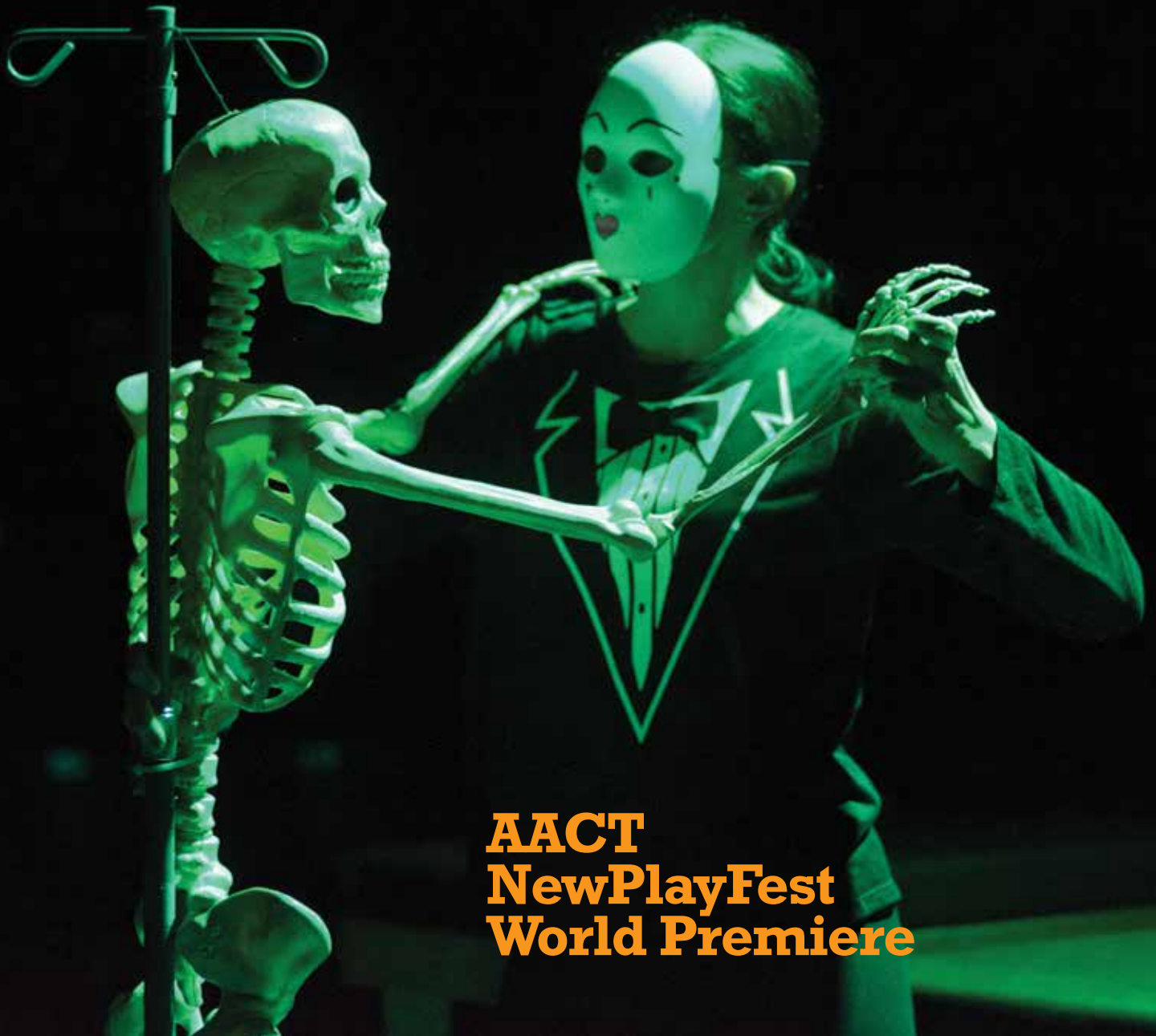


spotlight

November/December 2021 \$5.00

american association of community theatre



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NewPlayFest
World Premiere**

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Chris Serface
AACT President

STOP!

I want you to take a second and think back to the last 18 months:

- Remember when you suddenly had evenings free because there weren't any shows or rehearsals?
- Remember when your loved ones suddenly were amazed that you were home more than ever before?
- Remember how relaxed you felt?

Now I want you to look at yourself right now:

- Is your schedule full or double-booked again?
- Are your loved ones asking, "Will I see you tonight?"
- Do you feel a little more stressed than you did over the last 18 months?

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, it might be time to take a breath, and reflect.

I love what we all do in the world of theatre. It brings me joy, happiness, and fulfillment, as I'm sure it does for you. I also love spending time with my family and friends, and exploring life off the boards—a fact that I was reminded of during lockdown. It made me stop and wonder if I was living life as smart as I could be. As we came nearer to reopening, I challenged myself to find more balance. Could I take care of all my production responsibilities *and* have more time to spend away from the theatre? The answer was a resounding yes.

I think you'll agree with me that the last 18 months have allowed us all to step back and see things from a new perspective. With that in mind, I encourage you to stage a revival. Let the curtain rise on a more balanced *you*.

Best,
Chris Serface



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Now's the time to register for the Community Theatre Management Conferences in March; they'll be virtual, with a limit of 50 attendees per conference. And save the date for TEAMS Conference, live at Hale Centre Theatre in Utah, July 2022

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Mark your calendars for June 20-26, 2022, and delight in performances from top-quality theatre troupes from around the globe. Register now for the best early bird prices

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A Dynamic Duo Retires

After over 20 years of volunteer and contractor service, Festival and Education Coordinator Ron Ziegler and Education Coordinator Kathy Pingel retired from their positions with AACT at the end of August

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On the Cover

A Mime (Jill Lightfoot) and a physical therapy specialist's skeleton perform a stylized waltz in the prologue of the AACT NewPlayFest world premiere of *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone, at Rover Dramawerks in Plano, Texas

Photo: Stacy Winsett

Contacting AACT

AACT
PO Box 101476
Fort Worth, TX 76185
817-732-3177
info@aact.org

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 for advertising rates and specs. David and Darlene are also available at the phone number above.



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VIII TBD

IX Jon Douglas Rake
Tacoma, WA (2021)

X Dane Winters
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Upcoming Events

AACT Fall 2021 Webinar Series

Continuing through December 9
aact.org/webinars

AACT Online Roundtables

November 4, November 16, December 7
aact.org/roundtables

AACT Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 4 pm - 6 pm (central).
Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk
105 S. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, TX 78205
aact.org/calendar

AACT 2021 National Directors Conference

November 19-21, 2021
Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio Riverwalk
105 S. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, TX 78205
aact.org/ndc

AACT Winter Board Meeting

February 25 - 26, 2022
Drury Inn & Suites Phoenix Airport
3333 E. University Drive
Phoenix, AZ 85034
aact.org/calendar

AACT Summer 2022 Board Meeting

June 24 - 25, 2022
Venice Theatre
140 Tampa Ave. W
Venice, FL 34285

Correction

Madeline Ashton's name was misspelled in the Design Competition awards list in the September/October issue of *Spotlight*.

