smiling from beginning to end. With characters who only communicate in gibberish, it's French clowning at its very best.



From France, Nez Nets et Cie will bring *La Vie Rêvée De Nous (Life Dreams of Us)* to the festival

Georgia: Sighnaghi Theatre Company presents *Scrolling Group of Actors*. This production offers a performance style called Berikaoba, which we don't otherwise get to see in America. Berikaoba stems from an ancient folk tradition where actors donned animal masks and wandered the villages, performing for the public during an annual fertility festival. What was once celebrated throughout the Eastern European country of Georgia is now kept alive by only a handful of small villages.

continued on next page ►

Germany: **The Wild Bunch** returns from Berlin to present *Der Kinoerzähler*, which means “the movie teller.” Three actors, one saxophonist, and one drummer use music and video projections to enhance the story of a grandfather who saves himself from being considered dispensable. The play’s nine characters help illuminate topics of love, helplessness, seduction, passion, and guilt.

Israel: **The Yoram Loewenstein Performing Arts Studio** from Tel Aviv make their third festival appearance. This arts organization was established to help at-risk youth in Tel Aviv by providing them with an education in the arts, as well as basic studies. The students have an amazing success rate, with many becoming theatre professionals. This year, current students will showcase their talents in *The Other Side*.

Italy: **Teatro delle Ombre** brings us *Clan MacBeth*, based on a Shakespeare play. Guess which one! (Just don’t say it aloud in your theatre.) This is a dreamlike, surreal production, not a classical reduction of Shakespeare’s tragedy. It still focuses on the ambitious, passionate, cynical couple (a Scottish general and his lady) but adds a new character to the mix—a spooky, sinister Joker.



The Wild Bunch from Germany will present *Der Kinoerzähler* (The Movie Teller)

Poland: **Zapadnia Theatre** from Opole, Poland, returns, this time with *Symbiosis*. This new production is inspired by the novels, *The Piano Teacher*, by Elfriede Jelinek, and *Heartsnatcher*, by Boris Vian. The play explores the relationship between a mother and daughter, and as with previous shows from Zapadnia Theatre, the visuals will be a feast for the eyes.

Ukraine: **Splash Theatre Company** will join us from Kiev, offering a production of one of the most popular plays in Ukrainian literature: *Stolen Happiness* by Ivan Franko. This production tells its story with songs, dances, and costumes, inspired by Ukrainian folklore.

“A sweet and endearing look at relationships that continue to haunt us and are worth fighting for.”

Kent Nicholson, DIRECTOR OF MUSICAL THEATER, PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS

“Funny and genuinely entertaining...The lyrics are clever (“I can hardly floss”) and the music is tuneful...Real commercial potential!”

Rob Urbinati, QUEENS THEATRE



OldHouse.com

Cultures collide between an antique lover who occupies a house he expected to inherit, and the recently deceased owner’s techno-obsessive grandson, named in the will.

Music by Carl Danielson
 Book and Lyrics by David Lewis
 one set / 3m, 3f

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The Mountaintop from *The Lexington Players* (USA)

USA: Katori Hall’s *The Mountaintop* is a fictional depiction of Martin Luther King Jr.’s last night on earth. **The Lexington Players’** production from New England won top honors at AACT’s 2021 National Festival.

Listed are productions scheduled at the print deadline. All performing companies and productions are subject to change. Visit venicetheatre.org/international/ for updates.

aact WORLD FEST

FESTIVAL PACKAGES

THE JETSETTER PACKAGE

Regular \$500 | Student \$415

- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Reserved seating for all Pinkerton Theatre shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All after-glow parties
- Gala ticket
- Free drinks

THE PARADISE PACKAGE

Regular \$295 | Student \$225

- Reserved seating for all MainStage shows
- Opening ceremony
- All workshops
- All after-glow parties
- Gala ticket

THE BEACHCOMBER PACKAGE

Regular \$245 | Student \$175

- Access to all MainStage shows
- All workshops
- All after-glow parties

aactWORLD FEST 2022 registration prices listed above are for AACT members. If you are not a member, add \$75 to adult registration; \$15 to student registration.

AACT Airline Discount Codes:

Delta Airlines
Sarasota Bradenton Airport (SRQ)
Meeting Code: NMV4F

United Airlines
Sarasota Bradenton Airport (SRQ)
Z Code: ZKDA, Agreement Code: 572012

VeniceTheatre.org/international is the best place to stay up-to-date and to learn more about all there is to do at aactWORLD FEST 2022. Visit the site today to register for this fabulous event. You'll have the time of your life at this Festival in Paradise. See you in June!

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show America needs right now.

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Director at Playhouse Smithville

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Information

AACT 2022 Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC)

Find solutions virtually with fellow theatremakers

Our annual Community Theatre Management Conference is almost here! CTMC is open to administrators of all kinds, so whether you're a full-time professional manager, a part-time office administrator, a board member, or that dedicated volunteer who does it all, you are invited and welcome to attend one of the two virtual sessions.

This annual event offers a series of topic-specific discussions in various formats to provide participants with valuable insight, practical information, and new perspectives. We'll have large-group roundtables, smaller breakout sessions, and conversations dedicated to volunteer and paid-staff specific issues.

A pre-conference questionnaire identifies and prioritizes topics for discussions, including COVID-specific challenges and traditional topics such as:

- Sales and Marketing
- Other Sources of Earned Income

- Fundraising and Development
- Event Planning
- Volunteers
- Season and Play Selections
- Classes, Education, and Outreach
- Box Office Operations
- Virtual Programming
- Board
- Zoom Board/Staff Meetings
- Safety
- Reopening
- and more!

This year's CTMC is more flexible than ever with two virtual conferences. Choose the dates and time zone that work best for your schedule or attend both at a discounted rate! Visit aact.org/ctmc for details.

East Coast Session: Friday, March 4 - Sunday, March 6

Facilitated by Chad-Alan Carr, Founding Executive/Artistic Director at Gettysburg Community Theatre in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

West Coast Session: Friday, March 18 – Sunday, March 20

Facilitated by Dorinda Toner, Producing Artistic Director at Twilight Theater Company in Portland, Oregon

Register now at aact.org/ctmc

AACT Member	\$150
Non-Member	\$175

CTMC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Scholarships

AACT will be providing two scholarships for each CTMC Virtual Conference session to support and mentor theatre makers of color. Visit aact.org/ctmc for details.

More information, detailed schedule, and registration at aact.org/ctmc

**“Can’t repeat the past?
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Adapted by Richard Vigilante
anightatgatsbys.com



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE
AACT NEWPLAYFEST WINNING PLAYS
VOLUME 4 (2020)



The AACT NewPlayFest was created to develop new original work and spark communication and excitement among community theatres. Over a two-year period, playwrights submit their play to AACT for consideration, and winning scripts receive a world-premiere. At the end of the festival, all of the winning plays from the 2019-2020 cycle were published in this anthology.

