

spotlight

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY THEATRE

MAY/JUNE 2023 \$5.00



IN THIS ISSUE

AACTFest 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky

Selecting a Successful Season

Meet the AACT Design Competition Adjudicators

AACT's New Insurance Program Partner - Church Mutual Insurance

Renew Your Membership for 2023-2024!

and found

Lost in IKEA



Can two
strangers find
love at IKEA?



a comedy by
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President's Letter

Kristi Quinn
AACT President

Things change. The seasons, growing older, children growing up, light bulbs burning out, traffic lights turning red just when you come to the intersection. You know, change.

But, unfortunately, not all changes are expected or familiar. Change comes in different forms, both professional and personal. Bam! Life changes overnight.

Lately, the community theatre family has experienced this kind of change, making our theatre home feel uncertain and unpredictable. Covid and the economy have dealt a cruel blow, leaving us—especially in the case of Covid—with no one to blame. And we all love to find someone or something to blame.

Theatres are experiencing the pain of losing volunteers and patrons. Many have reworked seasons because anticipated productions have not had enough individuals audition or cannot find experienced directors. Only one person is running the tech side of a show and actors and directors are the stage crews. Audiences have dwindled because many fear to return or have lost the habit, season tickets sales are declining, and donors are focusing on building back their own lost revenues.

Change. We don't like it!

Perhaps it would help if we called change something else. Perhaps transition, shift, or alteration. Moving sideways and then forward. Taking a deep breath and finding ways to transition volunteers into new roles (clever how I worked in that word), shifting mind sets (again, clever phraseology) into seeing performing on stage as an exciting adventure, and altering audience expectations by offering them the opportunity to experience live theatre in a safe and secure environment.

AACT embraced transition when Covid raised its suffocating head. Sure, there some boo-hoo-ing, but it was quickly replaced by "What AACT can do to serve its members." Shifting from in-person to Zoom, adding online discussions and seminars to help navigate issues, and finding voices on social media where theatre folk could reach out to compatriots for advice, expertise, and solace.

The great news is that AACT is continuing these life-altering experiences. Community theatre volunteers and professionals have access to webinars and social media groups. If you wonder how or what, check our website, or give the office a call. Everyone wants to help.

And continue reading the *Spotlight*. Every issue is inspiring, educational, and can change, transition, shift, or alter your life!



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AACT welcomes *Spotlight* input and requests for advertising rates. Contact David Cockerell at **david@aact.org** to submit content. Visit **aact.org/advertise** for advertising rates and specs.

On the cover: *The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts' Bomhard Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky, will be home to theatre performances for both AACTFest 2023 and AACT YouthFest 2023, June 12-17, 2023*

Photo: Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts

Thank you to Subplot Studio for their sponsorship of the new look and design of *Spotlight* magazine. We look forward to this ongoing and growing partnership in order to bring you the best *Spotlight* quality and content. We encourage you to check out the wonderful products and services **Subplotstudio.com** has to offer you and your theatre!

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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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Upcoming Events

Online Roundtable

May 16 - Roundtable: Production Team, Roles and Responsibilities

aact.org/roundtables

Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC)

Prior to AACTFest 2023

June 11-13

Hyatt Regency Louisville

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/ctmc

AACTFest 2023 / YouthFest 2023

June 12-17

Kentucky Performing Center for the Arts

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/23

Youth Theatre Conference

In conjunction with AACTFest 2023

June 14-17

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/youthconf

AACT Summer Board/Committee Meetings 2023

Held during AACTFest 2023

June 12-13, 2023

Hyatt Regency Louisville

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/mtgs

AACT Annual Membership Meeting 2023

Held during AACTFest 2023

Friday, June 16, 2023

Hyatt Regency Louisville

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/mtgs

AACT Board of Directors Meeting 2023

Held during AACTFest 2023

Saturday, June 17, 2023

Hyatt Regency Louisville

Louisville, Kentucky

aact.org/mtgs

National Directors Conference

November 16-19

Drury Plaza Hotel Riverwalk

San Antonio, Texas

aact.org/ndc

Design and Layout: Subplot Studio

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AACTFest 2023!

Louisville, Kentucky - June 12-17

Act Now and Save on Your Registration!