AACT Staff

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Kathy Pingel, NewPlayFest Dramaturge
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Spotlight

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Editors: David Cockerell
Stephen Peithman
Design: Jim Covault

Content and Resource contributors:
Susan Austin, Stephen Bird, Dexter Brigham,
Mary Lou Britton, Lori Chase, Martha Cherbini,
Quiana Clark-Roland, David Cockerell, Laurie Colton,
Jim Covault, Winston Daniels, Darlene DeLorenzo,
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AACT NewPlayFest World Premiere: *Proprioception* Opens at Rover Dramawerks

Plano, Texas, celebrated the latest AACT NewPlayFest 2020 world premiere when *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone, opened on September 10 at Rover Dramawerks. The production was originally scheduled for April, 2020, but was postponed and rescheduled due to the pandemic. The play received an outstanding production and was well received, running through September 18.



Jason Rice

Opening Night of the world premiere of Proprioception, by Marilyn Millstone, at Rover Dramawerks in Plano, Texas.

Front row (seated, left to right): Marilyn Millstone, Proprioception playwright; Carol M. Rice, Rover Dramawerks Executive Artistic Director and Director of Proprioception

Second row (left to right): Linda M. Lee of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation; Sue Doty-Goodner, cast/Esther Abramson; Stacy Winsett, Costume Designer; Jill Lightfoot, cast/Kylie Jasper; Jason R. Davis, cast/Mike Sheffield; Susan Austin, AACT NewPlayFest Coordinator; Linda Habjan, Dramatic Publishing Company Vice President of Acquisitions; Kathy Pingel, AACT NewPlayFest Dramaturge

Back row (left to right): Jason Rice, Rover Dramawerks Board Secretary; David Cockerell, AACT Marketing/Communications Director; Kenneth Hall, Lighting Designer/Board Operator; Bennett Frohock, cast/Randy Ayers; Sara Jones, Stage Manager and Rover Dramawerks Board Member; Glynda Welch, Rover Dramawerks Board President; Rick Tuman, Rover Dramawerks Board Vice President; Kristin M Burgess, Props Designer; Sakura Brunette, Artist Angel Sponsor

Playwright Marilyn Millstone attended the opening, sharing her delight and gratitude for the Rover Dramawerks production.

Marilyn explained, "It is said that good things come to those who wait. But after waiting—wading—through 18 endless months of pandemic-related delays for my play, *Proprioception*, to premiere, the September 2021 opening didn't just feel good. Or great. It felt miraculous." She continues:

"In fact, as I write this—just a week after Rover Dramawerks's marvelous production officially

opened—I still can't believe we pulled it off. But pull it off, we did.

In August, I packed my suitcase to fly out to Plano for a three-day workshop with the cast, Director Carol M. Rice, and AACT interim dramaturge David Cockerell. As I packed, I felt rather overwhelmed by anxiety: I hadn't flown since the pandemic began, and even though I was fully vaccinated, the thought of spending hours in the air in close proximity to strangers frightened me. Added to that was the discomfiting news that the brilliant AACT dramaturge



with whom I had originally worked—Kathy Pingel—would miss the workshop. She was at her home in Florida, recovering from Covid.

Yet once I was in the rehearsal room with Carol, David, and the cast, and felt their electric energy, the pandemic completely receded from my mind. We focused instead on what we all love: live theatre. Carol generously permitted me to conduct a 30-minute question-and-answer session with the cast, during which we clarified some misunderstandings about relationships between the characters and discussed character motivation. The discussion eventually became quite lively, and when it was over, I felt we'd developed a strong sense of camaraderie.

At the end of each workshop rehearsal, Carol also invited both David and me to deliver notes. Often directors prefer playwrights to be seen but not heard, so I was thrilled to be included in this part of the production process. I also learned a lot from the notes delivered by David and Carol. I left Plano feeling that our production would be a hit, and judging by the reviews that came out after opening weekend, I was right!

In sum, the bouquet of opportunities I received for winning NewPlayFest 2020 was everything I'd ever dreamed of and hoped for: working with a brilliant dramaturg; spending several days in workshop with the director and cast; experiencing a glorious production; and now, finalizing my script for publication by Dramatic Publishing. As far as I know, AACT is the only organization that offers such a comprehensive array of opportunities to emerging playwrights; for that, I am deeply grateful."

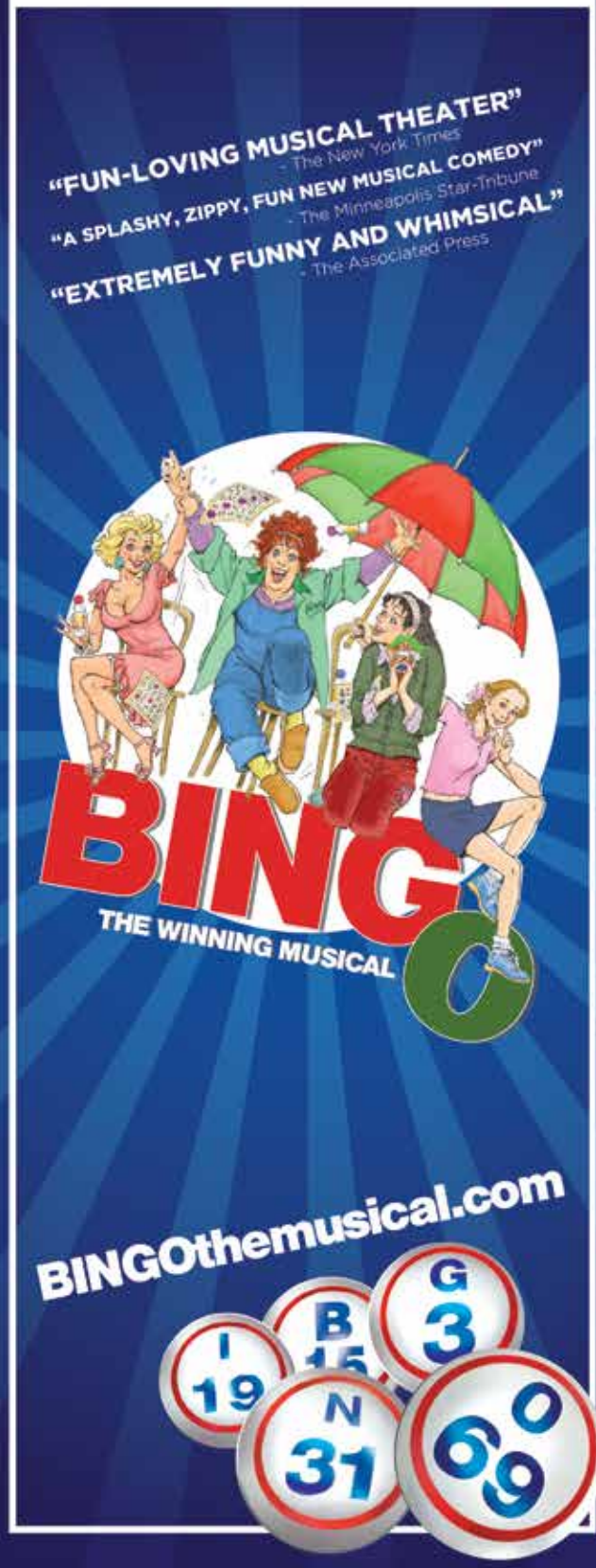
Stacy Winsett



Dr. Mike Sheffield (Jason R. Davis) examines the injuries of principal dancer Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot) in the Rover DramaWerks production of Proprioception

continued on next page ►

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Stacy Winsett



Dr. Mike Sheffield (Jason R. Davis) and his patient, principal dancer Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot), explore their relationship outside their physical therapy sessions in the Rover Dramawerks production of Proprioception

"I loved *The Big Shoe*..."