Included Titles:

On Pine Knoll Street

By Mark Cornell

Goat Song Revel

By Dan Borengasser

Casserole

By Pamela Harbaugh

The Cayuga Canal Girls

By Laura King

Shattering

By Pat Montley

Proprioception

By Marilyn Millstone

 Learn more at: dramaticpublishing.com/aact-vol-4

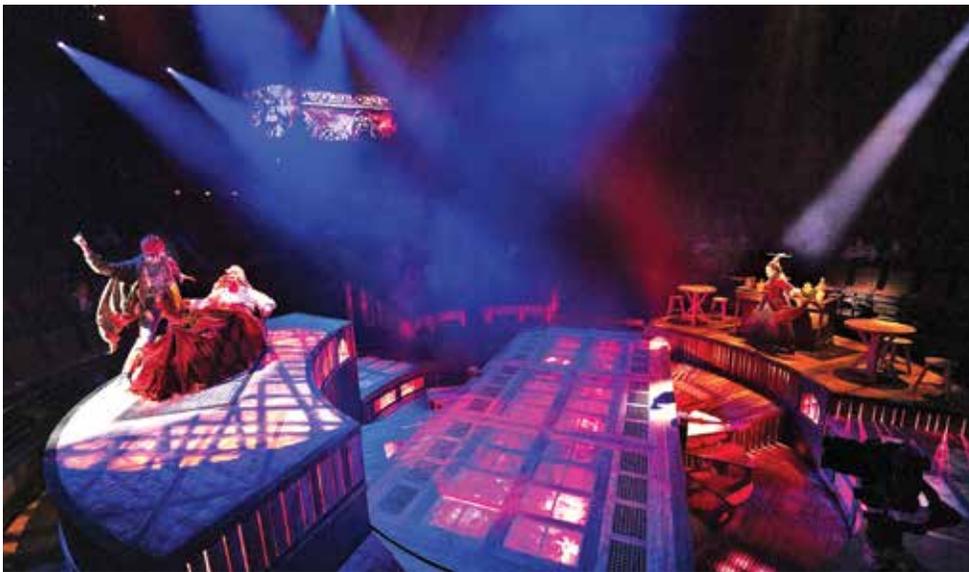
The Top 10 Reasons to Attend TEAMS 2022

The 2022 TEAMS Conference is just around the corner—July 29-31. We're looking forward to meeting in-person at the beautiful Hale Centre Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah, and hope you and your team will join us.

TEAMS is a high-performance educational conference that offers tracks in

- Technical Theatre
- Educational Programming
- Artistic Direction/Vision
- Marketing
- Stage Management

Come by yourself or get even more out of the conference by putting together a team—the five tracks will be held simultaneously, so participants can share rides and rooms. All registrants select the track that best suits their individual needs.



The Hale Centre Theatre's technologically marvelous stage during the 2021 production of *A Tale of Two Cities*

Still not sure whether this is the right event for you? Check out our countdown of the Top 10 reasons to attend:

10. The Hale Centre Theatre

For those who haven't seen this beautiful theatre center (and even those who have), a tour is the perfect way to kick off the event. The complex houses two theatres, including the 911-seat Young Living Centre Stage, considered one of the most technological theatrical stages in the world. TEAMS participants have the option of seeing *Singin' in the Rain* or *Silent Sky* (register early to receive a discount).

9. Live & In-Person

We've all done a great job of adjusting to the ever-changing demands of COVID-19. While there are benefits to virtual programming (as we've learned and embraced with CTMC), we are looking forward to being together again in-person for

TEAMS. Catch up with your colleagues from across the country and meet new peers at the same time!

8. Benefits Theatres of All Sizes

Theatres of all sizes are welcome and encouraged to attend. From the organization that's just starting out, to the theatre with a staff of twenty, you're sure to find ideas, support, and the comfort of a colleague who's been there.

7. Share Your Knowledge

As much as this is an opportunity to learn and grow, there's nothing wrong with celebrating your successes, too. Your experiences may be just the thing to help another organization solve their latest problem or discover a new opportunity.

6. Discussions Tailored to Your Group

We want you to get as much out of this as possible. That's why the conversations are often driven by the experiences and knowledge of people in the room. Using pre-conference surveys and skilled facilitators, we make sure we spend time on what matters to *you*.

5. "Exceeded Expectations"

Don't take our word for it; listen to what past participants had to say: "Feeling SO inspired!" "Wonderful, welcoming, engaging, and flexible," and "we covered so much ground!" Overall, participants say TEAMS exceeded their expectations.

4. Multiply Your Skills—Together

Because TEAMS is five unique conferences rolled into one, you and your team can attend together, participate in different tracks, and return to your organization with twice (or more) the gain. We even offer a discount for team registration!

3. Five Fantastic Facilitators

Regardless of which track you choose to attend, you're in good hands. Our five professionals know what they're talking about; they have the experience and proven track records to prove it. Learn more about the facilitators at aact.org/teams.

2. Renewed Enthusiasm

The past two years have challenged us all in unprecedented ways, leaving many of us exhausted and burned out. But TEAMS has a history of sending participants home feeling inspired and with a new enthusiasm for our day-to-day.

1. Community

If you've attended any of AACT's educational conferences, you know that feeling of community you can't find anywhere else. If you *haven't* attended any of our conferences, what are you waiting for? We promise you'll learn, grow, and connect, alongside new and lifelong friends and colleagues.

Registration

		Early Bird (Ends 6/29/2022)	Standard
Group (3+)	AACT Member	\$225/person	\$250/person
	Non-Member	\$300/person	\$325/person
Individual	AACT Member	\$250	\$300
	Non-Member	\$325	\$350

Registration includes all materials, continental breakfast, snacks, Saturday lunch.

Registration, schedule, facilitators, hotel information, airline discounts, and additional information at aact.org/teams

Bonus Offer: Regularly priced at \$55, participants will receive \$25 discounted tickets to see the Hale Centre Theatre production of *Singing in the Rain* and/or *Silent Sky*. Tickets available for Saturday night, July 30, and for the evening performances before the conference, Thursday, July 28.

- *Singing in the Rain* - Considered by many as the greatest movie musical of all time, the stage version retains the film's hilarious situations, snappy dialogue, and hit-parade score of Hollywood standards.
- *Silent Sky* - An astonishing, true story! In the early 1900's... Henrietta Leavitt, a meticulous mathematician, is hired by the Harvard Observatory to be a human calculator. Struggling with increasing hearing loss, she calculates the distance between sound waves, which leads her to a groundbreaking discovery—she can deduce the distance between planets and stars using her formula.

David Cockerell



The TEAMS Marketing Track, meeting at the Hale Centre in 2019, discusses how to build audiences, and to use marketing and branding in today's changing social media world

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Questions, Answers, and New Perspectives

National Community Theatre Directors Conference in San Antonio

Susan Goes

This past November, I joined more than 80 other community theatre leaders from across the country for the AACT National Directors Conference, in San Antonio, Texas. Formerly held in Madison, Wisconsin, every two years this amazing gathering provides an opportunity for full-time paid staff of AACT-member theatres to share stories, resources, and inspiration. This year's gathering was especially poignant given the pandemic challenges we've all faced, and the fact that this occasion marked the first time most of us had seen our AACT friends in person since March 2020. It was wonderful to be together!