Register Now at aact.org/23

Advance Rates good through June 1



| Item/Event | AACT Member | Non-Member |
|---|-------------|------------|
| AACTFest Registration | \$415 | \$490 |
| Adjudication Training - Level 1 course | \$50 | |
| Workshop Daily Pass | \$30 | \$50 |
| Youth Theatre Conference | \$40 | \$40 |
| Belle of Louisville Boat Cruise | \$30 | \$30 |
| Belle of Louisville Sunset Endowment Dinner & Cruise (limited number available) | \$150 | \$150 |
| Monologue Competition Entry Fee | \$25 | \$25 |
| Design Competition Entry Fee | \$35 | \$35 |
| AACT Youth Discount (18 and Younger) | -\$75 | -\$75 |
| Competing/Advancing Company member | -\$10 | -\$10 |
| Onsite Registration Rates (after June 1) | \$485 | \$560 |

Single Tickets - Contingent on seat availability, single tickets may be available in May through the Kentucky Center of Performing Arts box office. The best way to secure a seat is to register for the festival. You can add on a special event/activity by contacting the AACT office directly at info@aact.org or 817-732-3177.

The AACTFest 2023 National Festival includes:

- 12 Award Winning Productions
aact.org/productions
- AACT YouthFest - 5 Youth Theatre Productions
aact.org/youth
- AACT Design Competition (see page 15)
aact.org/design23
- Community Theatre Management Conference prior to AACTFest 2023 (see page 12)
aact.org/ctmc
- Youth Theatre Conference (see page 14)
aact.org/youth
- AACT Adjudication Seminar and Introduction to Adjudication
aact.org/seminar
- Keynote Speaker Broadway veteran **Ben Cameron!** Ben's signature enthusiasm and razor wit will be front and center for his AACTFest 2023 keynote address.
aact.org/keynote
- Workshops - Over 40 Workshops are scheduled this year! See page 10 for a few highlighted workshops.
aact.org/workshops
- Top Vendor Exhibits
aact.org/exhibitors
- Monologue Competition
aact.org/monologue
- Social events, sightseeing, and networking opportunities
- Festival awards presentation and post-show celebration after the final production

Workshops and meetings will be held in the Hyatt Regency Louisville, with festival performances in the nearby Kentucky Performing Arts Center Bombard Theatre. To learn more about Louisville, Kentucky, visit gotolouisville.com.

An overview of the AACTFest 2023 National Festival Schedule can be found at aact.org/schedule. The full conference workshop and performance schedule also will be available via the Whova Mobile app at aact.org/app in May. Visit the link and download the app to customize your schedule and join online chats and discussions!

Hotel and Transportation information and discounts – Discounted hotel and travel rates are available for festival attendees. The Hyatt Regency Louisville is the location for educational, social, and exhibition events. Your stay at our designated host hotel makes it possible for AACT to provide the great discounts, services, and experiences offered during the festival. aact.org/go23

Moving On (page 11) lists theatres that have just been selected to advance to regional festivals from state festivals. See all theatres advancing at aact.org/moving

Contribute or bid on items for the Silent Auction and help build the AACT Endowment (see page 13). The AACT Silent Auction will be available for viewing and bidding online at aact.org/auction

Support the AACT Endowment Fund by joining us on a Sunset Cruise and Dinner on board the historic *Belle of Louisville* (limited number available) \$150

Indulge in a truly special evening aboard the *Belle of Louisville*, the longest-running steamboat in the country, for AACT's Steamboat Dinner and Cruise. Proceeds support the AACT Endowment. This two-hour sunset cruise on the evening of June 15 will include dinner, two drink tickets, music, and fun for all. (Note: The event is ADA-accessible, with an elevator to the upper deck.) Tickets can be purchased with registration or as an add-on by May 8.

Volunteer Opportunities - While there, AACT will be working with the conference facilities to make this the best festival experience for you. However, we rely heavily on the expertise, time, and commitment of volunteers to make that happen. AACT is looking for volunteers to help make AACTFest 2023 a success. Whether for a few hours or a full-time commitment, we are looking for greeters, booth sitters, stuffers, merchandise handlers, and smiling faces to make the festival magic happen. If you are interested and are able to dedicate time to volunteer, contact Mary Jo DeNolf at maryjo@aact.org.

Finally, AACT thanks all our Corporate Partners and Sponsors this year. Through their financial and programming support, we are able to continue our mission to Help Theatres Thrive. It has been a long four years and we are looking forward to celebrating AACTFest once again in person! Please visit aact.org/23 to see the many supporters of AACTFest 2023.