The clever spin on the Mother Goose tales, the range of musical numbers from lively show tunes to expressive ballads for a nice mix of voice types...the subtle lessons contained in the piece, the affirmation of caring over greed, and the concept of love and protection of children."

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The play's author, Marilyn Millstone, lives in Kensington, Maryland. Her award-winning writing is rooted in her background as a news and feature journalist and essayist. She also holds an M.F.A. in playwriting from Spalding University. Her full-length dramas, one-acts, ten-minute plays, and monologues have been produced by theatres around the country and abroad.

Millstone's first full-length play, *The Sculptress*, won two prizes at the 2011 Baltimore Playwrights Festival. Her short play, *Compos Mentis*, has been produced eight times (six times in America and twice abroad) and won numerous awards. Two of Millstone's monologues were selected for *Best Women's Monologues of 2019*, published by Smith and Kraus.

Learn more about Millstone's work at marilynmillstone.com.

In *Proprioception* (a term referring to the perception or awareness of the position and movement of the body), two patients meet in a physical therapy office: a young prima ballerina with a torn ACL and a chip on her shoulder; and an elderly, widowed Holocaust survivor, estranged from her only child. When their physical therapist decides that the two women should share appointments, attachments form, conflicts erupt, secrets surface, and lives unravel. *Proprioception* is a play about how we heal - and how we don't.

Carol M. Rice directed Rover Dramawerks's world premiere production of *Proprioception*. The cast featured Jason R. Davis, Sue Doty-Goodner, Bennett Frohock, and Jill Lightfoot. The production crew included stage management by Sara

Esther Abramson (Sue Doty-Goodner) shares details of escaping the Holocaust and the loss of contact with her family to Kylie Jasper (Jill Lightfoot) and Randy Ayers (Bennett Frobock) in the Rover Dramawerks production of Proprioception



Jones, scenic design by Erica Rémi Lorca, costume design by Stacy Winsett, lighting design by Kenneth Hall, sound design by Robbi D. Holman, properties design by Kristin M. Burgess, and dramaturgy by AACT's Kathy Pingel and David Cockerell.

Rover Dramawerks' experience with the AACT NewPlayFest was very positive, said Rice:

"Everyone was so supportive, even through all of the COVID delays, and the play itself has received rave reviews from critics and patrons alike. My personal favorite part was the workshop—and I totally didn't expect it to be. I honestly didn't understand why the workshop component was needed until my cast and I experienced it, and I think it made a huge difference in the quality of the show, overall. Also, having a single point of contact in the dramaturge/AACT rep/go-between for the director and playwright was extremely helpful.

I will also say that having AACT and Dramatic Publishing reps here for opening night alongside Marilyn Millstone, the playwright, was very special, and I think the presentation of a check by Linda Lee of the Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation, opened our patrons' eyes as to what a big deal it was to work with AACT on this project. The AACT NewPlayFest will definitely go down as an amazing experience for Rover Dramawerks, and will always be a fond memory for me."

JKA Jack K. Ayre
FAL Frank Ayre Lee
Theatre Foundation

The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation provides a grant that helps make AACT NewPlayFest possible. The Foundation was created by the children of Frank Ayre Lee as a tribute to their father, and a legacy for the creative endeavors of his cousin and friend, Jack. The family is pleased to honor both men through AACT NewPlayFest, in presenting

continued on next page ▶

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Proprioception Premiere continued from page 11

and promoting new theatre works. For more information, visit aact.org/newplayfest.



Dramatic Publishing Company publishes AACT NewPlayFest's winning plays in anthologies, and also licenses production rights for the winning plays. Visit aact.org/dpc for direct links to Dramatic Publishing Company's NewPlayFest anthologies and plays, plus information about discounts and special offers for AACT members.

The 2020 AACT NewPlayFest cycle began with the world premiere production of *Casserole*, by Pamela Harbaugh, at **Boise Little Theater** in Boise, Idaho, October 18 – November 2, 2019; continued with the world premiere productions of *Shattering*, by Pat Montley, at **Tacoma Little Theatre** in Tacoma, Washington, January 24 – February 9, 2020; *Goat Song Revel*, by Dan Borengasser, at **Manatee Performing Arts Center** in Bradenton, Florida, February 6 – 23, 2020; *On Pine Knoll Street*, by Mark Cornell at **The Sauk** in Jonesville, Michigan, February 6



Jason Rice

Linda M. Lee of the Jack K Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation presents Rover Dramawerks Executive Artistic Director a check on opening night in support of the Rover Dramawerks NewPlayFest production of Proprioception, by Marilyn Millstone

– 16, 2020. The final two production for the 2020 cycle were delayed due to the pandemic. The 2020 AACT NewPlayFest cycle continued with *Proprioception*, by Marilyn Millstone at **Rover Dramawerks** in Plano, Texas September 10 – 18, 2021, and *The Cayuga Canal Girls*, by Laura King at **Phoenix Stage Company** in Oakville, Connecticut, October 2 – 16, 2021. The January/February 2022 issue of *Spotlight* will include a production report from Phoenix Stage Company. ♦

Schedule Now!

Become an AACT NewPlayFest 2024 Producing Theatre

The world premiere of an award-winning show is a feather in any theatre's cap.

It's also an exciting process, for a theatre that produces a new play is embarking on an artistic adventure that will energize both the company and its patrons, as our story on *Proprioception* (page 8) makes clear.

"If you have the opportunity to be a part of the NewPlayFest as an author or a producing theatre, I highly recommend it. It will breathe new life into how you approach a project," said Chris Surface, Tacoma Little Theatre Managing Artistic Director and Director of NewPlayFest 2020 winning script *Shattering*, produced at Tacoma Little Theatre.

With that in mind, AACT is now accepting applications for Producing Theatres for the 2024 NewPlayFest, with a deadline of February 1, 2022. For the application form, go to aact.org/newplay24, or contact the AACT office at 817-732-3177 or info@aact.org.

AACT will choose six AACT-member theatres to produce the winning plays selected by a team of AACT reviewers. Producing Theatres will read the scripts that make it to the final round and select the winning shows they will produce.

NewPlayFest 2024 productions will take place between June 2023 and December 2024. Producing Theatres will be chosen well in advance, to allow you time to schedule the world premiere production as part of your regular season.

AACT NewPlayFest plays a vital role in many ways. A theatre that produces a world premiere new play contributes to the future development of that piece, and helps the playwright determine what works or doesn't work on stage. The interpretations of the director and the actors can reveal insights into the work that even the playwright didn't know were there, allowing the playwright to make the play even more effective.

In keeping with AACT's commitment to advancing the artistic quality and creative process for community theatres and artists, winning plays will once again be published in an anthology by Dramatic Publishing Company. (See aact.org/books for a list of current anthologies.)

To improve the production process, the end product, and the playwriting experience for both theatre and playwright, AACT includes a workshopping component. This gives each Producing Theatre the opportunity to receive funds specifically for bringing the playwright to your theatre for workshopping and attend the opening night festivities. In addition, funds are also available to help cover production and marketing costs. The Jack K. Ayre and Frank Ayre Lee Theatre Foundation will again provide this generous funding. ♦

Submit a Script

Playwrights may submit scripts for AACT NewPlayFest 2024 during May and June 2022. Details for script submission will be available soon at aact.org/newplay24. Only non-musical, full-length plays will be accepted. In addition, scripts must be unpublished and must not have received a full production. (If selected, the AACT theatre's production is to be a world premiere.) Only one script per playwright will be accepted. There are no fees for AACT-member playwrights; nonmembers pay a \$10 script processing fee. For more information and script formatting guidelines, visit aact.org/newplay24.