This marked my fourth National Directors Conference and, once again, I was struck by how much we all have in common, even though our theatres may differ in many ways. Our common love for theatre creates strong rapport, whether we have known one another for 20 years or have just met.

As AACT members, we believe that theatre changes lives, and enriches communities. I believe this creed has only been strengthened by the pandemic, and indeed 68% of those at the San Antonio conference said they also believe their theatres are better than before. During the COVID-induced interruption to the status quo, we have put this time of forced introspection to good use, reimagining more effective ways to serve our communities in the future.

Big and Small, Old and New

While our shared love for theatre united us, our differences provided the fuel for stimulating discussions throughout the conference. AACT serves theatres from Hawaii to Florida, from large urban cities to small rural communities. There were some theatres in the group who have passed their 100th birthday, while others had been founded in the last five years. Our operating

budgets ranged from under \$100,000 to over \$20 million, with 40% of those present in the \$1 million budget category. Similarly, staff sizes ranged from one to more than 20, with more than 50% reporting a 1-5 employee range. Finally, the difference in regional approaches to the pandemic created another opportunity for reflection and learning. All combined, these variations triggered lively conversations throughout the weekend.



David Cokerell

AACT President Chris Serface welcomes attendees to the 2021 AACT National Directors Conference held in San Antonio, Texas, November 19-21

The first couple of times I attended the conference, my key takeaways were pragmatic ones—software tools to investigate, ticket-pricing strategies to consider, and new ideas for community partnerships, among other things. And for those attendees looking for such practical support, there were ideas in abundance at the San Antonio conference.

However, I came to the 2021 gathering yearning for a deeper kind of inspiration, and over the course of our weekend together, three themes emerged for me: 1) Tell the right stories; 2) Invest in your people; and 3) Take care of yourself.

Telling the Right Stories

A popular feature of past conferences has been the sharing of “Hits and Misses”—shows that had done well for us, or not been as successful as we had anticipated. In previous years, that discussion was mostly centered around ticket sales, and the focus was on identifying titles that might boost future bottom lines.

The conversation in November 2021 played out quite differently and was far more nuanced.

Rather than focusing on finding our next hit, we concentrated on much deeper questions. Do the stories we share on our stage speak to the community we serve? Which stories are most important to tell right now? Whose voices are being heard? Are we providing opportunities for performers of diverse ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds to participate? If not, what are the barriers to participation, and how do we build bridges to encourage new talent?

The responses to these questions are likely different for each theatre, and that was the point. We learned that it is far less important to have clear answers to each of those questions than it is to keep asking those questions with an open mind and a kind heart. So, the “right stories” to tell on stage in Paducah, Kentucky, will be different from the “right stories” to share in Salt Lake City, Utah. And that speaks to the beauty of community theatre: We can program seasons in response to what our audiences want to see—and we can gently stretch our audiences (and ourselves as theatre-makers) by including some not-yet-familiar works, representing more diverse voices.

Investing in Your People

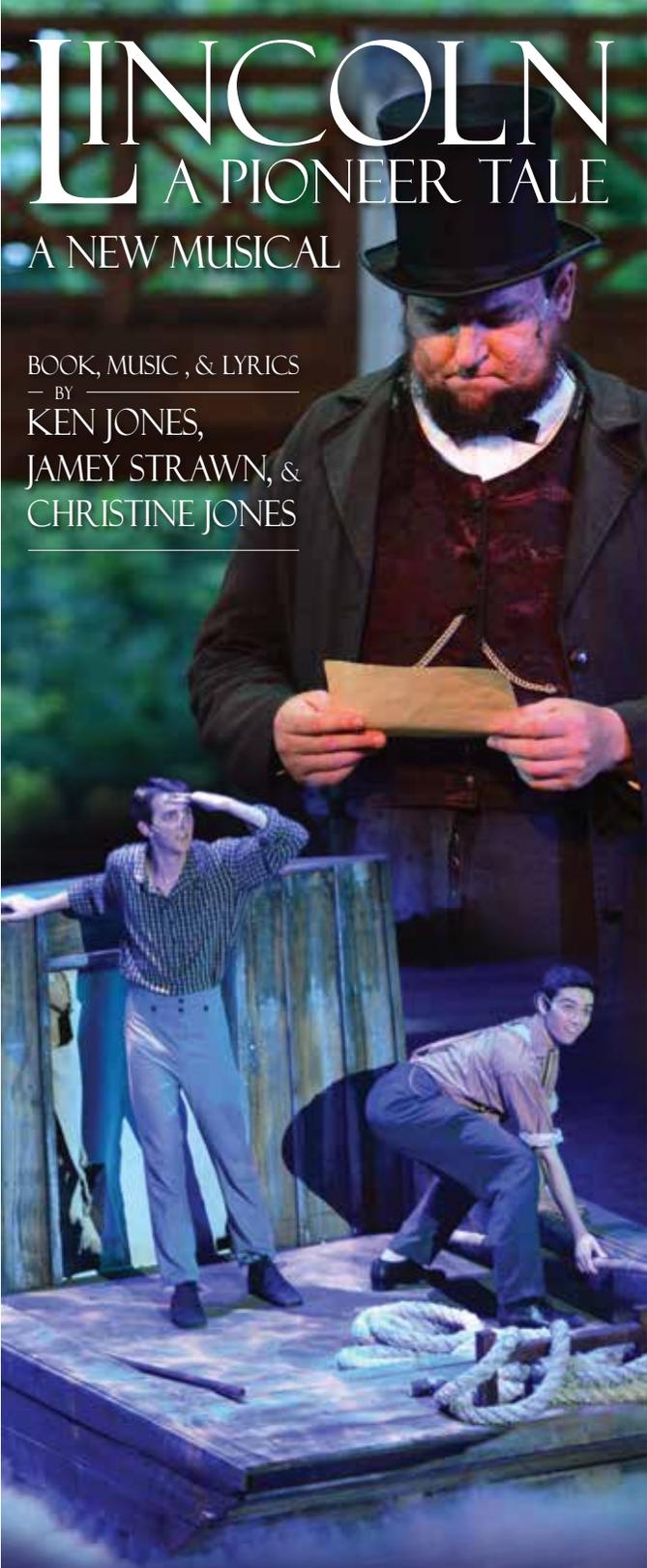
To be able to tell the right stories, we need to have the right people in place, and that was a second theme of this year’s conference: Invest in your people. Fortunately, most theatres represented at the conference had found creative ways to keep their staffs employed throughout 2020 and 2021, with 78% reporting the same level of staffing as March 2020.

Throughout the weekend we discussed all kinds of ways to promote a healthy work environment for our paid staff and volunteers. These include recruiting, hiring, and training new staff; volunteer supervision and recognition; compensation strategies; and leadership succession. My favorite creative morale-building idea came from Venice Theatre, which periodically declares a “S’mores Day” in their parking lot as a way to promote staff and volunteer comradery.

Taking Care of Yourself

We began our weekend-long conversation by acknowledging the extreme challenges we’ve faced in the last few years. I quickly realized that I was not alone in feeling exhausted by the pandemic and the need to reinvent all our operating procedures

continued on next page ►



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with public health considerations in mind. We all need to find ways to take care of ourselves, and I found that attending this AACT conference, and reconnecting with other community theatre people, was the best form of self-care I could imagine.

So, to all my AACT colleagues who attended this year's conference, thank you for your stories that reminded me of the joy and importance of live theatre. I am so grateful for our time together, and for the reminder that, to quote Stephen Sondheim, "no one is alone."

Information on the 2023 conference will be available soon on the AACT website. For those who have not yet taken part in one of AACT's wonderful educational conferences, I encourage you to consider this one—or any of the other conferences that fit your needs—and reserve the dates on your calendar. You will be so glad you did!



Susan Goes has served as Executive Director of Cottage Theatre, in Cottage Grove, Oregon, since 2007. She began her career in the development department of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and has worked with a variety of arts and nonprofit organizations, in both staff and board capacities. She holds a Master's in Arts Administration from the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, and a B.A. from Carleton College in Minnesota.

Can't wait until 2023? Join us March 4-6 and/or March 18-20, 2022 for the virtual Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC). For more information, visit aact.org/ctmc



AACT Virtual CTMC 2021 was a great learning experience and lots of fun for all participants. Share your tales of managing your theatre company and network with fellow theatre makers at the 2022 Virtual conferences

New AACT Staff Members

AACT has added two staff members to its national team.



Mary Jo DeNolf is serving as AACT Festivals/Engagement Coordinator, following the recent retirement of Ron Ziegler. She will work with state and regional festivals and participating theatre companies throughout the AACTFest cycle, including troupes performing as National Companies at the AACTFest National Festival.

Mary Jo has been active in AACT for several years.

She was Production Manager for Virtual AACTFest 2021, Production Manager at AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota. She served for 22 years as the Director of Operations and Volunteers at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She also worked on the theatre's production teams as Stage Manager and Properties Designer, and, as she says, just about every other backstage job there is. When not immersed in the theatre world, Mary Jo is an outdoor enthusiast hiking, camping, kayaking, and sailing with her husband Steve.



David A. VanCleave is Education Coordinator, working to advance educational opportunities offered by AACT. He follows Kathy Pingel and Ron Ziegler, who recently retired from their positions with AACT.

David has been involved in community theatre since elementary school as an actor, stage manager, director, dramaturge, designer, and educator. He served as

Executive Artistic Director at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre from 2014-2020 and is currently co-director of HOPE! Drama Troupe at the Des Moines Playhouse.

David earned his B.F.A. in Theatre Arts/Directing from The Theatre School at DePaul University, where his credits include *Closer* (Director), *Spinning Into Butter* (Stage Manager), *Flow My Tears the Policeman Said* (Dramaturge), and the world premiere of *The Death of Gaia Divine* (Director). For Des Moines Playhouse, he has directed *Matilda*, *Cabaret*, and *The Laramie Project*, as well as productions for Des Moines Onstage, Noce, Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre, and more.



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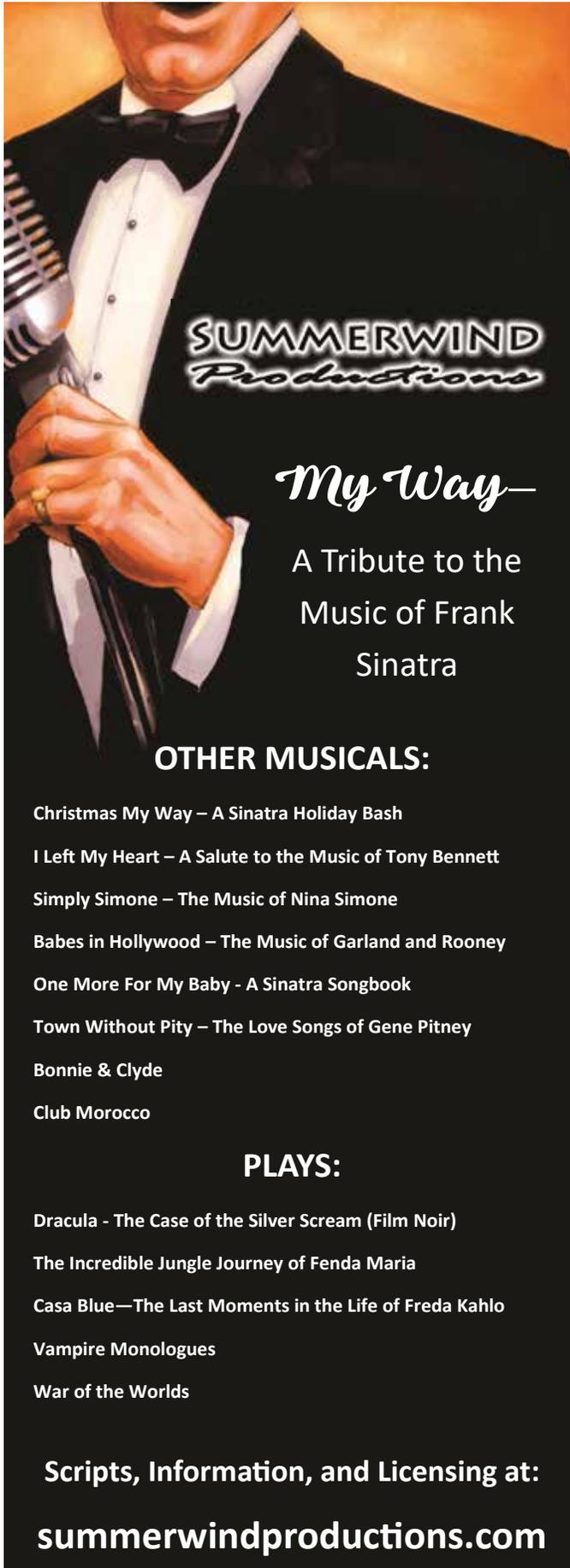
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AACT Call for Board Nominations - Volunteer or Suggest!

The AACT Nominating Committee needs your help to identify persons who would be good candidates to serve on the AACT Board. If you are interested and/or know persons you would like to see serve, visit aact.org/nominations.

Please submit your suggestions by March 20th.

The role of the Board Member at Large is to provide leadership, direction, and oversight to AACT through support, development, and review of policies and goals for the Association.

For 2022-2023, seven Members at Large will be elected to the board from slate of nominees submitted by the Nominations Committee. Meeting this spring, the Nominations Committee will make recommendations to the AACT Board of Directors. The board will cast votes for those on the ballot in April and the new board members will be installed at the Summer Board Meeting scheduled to be held June 24-25, during aactWORLDFFEST 2022 in Venice, Florida.

Look for the election results in the July/August 2022 *Spotlight*.

For more information on the structure, responsibilities, and requirements of the board, please read the **AACT Bylaws** and **Operational Guidelines**. Links to these documents can be found at aact.org/nominations.