Be a Reviewer

Volunteer Reviewers play an important role in AACT NewPlayFest 2024, reading and scoring submitted scripts in several rounds of reviews. If you'd like to be a part of this exciting AACT festival as a Reviewer, you'll find an application form and more information at aact.org/newplay24.





The Theatre Community of Community Theatre

Dexter Bringham

We have a real opportunity here, friends. As we begin the painfully slow and incremental return to presenting regular performances for the public again, there are numerous areas where we can draw a firm line in the sand to mark the Before Time, and to differentiate it from the Moving Forward Time.

- In the Before Time, we were committed to rewarding those folks who showed up to audition. If they were willing to put forth the effort when others weren't, then they should be in the show.

✓ *But in the Moving Forward Time, we know that many folks don't come to auditions because they don't feel welcome or invited, and by insisting on casting only the folks who show up, we end up with the same faces, usually white, and an ever shrinking and insulated pool of talent and artistic perspectives. We know that there is no shame in going out into the community and inviting people to the table.*

- In the Before Time, we programmed our seasons from a list of plays and musicals, sorted into various buckets named

"Popular with Audiences," "Popular with Actors," "Family Shows," etc. The shows on that list were almost universally written by dead white guys and told stories about young, thin, straight, white people.

✓ *But in the Moving Forward Time, we know that these stories don't have to continue to be exclusively played by thin, straight, white, actors. If the story is universal enough to stand the test of time, then it is universal enough to reflect the true diversity of our society. We also know that there are other voices out there writing exciting new plays and musicals, and these creators deserve our love, attention, and royalty dollars more than the great-grandkids of a guy who wrote a show in 1950.*

- In the Before Time, we didn't think about the health of our fellow cast and crew, except when it interfered with rehearsals and/or performances. We lamented when a particular virus was "making its way through the cast" without taking any real action to mitigate the spread.

✓ *But in the Moving Forward Time, we know how much each individual can do to protect our fellow community members. We know that by staying home when ill, by wearing masks, by social distancing, and by getting vaccinated, we can keep each other safe.*

Community Theatre is now facing the dark parts of its legacy: a century of reinforcing the idea that only thin people are worthy of love; decades of blackface (*Lend Me a Tenor*) and yellowface (*The King and I*, *Anything Goes*, *Miss Saigon*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *The Mikado*... the list is almost endless here), and the centering of male, Euro-centric stories to the exclusion of everything and everyone else.

In the Moving Forward Time, let's shed that shameful past and allow the beautiful art that has enriched our lives to be shared with everyone. I am an eternal optimist, and I can see a community theatre that is open and welcoming, that has learned from the past, and is more exciting and vibrant because of it. ♦

Reprinted with permission from the October CTAM (Community Theatre Association of Michigan) CALLBOARD

Dexter Bringham is currently the Producing Artistic Director for Cornwell's Dinner Theatre in Marshall, Michigan. Prior to that he served for eight years as Director of Theatre Programs at Midland Center for the Arts, and was the co-founder and Artistic Director of Festival 56, Illinois' largest summer theatre festival, for its first 12 seasons. He has served on the board of the Cultural Advocacy Network, as president of Michigan Presenters, and been a monthly columnist for the Community Theatre Association of Michigan.

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Find solutions virtually with fellow theatremakers

AACT is offering a choice of two virtual conferences in March 2022:

East Coast Session

Friday, March 4 - Sunday, March 6, 2022

Facilitator: Chad Alan-Carr

West Coast Session

Friday, March 18, 2022 - Sunday, March 20, 2022

Facilitator: Dorinda Toner

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Each session will be limited to 50 participants, in order to facilitate brainstorming, dynamic sharing, and building idea upon idea. Enroll in the session above whose time zones best suit your ability to participate fully.

Through a pre-conference questionnaire, you will help prioritize and suggest topics for discussion, which promises a blend of traditional CTMC topics and those that have arisen with the challenge of COVID-19.

More information and registration at aact.org/ctmc

AACT Member \$150 | Non-Member \$175



Participants of AACT TEAMS 2019 enjoy the camaraderie of fellow theatre makers in the beautiful Hale Centre Theatre's conference room

TEAMS 2022

Save the Date:

July 29-31, 2022

Hale Centre Theatre

Salt Lake City, Utah

TEAMS is an educational conference offering tracks in

Technical Theatre

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Casey Wayne Soelberg, the Media & Public Relations Director for the Actors' Repertory Theatre of Idaho, in Idaho Falls, Idaho, attended TEAMS 2019 and says, “I found that sharing stories, problems, and solutions made for a memorable and mind-stretching experience. The TEAMS Conference helped us all to unravel the underlying messages within our shared experiences—and the potential for growth they contain. We came away equipped with the tools to succeed—with the help of the right people and a positive attitude.”

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. Registrants select the track that best suits their individual needs.

The insights you gain will pay for the conference registration many times over.

For more information, visit 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.

Registration Opens January 2022!

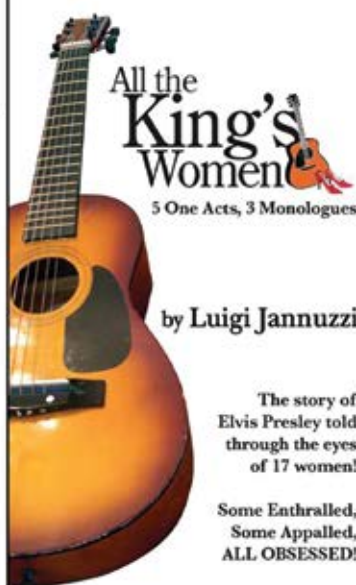
aactWORLDFEST 2022

June 20-26, 2022, Venice, Florida

Mark your calendars for June 20-26, 2022, Register today for aactWORLDFEST 2022 at venicetheatre.org/international/. Register now to receive the discounted early bird prices.

Delight in performances from top-quality theatre troupes from around the globe. Many perform in their native language, but it's easy to follow what's happening because the language of theatre is universal! Plus, there are delightful dinners, after-glow gatherings, impromptu drum circles, "lobby gabs"—all of which add up to a recipe for life-long, global friendships, and some very special events. You'll have the time of your life at this Festival in Paradise!

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aact WORLDFEST

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All after-glow parties
Gala ticket

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Regular \$245 | Student \$175

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

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



Rene McVey

The Maner Manush theatre troupe from Italy celebrates the life of the great master painter with their production of Michelangelo da Caravaggio at aactWORLDFEST 2018

The U.S. Shines in Monaco's World Theatre Festival

Frank Peot

AACT Secretary and Congress Delegate

Actors, directors, technicians, delegates, and observers from around the world were treated to productions from 14 countries at the 17th World Congress and Festival of Amateur Theatre in Monaco, August 17-22.

Each presenting theatre received the "Festival Homage" award, in acknowledgement of being selected as the best of each participating country—which included Hungary, Slovakia, Portugal, the Central Africa Republic, Morocco, Belgium, Slovenia, Spain, Lithuania, France, Cuba, Finland, and Italy, as well as the United States.

It was a wonderful and remarkable opportunity to discover and exchange ideas through our common passion for theatre.