Nominees should be aware of their nomination and be willing and able to serve if elected. ♦

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National Arts Action Summit in March

Restructured and refocused, the 2022 National Arts Action Summit (NAAS) will be held virtually on March 28-30. Now in its 35th year, the Summit is a multi-day event sponsored by Americans for the Arts that brings together arts advocates from across the country to discuss federal arts advocacy and learn the best advocacy strategies to influence national change.

To make the Summit more accessible and impactful, this year, for the first time, there will be no individual registration fee. There also will be no partnership fee, which means that any organization can participate in the legislative planning sessions prior to the Summit.

In addition, Summit content has been refocused to help advocates be better prepared to speak to decision-makers. This is important, say event planners, since grassroots advocates have been, and can be, immediately effective at making appropriations requests to their members of Congress and requesting their co-sponsorship of active legislation.

Since this sort of advocacy is best leveraged in the spring—in line with the Congressional schedule—this year's Summit will focus on the annual appropriations process and pending

creative workforce legislation. Reducing the number of issues presented at the Summit will ensure policy leaders and attendees alike can develop a more compelling and straightforward advocacy strategy that will help increase resources for underrepresented and marginalized communities in the creative sector.

For more information on the Summit and how to register, go to aact.org/summit.



Reducing the legislative scope of the National Arts Action Summit in March doesn't mean that Americans for the Arts is ignoring issues like arts and health, tax policy, or technology issues. In fact, this year it will host "a new federal policy gathering that will bring together more stakeholders from across the policy spectrum to craft and develop the federal policy issues that we're familiar with, and consider new policies that we've overlooked, that we can help raise up," explains Nolen V. Bivens, President and CEO of Americans for the Arts. ♦

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AACT YouthFest 2023

Coming to the National Festival in Louisville

AACT YouthFest 2023, the 3rd National Youth Theatre Festival, will be held in conjunction with AACTFest 2023, the National Theatre Festival, June 12-17, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Participation in YouthFest is by invitation only, and AACT is looking for theatres and schools interested in performing an all-youth cast show at AACT YouthFest 2023.

To learn more about YouthFest, including rates and deadlines, visit aact.org/youthfest and review the YouthFest Participant Guide. AACTFest 2023 full registration includes the keynote speakers, workshops, performances of youth shows, as well as the national award-winning companies' shows from the AACTFest 2023 festival cycle, receptions, adjudications, social events, the festival awards ceremony, and more! Youth rates are discounted from the AACTFest rates.

Basics:

- Company must become an AACT Organizational Member.
- All performers must be 12th grade and younger. (2023 high school grads are eligible the summer after high school graduation.)
- Scenery elements are encouraged to be minimal, and everything must fit inside a 10' x 10' square offstage.
- Companies are allowed 45 minutes total time for set up, performance, and strike.
- Each cast member, crew member, director, and chaperone must have a full registration to AACTFest 2023.



Paola Nogueras

Application Deadline: June 15, 2022

Workshop Theatre from Willis, Texas presents a captivating production of 1984, by George Orwell, adapted by Robert Owens, Wilton E. Hall, Jr., and William A. Miles, Jr. at AACT YouthFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck

Reading Between the Lies

By Kelly Barrett-Gibson

The first read of a new play becomes a crime scene when one of the participants unexpectedly drops dead. In a room filled with old vendettas, jilted lovers, blackmail victims and one loony former child star, it's anyone's guess who the killer is, who was the intended victim and who, if anyone, will save the day!



www.hiStage.com

AACT YouthFest is not a competition, but rather a celebration of Youth Theatre! Performances will be adjudicated, with opportunities for individual and group awards. Don't delay; applications are due **June 15!** Our early deadline is designed to give your group maximum time for project grant-writing and other fundraising opportunities.

AACTFest 2023 will also include a Youth Theatre Conference, a customized educational opportunity without the performance aspect of YouthFest.

We look forward to hearing from you soon! Interested or have questions? Email AACT YouthFest 2023 Chair, Chad-Alan Carr at Chad@GettysburgCommunityTheatre.org. ♦

AACT YouthFest 2023 is made possible by is made possible in part by a grant from the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation.



AACT Youth Theatre Conference 2023

The **AACT Youth Theatre Conference 2023** will take place in conjunction with AACTFest 2023 and AACT YouthFest 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky.

The focus will be on cultivating youth who aspire to be leaders within the art community and providing advanced training in the theatre arts. Participants will be exposed to a line-up of powerful theatre performances from around the country, engage in educational workshops, receive mentoring and shadowing from arts professionals, and take part in activities that are challenging and fun!

The conference is open to ages 12-18. Upon registering, participants will receive a survey to help us cater their individual schedule to their interests.

Be on the look-out for more information! Registration will be available soon and space is limited! ♦

Kate Benson
Gloria J. Browne-Marshall
Angelica Chéri
Inda Craig-Galván
Carey Crim
Adrienne Dawes
Michael Bigelow Dixon
William Missouri Downs
Tyler Dwiggin
Idris Goodwin
Michael Griffo
C. Julian Jiménez
Jon Jory
Lila Rose Kaplan
MJ Kaufman
Stacie Lents
Ken Levine
Christian McLaughlin
Robert O'Hara
Rich Orloff
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AACT-Member 2022 Roundtables

Sharing ideas, concerns, and solutions online

As our theatres continue to reopen, reprioritize, and recover from pandemic pressures and often fluctuating policies, peer networking is more important than ever. AACT Roundtables excel in offering focused online discussions that address issues, identify solutions, celebrate successes, and lend support during these unprecedented times. Each Roundtable features a panel of community theatre peers, addressing the top four or five topics suggested by the attendees.

Our Roundtable series is one of AACT's most popular programs because it provides:

- **A Wealth of Information.** Get answers to the questions you want to ask, valuable input and advice from fellow community theatre people.

- **Multiple Experts.** Discussions feature a group of panelists, providing you with a variety of experiences, views, and insights into the topic being discussed.
- **Shared Knowledge.** Roundtable sessions provide in-depth sharing of knowledge and hands-on experience from many perspectives.
- **Broad-Based Perspectives.** Panel members are selected from community theatres from all over the U.S.
- **Exclusive Content.** AACT Roundtables are offered to AACT members *only*.

Upcoming Roundtables

March 15

Corporate Sponsorship

A look at the relationship with corporate sponsors—from first date through honeymoon.

April 19

Volunteer Management

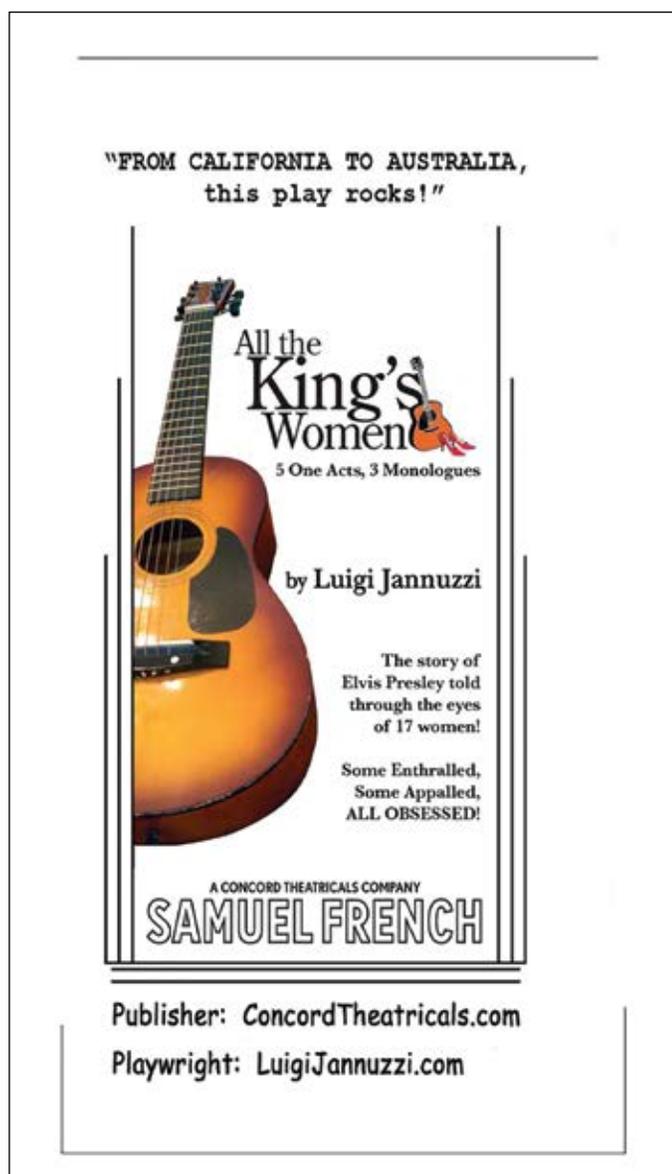
Like many aspects of our industry, volunteer recruitment and management has changed over the past two years. Learn how to identify the right volunteer and keep them coming back.

You'll find more information, including panelists for each Roundtable and registration details, at aact.org/listings. You'll also learn about upcoming Roundtables as they are announced. Roundtables are recorded and made available after their live presentation, usually within 24 hours.

Become a Panelist!

What makes AACT Roundtables so dynamic is the opportunity they offer to hear from a variety of voices and viewpoints, without boundaries. If you would like to serve on one of the panels, AACT invites you to apply. Your experience and knowledge are welcome, whether for a theatre with paid staff, or one staffed entirely by volunteers. Acceptance is on a rolling basis. To volunteer, submit the online form at aact.org/panelist

AACT Roundtables are sponsored in part by Ludus, powering theatres' ticketing, marketing, and fundraising needs.





Spotlight on Swings

How to Serve the Story *and* Your Volunteers

David A. VanCleave, AACT Education Coordinator

We're officially two years into the COVID-19 pandemic and theatres everywhere seem to have perfected the art of being flexible. We adapted our programming, added and adjusted protocols, learned new technology, and developed new ways to tell stories. Then we did it again. And again. We learned that with COVID, the only constant is change.

That's been especially true with the Omicron variant. Across our industry, productions were rescheduled, tickets refunded, and roles recast. Even Broadway theatres were forced to readjust their standard casting procedures, after exhausting their swings and understudies. *The Lion King's* Young Simba alternate performed as Young Nala, script-in-hand. *Thoughts of a Colored Man's* playwright stepped into a leading role. *Come From Away* filled two-thirds of its cast with swings, former cast members, and one actor from the national tour.

In Omicron's first month, virtually every Broadway production canceled performances. Some shows announced they'd return in the spring, while several others were forced to close entirely. That number would certainly be higher if it wasn't for the talented swings and understudies.

So why aren't they more common practice in community theatre? Is it time to reevaluate?

"We haven't stopped reevaluating," joked Katy Merriman, artistic director of Des Moines Playhouse. "When we started [performing indoors again], we performed shows in rep. The thought was, if someone tests positive from one show, we'd be prepared to go with the other, instead."

The two productions rehearsed on opposite sides of the building to avoid possible exposure between the two productions. This approach worked well for the Playhouse, but as COVID cases continued to drop and vaccinations increased, the company returned to one show at a time. Thanks to consistent reevaluating of its safety policies, the Playhouse has produced

eight indoor shows since September 2021 (including the AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere of *Escaping the Labryinth* by Thomas S. Hischak).

It wasn't always smooth sailing, especially with the big musicals. Both *Cabaret* and *The Sound of Music* saw actors missing performances due to non-COVID illnesses. In both cases, seasoned performers were called in and gave stellar performances, script-in-hand.

KNOW THE TERMS

- ✓ **understudy:** a performer cast in the ensemble of a musical (or minor role in a play) who is responsible for covering a lead and/or supporting role(s)
- ✓ **swing:** an off-stage performer responsible for covering any number of ensemble **tracks**.
- ✓ **track:** everything an individual ensemble member does in the show, including all the characters, choreography, blocking, costume changes, props, backstage traffic, and more. Each member of the ensemble has a unique track.
- ✓ **standby:** an off-stage performer whose sole responsibility is to cover the lead (usually a star) in a production.

"We definitely would have handled things differently if they were related to COVID," Merriman explained. "I think ultimately, these past few years have changed the way the Playhouse looks at illness in general. That's a good thing."

Community theatres often reject the notion of understudies out of respect for the volunteer. Is it fair or reasonable to expect them to learn a role they likely won't perform? How do you adequately prepare them without jeopardizing the rest of your process or doubling the work? How do we simultaneously serve the volunteer and the story?

"We've started double-casting certain roles," Merriman added. "Some von Trapp children were double-cast. We plan on casting two Pippi Longstockings, two Matildas...."

Even the theatre's non-musicals are taking extra precaution. *Charlotte's Web* added two extra ensemble members, one male-identifying adult and one female-identifying youth, who will be prepared to cover any role at any time.

"They're both excited about this unique training experience, Merriman said. "If we had swings who were not part of the regularly performing cast, I would want to pay them a stipend. But in this case, they are performing in each show, and they also get a strong educational experience in learning another track."

We've all heard the one about the leading player who

powered through the flu to finish their big dance number, only to immediately collapse backstage. These stories are heroic tales; we tell them with great pride, “the show must go on!” But if we truly serve our volunteers, shouldn’t that also include their health and well-being?

Maui OnStage re-evaluated their casting strategies after losing several actors to mandatory quarantine and non-COVID illness during rehearsals last summer. Its October production of *Clue* (a collaboration with ProArts Playhouse) featured three additional actors, specifically cast as swings. According to Executive Director Luana Whitford-Mitchell, it was the right decision.



Maui OnStage's production of *Clue* included promotional materials featuring swing Carrigan O'Brian as Yvette and Miss Scarlet

“We went into pre-production knowing we’d be using swings and worked really hard to incorporate them in every part of the process, starting with the table read.”