A highlight of the 37th Congress Meeting, on August 21, was the election of Tim Jebsen (Midland, Texas) to a two-year term on the IATA Council. Aled Rhys-Jones of the UK was elected president of the organization.

The General Assembly will meet in Japan in 2022 and in Debrecen, Hungary, in 2023. ♦

Frank Peot



(left to right) U.S. Delegate Beverley Lord; *Who Will Sing for Lena?* director Sal Jones, actress Jessica Washington, and playwright Dr. Janice Liddell; and U.S. Delegate Frank Peot enjoy the festival between colloquiums

For the Mondial du Théâtre—the official festival of the International Amateur Theatre Association (AITA/IATA)—the United States was represented by the production of *Who Will Sing for Lena?* from the Lexington Players, of Lexington, Massachusetts. A highlight of the 2019 national AACTFest, the one-character play scored another success in Monaco, with Jessica Washington, as Lena, drawing nothing but positive comments at the colloquium the following morning. We can be very proud of our representative at the Mondial du Théâtre.



The Central African Republic is represented at the festival by a moving performance of the play *Veterans*

Frank Peot

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2022 National Awards Nominations Open

AACT National Awards are presented each year in recognition of outstanding contributions to community theatre. Nominations for 2022 National Awards will be accepted beginning November 1, for persons of all ages. The submission deadline is *January 20, 2022* and the awards will be presented in June at aactWORLDfest 2022 in Venice, Florida.

AACT bestows national recognitions in 10 categories, 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

Visit aact.org/national-awards to submit a nomination. The page lists all AACT National Awards with descriptions and criteria, plus links to view those who have received each award in the past.

Anyone may nominate a candidate for a National Award. The AACT Awards committee encourages nominating individuals of any age for those awards whose criteria are based on merit, rather than age or length of service.

Spotlight Award

Nominations are welcome throughout the year for the AACT Spotlight Award, which is presented locally by AACT and an AACT-member theatre, in recognition of 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 details and the Spotlight Award nomination form, visit aact.org/spotlight-award. ♦



Ziegler & Pingel: A Dynamic Duo Retires

After over 20 years of volunteer and contractor service, Festival and Education Coordinator Ron Ziegler and Education Coordinator Kathy Pingel retired from their positions with AACT at the end of August.

On September 1, AACT gave an official “congratulations and farewell” to the two, citing them as among the most influential people in the organization’s history.

AACT President Chris Serface recalls his first meeting Ron and Kathy, while he was working on AACTFest 2009: “The box lunch social that was scheduled had exactly three attendees: Ron, Kathy, and me. On that day I would find two friends who I continue to hold close and dear and have such strong respect for. Over the years, I have learned so much from them and look forward to more adventures with both.”

“A powerhouse of a woman”

During her time with AACT, Kathy Pingel has adjudicated at the state, regional, national, and international levels, and beginning in 2015, led AACT’s adjudication training at the national festival. She later formalized and wrote the curriculum for the Adjudication Seminar and Workshop, which will be used in years to come. In 2017, Kathy was named an AACT Fellow.

In 2018, Kathy joined AACT’s staff as Education Coordinator, steering the development of new educational programming, such as the AACT Pop-ups, Fall Webinar Series, and the 2019 and 2021 AACTFest Workshops. She has served as the AACT NewPlayFest Dramaturge (a position she piloted) for the past two NewPlayFest cycles.

“The first time I met Kathy, I was just blown away by this powerhouse of a woman who shared amazing ideas that have inspired my program for years,” says April Cochran, Education Director for Market House Theatre, in Paducah, Kentucky. “She’s fiercely loyal, generous, has a razor-sharp wit and is one of the smartest people I know. She and Ron have made an indelible impact on AACT, and on community theatre throughout the world.”

In retirement, Kathy plans to continue to freelance as a play editor, director, and teacher.

“A commitment to integrity”

During his time with AACT, Ron Ziegler has made outstanding contributions in almost every area of the organization. He served as president from 1995 to 1997, and spent over 14 years serving in various capacities for the AACT Festival Cycles. Most recently, Ron took on the herculean task of planning the first AACTFest Invitational Festival, which debuted in a virtual setting earlier this year.

“Ron has always been dedicated to insuring festival integrity, and a positive experience for participants,” says Festival Commission Chair Kay Armstrong, who has worked with Ron for 14 years. “Foremost in my thoughts, these words kept repeating: commitment to integrity, determination to achieve positive goals, and capability of compromise.”



When asked how she feels about stepping into the new role of AACT Festival Coordinator and Engagement Coordinator, Mary Jo DeNolf writes, “I’m very excited about coming into this wonderful organization and taking on these new responsibilities. Ron has big shoes to fill but I’m up for the challenge! We all will miss them greatly!”

In his staff role as Education Coordinator, Ron has planned and facilitated numerous AACT educational programs—most prominently in leading the Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC). Like Kathy, he was named an AACT Fellow.

“A special team”

“Theatre brought Ron and Kathy together, and it’s hard to think of AACT without them,” says Jim Walker, AACT’s Vice President of Festivals. “More than colleagues, more than friends, they are family, and I send them my love and appreciation for all they have done and best wishes for whatever awaits them in the future. They will always be full of theatre and therefore, full of life.”

AACT Executive Director Quiana Clark-Roland agrees: “We here at AACT will whole-heartedly miss the intimate working relationships we’ve had with Kathy and Ron. They brought to the table a wealth of experience, knowledge, dedication, humor, and compassion in the relationships they built with staff, members, colleagues, and volunteers. It has been an honor and privilege to work with them, and we are so grateful that they ‘stuck around’ to see AACT into a new and exciting era of educational programming and engagement.”

“Each in their own way, they served AACT and improved the organization in so many ways,” says Jill Patchin, Manager of AACT’s Corporate Partners program, and former AACT President. “They encouraged those they met along the way, brought them into the AACT family, and have left a lasting mark on all of us for the better. But more than that, we’ve just had fun!” ♦

The Gift of a Lifetime

"It takes vision and leadership to find the way forward when the world is murky. And when the world clears up, we need an organization dedicated to spreading the word, to and for all theatres. I support AACT's efforts to do that through my Legacy Society commitment."

Unfortunately, those things are not what attracts funds. Those funds must come from us, the true believers, who think that not only must theatres survive, they need to thrive. And they need a leader. AACT at its best does that and the Endowment supports it."

—Rod McCullough, Athens, New York

Your gift to the AACT's Endowment's Legacy Society helps open new horizons for theatres to reach even more people, allowing new programs to emerge as needs and opportunities are made known in education programming, festivals, and workshops. Just as our mission is to help Theatres Thrive—the AACT Endowment Fund exists to make sure that AACT itself thrives!

Gifts made through bequests and memorials, as well as donations of assets, help AACT support its mission—today and for generations to come. You can become a member of the Legacy Society by pledging \$5,000 or more. The pledges can be accomplished over months, or even years.

For more information, visit aact.org/aact-legacy.

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Our thanks to all AACT Legacy Society Members who have donated or pledged to seeing the future of AACT and AACTFest thrive!

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AACT Web Power

As theatres re-open, the search is on for qualified people to fill a wide range of positions. If your theatre has begun such a search, remember that you can post the announcement—free of charge—on the AACT website.

Whether you're seeking to fill an administrative, technical, support staff, or artistic position, your listing can include a job description, application details, contact information, and a link to your website for additional information. And since AACT's job listings page is among the most visited on our website, your announcement is sure to be noticed.

Go to aact.org, and on the drop-down menu click on "Networking," then "Job Postings." Or go directly to aact.org/jobs.

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

Spotlight on Discounter



Dramatic Publishing

Since 1885, Dramatic Publishing (DPC) has been committed to developing and serving the authors, artists, and educators who comprise the world of theatre. Its catalog includes a full spectrum of musicals, full-length and one-act plays, for every cast size, skill level, and audience.

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- *Delirium's Daughters*, by Nicholas Korn
- *My Man Godfrey*, by Eric K. Hatch
- *The Singin' Cowboy*, book by Todd Mueller and Hank Boland, music and lyrics by Gregg Opelka
- *Some Sweet Day*, by Flip Kobler and Cindy Marcus.

Read more about this special offer at dramaticpublishing.com/blog/aact



New Roles



Tracey Williams Sutton has been named Artistic Director of California's **Ojai Art Center Theater** (OACT). "When she moved to Ojai in 2004, Sutton says she "was asked by a friend how I wanted to embrace the community. I told her I wanted to be involved in the local theater. The next thing I knew, the Ojai Art Center was

calling me to interview to direct its theatre branch's production of *Kiss Me, Kate*."

According to OACT Chair Herb Hemming, that certainly worked out well. "Tracey Williams Sutton is more than a triple threat—she's an actress, director, costumer, set designer, and producer," said Hemming. "She has done it all."

Sutton has a Master's degree in Theatre and Direction. Her list of credits includes touring Broadway productions of *The Sound of Music* (Maria), *West Side Story* (Maria), and *Phantom of the Opera* (Christine). She has won numerous awards in Ventura and Los Angeles as an actress, director, costumer, and music director. She also taught theatre at Ojai's Villanova Preparatory School and Thacher School, and served as OACT chair.

"I want to embrace the original mission of this theater by inspiring others to be a part of it," said Sutton. "To paraphrase OAC founder Dr. Charles Butler, we must keep it alive, vital, and a force for good. . . It is not what we can get out of this place but what we can put into it. . . Take it, use it, enjoy it, cherish it, treat it tenderly, for much love has gone into its making."



After conducting a national search, **Midland Community Theatre** (Midland, Texas) recently hired **Ken Olson** as its Managing Director. Originally from Apple Valley, Minnesota, Olson has been involved in theatre since he was very young. In 2013, he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Design and Technical Theatre (with a Stage Management Emphasis) from the

University of Minnesota, Duluth. Following graduation and two stage management internships, Olson worked with regional theatres in Boston and the Twin Cities, cruise ships with Norwegian Cruise Line, national tours with Troupe America, Magic-Space Entertainment, Mills Entertainment's *Scott Brothers House Party Live* (with Jonathan and Drew Scott of HGTV's *Property Brothers*), and served as Tour Manager for *Monster Jam*, with Feld Entertainment.

Ken is now able to mix his love of theatre and live entertainment with his background in non-profit work and the business side of entertainment. He is thrilled to be part of the Midland community and its "incredibly dedicated and passionate Board, staff and volunteers that are the core of Midland Community Theatre."



Sara Phoenix has been named as the new Vice President of Development and Community Engagement at the **Tulsa Performing Arts Center**, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Phoenix is considered to have been instrumental in revitalizing Theatre Tulsa and its role in the Tulsa arts community.

Over the past nine years, she has given countless hours of time, energy, and exhaustive work to Theatre Tulsa, remaking it into one of Tulsa's top cultural gems. According to theatre leaders, the number of opportunities Phoenix has created for actors, designers and other creative artists throughout the city cannot be overstated. Sara will be part of Theatre Tulsa's Advisory Board, where she will continue to provide her vast knowledge and experience. (She also will continue in her role as AACT's Executive Vice President.)



Theatre Tulsa's new Artistic Director, **Laura Skoch**, an actor, director, and teacher who has worked for many years in New York theatre, says she is very happy to be back in Tulsa, raising her family. Skoch holds a B.F.A in Theatre from the University of Southern California, and an M.F.A. from Columbia University. She has appeared on Theatre Tulsa stages in *Richard III*, *The 39 Steps*, and *Vanya, Sonya, Masha and Spike*. She also directed its highly acclaimed production of *Cabaret*, and most recently, *The Guys*.



The Wimberley Players (Wimberley, Texas) has named **Trish Rigdon** as Managing Artistic Director. In her new position, she will direct the day-to-day administration of the theater, and along with Executive Producer, Adam Witko, will shape the Players' annual season. As artistic director, she leads the artistic team in the selection of plays, musicals, concerts, and films.

Rigdon's extensive list of credits includes productions seen on Broadway, the West End of London, and touring productions in the US and UK, as well as numerous regional productions. From 2003–2006 she served as Associate Director, Associate Producer, and Costume Designer for the Peter Hall Company in London under its acclaimed director, Sir Peter Hall. She is the former Director of Theatre for Rice University, and from 2010–2016, was Executive Director of the Houston Cinema Arts Society. She holds a B.A. in Fine Arts from the University of St. Thomas, Houston, and an M.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Houston.

Not a stranger to the Playhouse, she directed *Dracula, the Radio Play* in 2020, and *It Had to be You* and *War of the Worlds* in 2021.

Says Board President Nick Bradshaw, “Despite the challenges of the past year, the theatre has steadfastly looked toward the future, and welcoming Ms. Rigdon is a part of that vision. Her deep theatre experience will help us grow in ways that are sure to benefit the cultural landscape of Wimberley.”

Congratulations to everyone on their new roles! If your theatre has someone in a new role, email info@aact.org with their name, position, short bio or information on their involvement, and photo to have them recognized in future issues of *Spotlight*!

AACTFest 2023 State and Regional Festivals

The 2023 AACT National Festival and Conference will be held June 12 - 17, 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky, with performances at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts.

AACTFest 2023 National Companies will be representative of the state and regional festivals that are currently being organized. As the festivals are planned, AACT is requesting information on festivals be shared via the festival information online form.