“We went into pre-production knowing we’d be using swings and worked really hard to incorporate them in every part of the process, starting with the table read,” she said. The swings learned blocking alongside the other cast members, were costumed by the costume designer for each role they covered, and were even included in the show’s publicity photos. According to Whitford-Mitchell, this led to a very tight-knit and supportive cast. “It did increase the workload for everyone involved, but in the end, it was worth it. I think the use of swings will become a normal part of our theatre.”

As a thank-you for their time and commitment, each swing was given a performance. These casting changes were announced from the beginning, including all marketing and social media. “This ensured that no one was surprised or had their feelings hurt,” Whitford-Mitchell noted. “In fact, the cast member [who stepped out for the swing] would watch the show from the designated ‘swing seating’ in the house. The swing’s family and friends were there. It was like the fan clubs all showed up! It was great!”

Springfield Little Theatre’s production of *Steel Magnolias* is taking yet another approach. After a tremendous turnout at auditions and the longest callbacks in memory, the company decided to double-cast the production. As Executive Director Beth Domann recalled, “The idea actually came from Jessica Bower [the wife of Jamie Bower, SLT’s Technical Director]. We had thought about understudies, but once we saw all that talent, we just knew we had to double-cast it.”



Spreading It Around

by Londos D'Arrigo

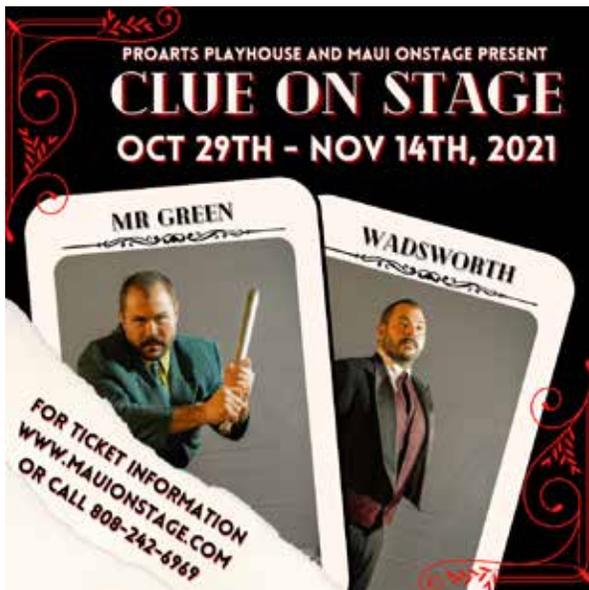
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Swing John Galvan as Mr. Green and Wadsworth was also promoted for Maui OnStage's production of Clue

Rather than framing the result in terms of extra work, the SLT team is choosing to focus on the extra fun this approach provides.

“We have a ‘Blush Cast’ and a ‘Bashful Cast’” Domann explained. The names are a reference to the script, of course, but they’re also a fun way to distinguish the casts without inadvertently creating a sense of hierarchy. Identifying the casts as “Cast A” and “Cast B” is the simplest approach, but it often sends the message that one cast is superior to the other. But,

“We’ve added what we’re calling the ‘Wild Card’ show, where we’ll mix up the two casts by drawing names at random.”

as Domann said, “We don’t want any of that,” instead making it clear that “we’re having fun, and both casts are going to be outstanding.”

The theatre has added performances to ensure each cast has equal opportunities. “We’re also doing something a little crazy,” Domann said. “We’ve added what we’re calling the ‘Wild Card’ show, where we’ll mix up the two casts by drawing names at random.” The exclusivity of that experience appeals to their audiences, they’re continuing to serve their volunteers, and they’ve implemented backup plans should an actor get ill. Plus, there’s no such thing as too much *Steel Magnolias*.

We’ve all learned that there is no “right answer” in times of COVID. Infection rates, government mandates, and general attitudes towards the virus change daily, and are vastly different from state to state. But if we can take extra steps to learn Zoom and to navigate the labyrinth of emergency federal relief funds, shouldn’t we also take some time to protect our volunteers and uphold our stories? That is, after all, why we do what we do. ♦

UPCOMING ROUNDTABLE

An AACT Roundtable will be added to discuss this topic in more depth, and to include additional voices. If you’re interested in participating on the panel for this event, visit aact.org/panelist

Spotlight Award Honors Mary Sue Weeks

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*.

The **Lincoln County Community Theater (LCCT)**, in Damariscotta, Maine, has honored **Mary Sue Weeks** of Bremen, Maine, with the *AACT Spotlight Award* for her contributions to the artistic life of the theatre.

An accomplished scenic artist, Mary Sue has shared her considerable talents with the company for over a decade. John Mulcahy, LCCT Production Supervisor, says “From the moment she walked through the door of our theatre, we have not mounted a production that has not been blessed with Mary Sue’s incredible skills, tireless work ethic, and friendly demeanor.”

He recalls that “when we wanted to show a giant IBM Selectric typewriter on the upstage drop for *Nine to Five*—a little research and it was done. Paint a drop and false proscenium in the style of Rousseau for *Iolanthe?*—she mastered it.”

Weeks plays a particularly important role in brainstorming discussions in the early stages of the design process, which

Mulcahy says “never seems to be about individual egos colliding, but rather about comrades weighing different ideas and happily arriving at the best plan for moving ahead. Every community theatre should be as lucky as we are to have someone like Mary Sue Weeks among its dedicated volunteers.” ♦



Mary Sue Weeks

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A small photograph of Earl Lewin, a man with grey hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. He is standing next to a large playbill or poster that features a scenic image. The playbill is titled "EarlLewinPlaywright.com".

New Roles



TRW Plays, the newly formed play-licensing division of Theatrical Rights Worldwide, has announced the addition of **Craig Pospisil** to its staff. Bringing over 30 years of licensing experience, Craig will serve as Vice-President of TRW Plays, working alongside Executive Director Lysna Marzani.

"I'm very excited to join TRW and help build this new play publishing and licensing division," Craig says.

"There's so much potential for growth for this catalogue and it will be an exciting challenge to help find and champion new plays from both new voices and experienced ones."

In addition to his years of experience in theatrical licensing, Craig is a multi award-winning playwright and filmmaker. He is the author of the full-length plays *Months on End*, *The Dunes*, *Life is Short*, *Somewhere in Between*, and more than 50 one-act and short plays. His work has been published by Applause, Dramatists Play Service, Heineman, Playscripts, Smith&Kraus and Vintage, and seen on stages around the U.S. and in two dozen countries on six continents. He graduated from Wesleyan University, received his Master's from New York University, and is a member of the Dramatists Guild. A born-and-bred New Yorker, he lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Bloomberg TV anchor Alix Steel and their daughter.

Steve Spiegel, Owner/CEO, of TRW notes that "Craig has lived the world of play licensing and joins TRW Plays as one the most highly recognized and respected executives in the industry. He brings with him an unmatched level of knowledge, relationships and experience."



Cloverdale Playhouse in Montgomery, Alabama, has announced two new hires. **Tara Fenn** is the company's new Managing Director, after having been involved as a volunteer with the playhouse since its inaugural year. Recipient of a B.A. in Communication and Theatre from Auburn University at Montgomery, Tara's experience in the River Region has involved productions at Theatre AUM, Cloverdale Playhouse, Prattville's

Way Off Broadway Theatre, and the Wetumpka Depot. She has been a director, actor, singer, teacher, costumer, stitcher, board member, production team member, front of house manager, props master, fundraiser, and everything in between. She is

also a founding member of AUM's all-female a cappella group, AUMcappella.