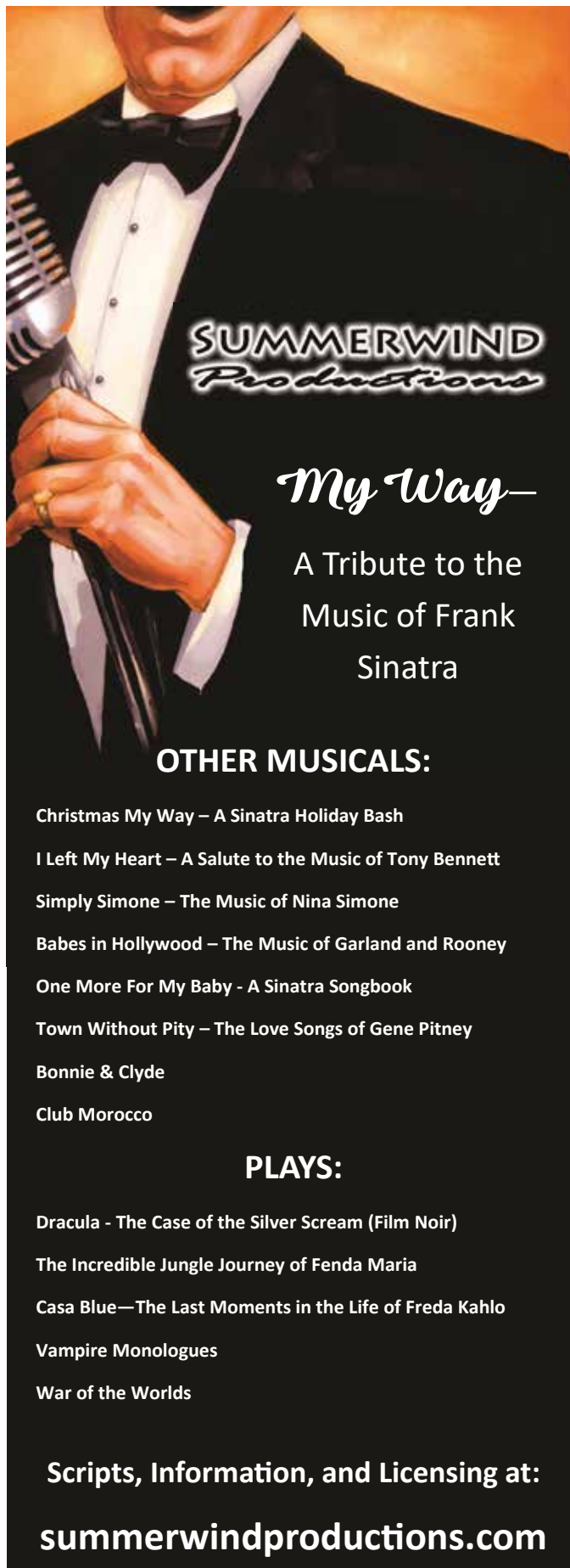
Submit your festival info to AACT - aact.org/festival-information

Plan now to join AACT in Louisville, Kentucky, June 12 – 17, 2023!

The conference hotel will be the Hyatt Regency Louisville, located in the heart of downtown and the tourism district, and within walking distance of the festival and conference locations.

AACT is excited to host the festival in such a culturally vibrant and charming Southern city, which, as Trip Advisor notes, is “only growing better with time, earning its place as one of the top places to travel in the U.S.”

More details and updates are available on aact.org/23.



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Left to right: Having breakfast with “Elvis” after the inaugural South West Theatre Conference (AACT Region VI) Festival held at the Simmons Center in Duncan, Oklahoma, August 6–7, are board members Sharon Burum (AACT Board Member at Large and Oklahoma Community Theatre Association Board member), Martha Cherbini (AACT Board Member at Large), Susan Austin (AACT Texas State Contact), and Sally Barnes (AACT Region VI Representative and Oklahoma Community Theatre Association Board member)

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



The cast and dramaturge for the play Proprioception discuss script changes with the playwright at the August 16 NewPlayFest workshop at Rover Dramawerks in Plano, Texas.

Left to right: Jill Lightfoot (cast), Marilyn Millstone (playwright), Bennet Frohock (cast), Sue Doty-Goodner (cast), Jason R. Davis (cast), and AACT Marketing/Communications Director David Cockerell (dramaturge)

Toasting the August 17 opening of the Mondial du Théâtre, the World Festival for Amateur Theatre in Monte Carlo, Monaco, are, left to right: Kathie Maldonado (Theatre New Mexico Board member), Frank Peot (AACT Secretary and board member of Wisconsin's Sun Prairie Civic Theatre), Beatrice Cellario (Mondial du Théâtre), Bevie Lord (AACT Region 1 Representative), and Jim Walker (AACT Vice President-Festivals, and Artistic/Managing Director of South Dakota's Aberdeen Community Theatre)



Jim Walker

continued on next page ►



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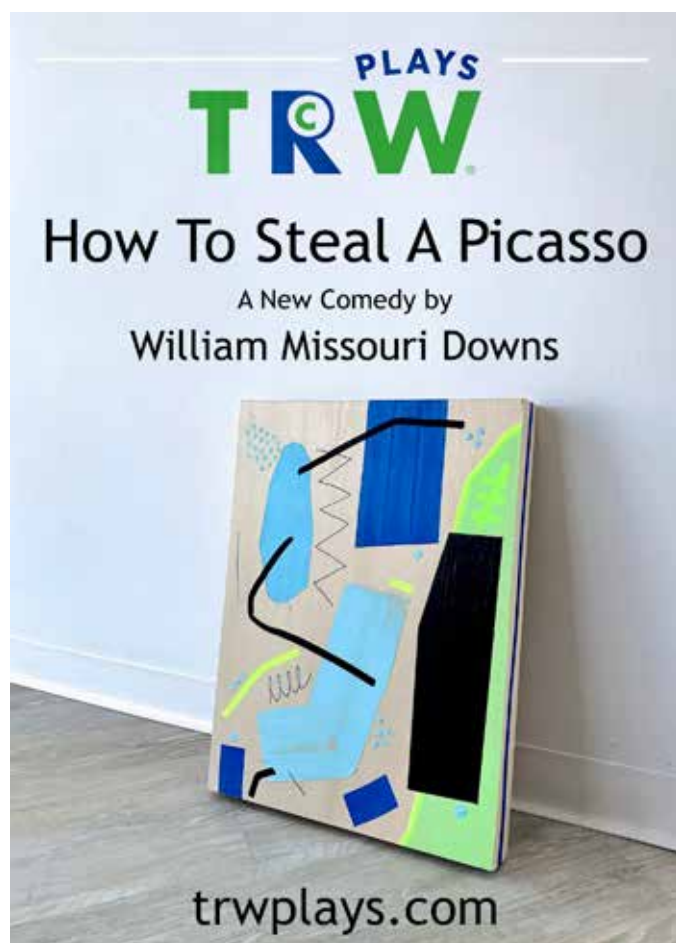


After a colloque (discussion of a performance) at the Mondial du Théâtre, World Festival for Amateur Theatre in Monte Carlo, Monaco, August 19, are (left to right) Steven Butler (AACT Board Member at Large, Executive Director of the Florida Theatre Conference, and Executive/Artistic Director of Actor's Warehouse in Gainesville, Florida), Jim Walker (AACT Vice President-Festivals, and Artistic/Managing Director of South Dakota's Aberdeen Community Theatre), and Kristofer Geddie (AACT Board Member at Large, Director of Diversity and General Manager at Venice Theatre, Venice, Florida)

Bevie Lord



First cousins Manon Cellario (l) and Barbara Cellario (r) are being thanked and congratulated by Bevie Lord (AACT Region 1 Representative), for their contributions to the 17th Mondial du Théâtre, Monaco 2021 on August 20. They are part of the third generation of the Cellario family who are responsible for the continuation of the Mondial, which began in 1957 when their grandfather assisted Princess Grace, the festival's founder



Artie's Advocacy Tip

There is no recovery without creativity!

The pandemic has brought an unprecedented challenge to arts funding.

Do you have your arguments ready for supporting the arts in your community?

From Americans for the Arts (americansforthearts.org): As of mid-October, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations have suffered financial losses of an estimated \$14 billion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 95% of artists and creative workers have lost income and 63% are fully unemployed.

Given the funding challenges in the arts today, do you have your arguments ready for supporting the arts in your community? Americans for the Arts has important information at the ready on:

- the economic impact of the arts: aact.org/prosperity
- the social impact of the arts: americansforthearts.org/socialimpact
- the need to put creative workers to work: creativeworkers.net/





Celebrating at the Village Club during the World Festival for Amateur Theatre in Monte Carlo, Monaco, August 21, are members of the Lexington Players of Lexington, Massachusetts. The Players represented the U.S. at the Mondial du Théâtre with their production of Who Will Sing for Lena? (named Overall Outstanding Production at AACTFest 2019)

Front row, left to right: Michelle Aguilion (Who Will Sing for Lena? costumes), Nadine Sa (Who Will Sing for Lena? stage manager), Manon Cellario (Mondial du Théâtre hostess for Lexington Players), Pierre Cellario (organizer of Mondial du Théâtre), Bevie Lord (AACT Region 1 Representative)

Back row, left to right: Michael McTeague (Who Will Sing for Lena? lighting/sound design), Susan Harrington (Who Will Sing for Lena? producer) Jessica Washington (Who Will Sing for Lena? cast), Douglas Cooper (Who Will Sing for Lena? set design), Jean Marc (Mondial du Théâtre host for Lexington Players), Sal Jones (Who Will Sing for Lena? director), and Jim Walker (AACT Vice President-Festivals)

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National Arts Marketing Project Conference 2021

Virtual
December 7 & 8, 2021

Arts and culture organizations have continued to shift and flex, adapting and adopting new ways of working while also sustaining existing platforms, outlets, and audiences. As we continue to react and respond to the changing landscape created by the pandemic, uncertainty is the only constant. Nothing is normal yet.

Americans for the Arts has continued looking at more effective ways to support organizations, individuals, and communities. This year, and for the foreseeable future, we will continue to deliver the National Arts Marketing Project Conference online in its focused and streamlined format.

Join virtually as NAMP explores three core themes:

- What new skill(s) do I need to learn to be effective in my individual career?
- What information does the field need to navigate the current environment?
- What is our collective vision for the future, and how do we reach it?

Education-Oriented

With panel talks and hands-on workshops, learn the skills you need to be a better marketer. From the latest strategies to new technologies and innovations, this conference offers a one-of-a-kind educational experience.

Designed To Inspire

Be inspired by an unrivaled roster of expert speakers, relevant content, and a variety of learning formats to imagine a brighter future. You'll leave reinvigorated by the new connections you'll make and inspired to utilize the latest marketing tools in your own arts marketing endeavors.

Two days of programming content from field experts in social media, email marketing, audience development, fundraising, research, and much more.

Access to session recordings for six months after the conference. Sessions will be available until June 30, 2022.

Details and registration: artsu.americansforthearts.org

The 2022 Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival

The Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival honors new American plays that provide dynamic performance opportunities for college-aged actors.

The festival endeavors both to recognize playwrights for their outstanding work and to provide a resource for universities across the country to identify dynamic plays with robust roles for college-aged actors for production at their institutions. The festival features both a full-length and short play division.

Full Length Submissions

Seeking plays that have:

- A cast of primarily (or exclusively) characters in their teens and twenties.
- A mid- to large-sized cast (i.e., at least five actors, preferably at least ten).
- Significant representation (in both number and quality) of roles for female-identifying actors.
- Dynamic, fully-drawn roles to challenge student actors.
- Thematic values that will speak to college-aged artists and audience members.
- The festival also places a value on plays that have the potential to provide performance opportunities to actors from under-represented groups.

Full-length plays should not have had a previous full production. Workshops and readings are fine.

Finalists for the festival's top prize will receive airfare and housing to participate in the Lanford Wilson New American Play Festival on the campus of the Jeanine Larson Dobbins Conservatory of Theatre & Dance at Southeast Missouri State University in June of 2022. Staged readings of the finalists' plays will be presented as part of the festival, and the winner of the top prize will be announced at the end of the week-long event.

The winning full-length play will receive:

- A world premiere production in the 2022-2023 Dobbins Conservatory of Theatre & Dance theatre season.
- Consideration of the play for publication by Concord Theatricals, the world's most significant theatrical company, comprising the catalogs of R&H Theatricals, Samuel French, Tams-Witmark, and The Andrew Lloyd Webber Collection.
- A meeting for the playwright with new play acquisition staff at Concord Theatricals.

Submissions are also accepted for short plays.

Submission deadline: November 15, 2021

Details: semo.edu/conservatory/lanfordwilson

Questions: email the festival's Artistic Director, Kitt Lavoie klavoie@semo.edu

When	What/Who	Where		Information
Nov 4	Online Roundtable: <i>Challenges in Reopening</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/roundtable
Nov 11	Fall Webinar Series: <i>New Play Festival: How to Begin</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177x1 aact.org/webinars
Nov 16	Online Roundtable: <i>Open Topic, All-Volunteer Theatres</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/roundtable
Nov 18	AACT Executive Committee Meeting	TX	San Antonio	817-732-3177 aact.org/calendar
Nov 19-21	AACT National Directors Conference 2021	TX	San Antonio	817-732-3177 aact.org/ndc
Nov 20	TANYS State Festival	NY	Rome	315-337-5920 tanys.org
Dec 2	Fall Webinar Series: <i>Using Artistic Collaboration to Enhance Cultural Understanding</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177x1 aact.org/webinars
Dec 7	Online Roundtable: <i>Open Topic, Paid Staff Theatres</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177 x1 aact.org/roundtable
Dec 9	Fall Webinar Series: <i>Psychological Dramaturgy</i>	Virtual		817-732-3177x1 aact.org/webinars

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

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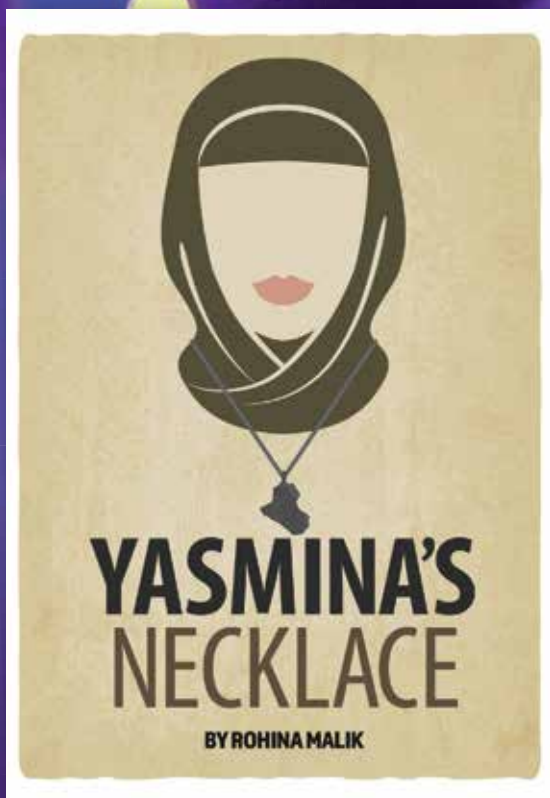
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Meet Abdul Samee: his father is Iraqi, and his mother is Puerto Rican. Longing to shed his cultural identity, he changes his name to Sam and does everything in his power to turn his back on his heritage. But when Sam meets Yasmina, a beautiful woman from his father's homeland, he begins to learn that a tree without roots cannot stand for long.

Cast size: 5m., 2w.



Bishop von Galen visits a clinic for disabled children in Nazi Germany to challenge the state-supported program of murder with unpredictable results. Based on a real figure who successfully protested against the appalling policy of eugenics, *All Our Children* asks profound questions about how we should value all people, whatever their disabilities or limitations. **Cast size:** 3m., 2w.

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