Sam Wooten is the Cloverdale Playhouse's new Artistic Director. He has been an actor, writer, director, and producer of theatre in Montgomery. Raised in Marietta, Georgia, Sam's early interest in theatre led to years with Atlanta-area theatres and their educational and children's programs. After a brief stint pursuing film and television opportunities in L.A. he returned to earn his B.A. in Theatre from the University of Georgia, an M.F.A. in Drama

from Indiana University, and a certification from the Stage Internazionale Di Commedia dell'Arte in Reggio Emilia, Italy. In Chicago, Sam started his own theatre company, focusing on new and original works. In Montgomery, he has served as a board member for the Cloverdale Playhouse since its founding. Most important, he says, is his role as a spouse to Emily, and as a parent to Miriam and Henry. ♦

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For discount instructions, visit aact.org/member-discounts (you must be signed in) and scroll down to Subplot Studio.

Make a Legacy Gift

Please consider including the American Association of Community Theatre in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift. Through these special gifts, friends like you are able to sustain AACT's mission and provide learning experiences for AACT-member companies participating in AACTFest national festivals.

To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit aact.org/legacy or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org

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Artie's Advocacy Tip



Advocate for the Arts. Make your voice heard!

Join Americans for the Arts' 2022 National Arts Summit (NAAS) virtually on March 28-30. For the first time, there will be no individual registration fee! Join AACT and fellow artists to learn the best advocacy strategies to influence change.

See the article in this *Spotlight*, page 21.

For more information on the Summit and how to register, go to aact.org/summit.

Join Us for AACT Online Roundtables

AACT is hosting online roundtables for all AACT members!

AACT Roundtables provide members with a forum for sharing experiences, ideas, concerns, and solutions.

Join these informative sessions and gain insight on a variety of topics with theatre professionals from around the country.

See the information on page 24, and visit aact.org/listings to schedule your 2022 AACT virtual roundtables.



AACT Roundtables are sponsored in part by Ludus, powering theatres' ticketing, marketing, and fundraising needs.

AACT Web Power

Need help with a production or administrative question? AACT's Resource Roster is there to help you find the answers you need. Submit your question online at aact.org/roster and AACT's Resource Roster Coordinator will match you with an AACT member who is experienced in the topic you've indicated. It's networking at its best.

Note: If you are looking for something very specific, such as a prop, sample documents, or references for consultants, it may be better to use AACTList, our email discussion group, so that you can reach multiple people with a single post. [aact.org/aactlist].

The Resource Roster is composed of AACT members who have volunteered their time and skills to assist with your theatrical needs. If you would like to volunteer your expertise to the Resource Roster, contact Coordinator Lynn Nelson at lynn_nelson@hotmail.com. Along with your name and contact information, include the specific skill or knowledge you can provide to other AACT members.

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

Harris Cashes Out!

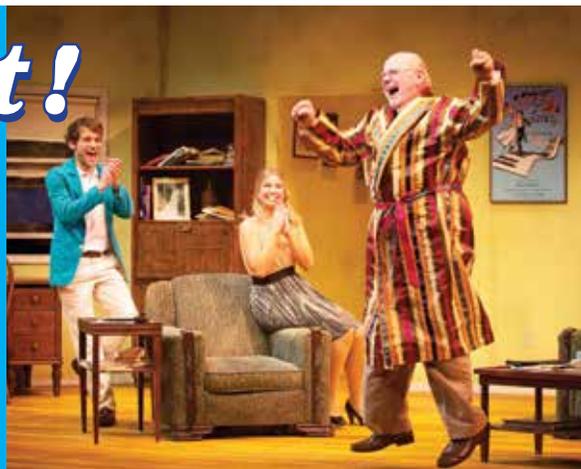
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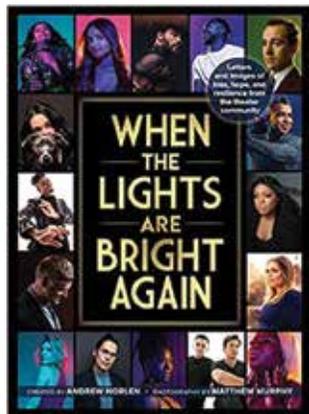
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When the Lights Are Bright Again

Created by Andrew Norlen
Photography by Matthew Murphy

Applause Books

It began as an artist's desperate desire to express himself inside a worldwide pandemic, but in one year's time it has grown into a theatre industry and country-wide outlet for healing, grief, justice, and hope in the theatre community.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed what a world without live performance looks and feels like. This book captures a small fraction of the powerful and transcendent internal heartbeat that never went away within the theatre community. *When the Lights Are Bright Again* immortalizes the stories, struggles, and successes of an industry that was the first to be shut down and one of the last to return.

Andrew Norlen weaves more than 200 letters from Broadway theatre veterans, devout theatregoers, teenage dreamers aching for their day in the spotlight, long-time ushers, designers, creatives, and countless other arts workers with a brand-new, breathtaking photo series by Broadway photographer Matthew Murphy.

Not only has the creation of this book allowed the theatre community to grieve and express themselves in a new way, but for every copy purchased, a portion of the profits will directly benefit The Actors Fund. This book will continue to help support arts workers to thrive and receive financial stability for decades to come with every copy sold.

When The Lights Are Bright Again is a love letter to the arts community and every theatregoer, but, above all else, it is a meditation on the human experience. There is something for every broken, tired, and angry soul inside this book: hope.

Available at the AACT Bookstore: aact.org/books

National Playwriting Competition

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Details: urbanstages.org/submissions/

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Mar 9-13	SETC 2022	TN Memphis	336-265-6148 setc.org
Mar 15	AACT Roundtable: Corporate Sponsorship	Virtual	817-732-3177 aact.org/listings
Mar 17-19	OCTAFest	OK Weatherford	405-840-0788 oktheatre.org/octafest
Mar 18-20	CTMC 2022 West Coast Session	Virtual	817-732-3177 aact.org/ctmc
Mar 22 - Apr 10	AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere <i>The Cafe Mocha Murders</i>	CA Oakhurst	559-683-7112 goldenchaintheatre.org
Mar 28-30	National Arts Action Summit	Virtual	202-371-2830 aact.org/summit
Mar 31-Apr 3	South West Theatre Conference 2022	TX Kerrville	facebook.com/ SouthWestTheatreConference
April 19	AACT Roundtable: Volunteer Management	Virtual	817-732-3177 aact.org/listings

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

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| 22 Eldridge Plays & Musicals | 20 Summerwind Productions |
| 31 <i>Harris Cashes Out!</i> | 5 Theatrical Rights Worldwide |
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AACT will be providing two scholarships for each CTMC Virtual Conference session to support and mentor theatre makers of color. Visit aaact.org/ctmc for details.