Enjoy a fun evening on the Belle of Louisville

AACTFest Workshops—A Select Preview

As if inspiring performances from across the country weren't enough, AACTFest offers a variety of workshops every day. They give attendees the opportunity to discover new ideas and enhance their skills in all areas of theatre, including accessibility, artistic, design, development, directing, and more.

Below are just a few of the exciting workshops being offered at AACTFest 2023 in Louisville. For a complete roster, visit aact.org/workshops.

Accessibility

Arts for All: Creating Accessible Theatre

Presenter: Libby Pedersen, Executive Director, Ignite Theatre Company

How to introduce accessible theatrical programming into your season without breaking the bank.

Acting in Your Shoes

Presenter: Keith McGill, Actor, Director, Writer, Comedian, and Arts Educator

Explore what happens when scenes are cast non-traditionally, and why it's important to think differently about how diversity is represented on our stages.

Artistic

Creating, Communicating, and Enacting the Director's Vision

Presenter: Pamela Steers, Director and Educator

Tips for the process of creating a directorial concept for a script and how to communicate that vision to a team and an audience.

Dance for All – Including Various Skillsets in Musical Theatre

Presenter: Maggie Walls, Momentum Arts

Explore techniques that will enable you to use dancers of all levels in musical theatre choreography. Using inclusive approaches can enhance choreography and challenge dancers and performers in unique ways.

Introduction to Intimacy Choreography

Presenter: Elaine DiFalco Daugherty, Assistant Professor, Central Michigan University

What does an intimacy choreographer do? What does it mean to actively practice consent? How do we develop clear storytelling through specific, repeatable choreography?

Design

Solving Problems with Digital Scenery

Presenters: Melissa Kratish and BroadwayMedia

Digital scenery may seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. In this workshop you'll learn how adopting this cutting edge technology can solve common production challenges.

Faux Desserts, Ice Cream, Cake, and Bars

Presenter: Michael Wilson, Props Master, Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

This hands-on workshop gives you the opportunity to make three different faux dessert props to take home.

Development

Grant Writing Survival Guide

Presenter: Cyndi Len, Arts Educator

Grant writing is a necessity for all of us in the arts. Success begins with the search, then the structure, building budgets, descriptive and technical language. Bring your ideas—let's write!

Activating the Three Ps of Theatre Marketing

Presenter: Julie Nemitz, Founder of Theatre Marketing Lab

Learn how to approach theatre's "Three Ps"—programming, production, and promotion—from a marketing point of view.

Plus...

Learn from Music Theatre International, Concord Theatricals, Broadway Licensing, keynote speaker Ben Cameron, and many more!



A complete roster of AACTFest 2023 workshops can be found at aact.org/workshops

Moving On

Theatres recently selected to represent their states/regions

State winners moving on to their regional festival are shown below. Some states qualify to send two shows to their regional festival. Winners of the regional festivals will move on to the national festival in Louisville, Kentucky.

Productions advancing to the AACTFest national festival are in bold type. See all theatres representing states and regions in the AACTFest 2023 cycle at aact.org/moving

| Region | Org Name | City | State | Play 23 | Author 23 | Winner 23 |
|-----------|--|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 2 | Rockville Little Theatre | Rockville | MD | <i>Pride@Prejudice</i> | Daniel Elihu Kramer | State |
| 2 | Raging Hag Productions | Lexington Park | MD | <i>Paradise</i> | Trish Cole | State |
| 2 | Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre | Wilkes-Barre | PA | <i>The Yellow Leaf</i> | David Parmelee | State |
| 3 | Mandi Theater | Buffalo Grove | IL | <i>Bhagavadajjukam</i> | Bodhayan | State |
| 3 | Kokomo Civic Theatre | Kokomo | IN | <i>Silent Sky</i> | Lauren Gunderson | State |
| 3 | The Sauk | Jonesville | MI | <i>Desert Song</i> | Mark Cornell | State |
| 4a | Starkville Community Theatre | Starkville | MS | <i>Underneath the Lintel</i> | Glen Berger | Region |
| 4b | Theatre Tuscaloosa | Tuscaloosa | AL | <i>Launch Day</i> | Michael Higgins | Region |
| 5 | Ankeny Community Theatre | Ankeny | IA | <i>The Children</i> | Lucy Kirkwood | State |
| 5 | Carousel Theatre | Indianola | IA | <i>Code Five</i> | Marc Holland | State |
| 6 | Playhouse 2000, Inc. | Kerrville | TX | <i>Blind Date</i> | Horton Foote | State |
| 6 | Baytown Little Theater | Baytown | TX | <i>District Merchants</i> | Aaron Posner | State |
| 6 | Bulldogs Theatre | Artesia | NM | <i>Who are we, who we are</i> | Forrest Musselman | State |
| 7 | Cheyenne Little Theatre Players | Cheyenne | WY | <i>The Outgoing Tide</i> | Bruce Graham | Region |
| 9 | Bellingham Theatre Guild | Bellingham | WA | <i>When Jack Met Jill</i> | Adam Szymkowicz | State |
| 9 | Stage Left Theater | Spokane | WA | <i>Pass Over</i> | Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu | Region |
| 9 | Ten Fifteen Productions | Astoria | OR | <i>An Interview</i> | David Mamet | State |

Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC)

June 11-13, Prior to the National Festival

AACT's Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) will be held prior to AACTFest 2023 in Louisville, June 11-13, at the Hyatt Regency Louisville.

Register for this dynamic conference at aact.org/ctmc. CTMC registration deadline is **June 1**.

CTMC is open to administrators at all levels, 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.

Participants will gain valuable insight, best practices, and new perspectives through a customized series of intensive, topic-specific, large and small group discussions that speak directly to your unique challenges and experiences. A pre-conference questionnaire identifies and prioritizes topics for discussions, including both new challenges and traditional topics.



CTMC is facilitated by Chad-Alan Carr, Founding Executive/Artistic Director of the Gettysburg (PA) Community Theatre. Chad-Alan serves on the AACT Board of Directors, and was the Chair of the AACT National Youth Festival at

AACTFest 2017 and AACTFest 2019. His accomplishments include directing the Eastern States Regional Premiere of The Penguin Project (theatre for youth with special needs), chartering the International Thespian Troupe for Gettysburg Area High School, and serving as a board member for Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres, Eastern States Theatre Association, as well as AACT. A frequent presenter at AACTFests and participant in AACT Roundtables, Chad-Alan brings to CTMC a wealth of experience and an ability to create dynamic group interactions.

CTMC is sponsored in part by Arts People.



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CTMC attendees are eligible for the same discounts on hotel and airline rates as those who are attending AACTFest. Additional information and registration at: aact.org/ctmc.

Donate Items Now to the AACT Silent Auction

Take part in the fun of AACTFest 2023 by contributing a special item to the festival's Silent Auction. Online bidding begins May 15.

Proceeds benefit the AACT Endowment's Festival Support Fund, which helps companies representing their regions with some of their travel expenses to the national festival.

Donations will be displayed during AACTFest 2023, both in Louisville and online.

Here are just a few examples of what has already been donated.

- Sea Glass Cottage beach stay, Long Beach, Washington
- Southern dialect coaching
- \$500 discount on a TRW musical
- Theatre Marketing Lab 90-minute marketing consultation
- \$850 projection package sponsored by Broadway Media
- Salt Lake City, travel and show package from Hale Center Theatre
- Theatre and hotel package for Grand Rapids, Michigan
- AACT Community Theatre Management Conference registration
- AACT National Directors registration
- Glamping Adventure in Idylwild, California - nature at its best
- State and regional themed gift baskets
- "Acting Skills for Life" three 40-minute online sessions
- Theatre and hotel package from Indiana's South Bend Civic Theatre
- Props and Faux Food package
- Weekend theatre adventure and stay in Wetumpka, Alabama
- Theatre package (includes 5 tickets) from Memorial Opera House Theatre, Valparaiso, Indiana
- Sherman Ward painting

How to Contribute Items

There is still time to contribute! Visit aact.org/auction to submit your donation. (Donations must be received by **June 14.**)

Items Sought

Donations are requested with a minimum value of \$100 per item, basket, or group of items to be auctioned together.

Questions? Contact Festivals/Engagement Coordinator Mary Jo DeNolf at: maryjo@aact.org.

Ready to Bid?

Want to see more? Items can be viewed and purchased at aact.org/auction23. Online bidding starts May 15 and continues through June 16. Can't attend AACTFest 2023? You can still bid from the comfort of your home. Login will be required in order to purchase items.



Thanks to all who have already donated.

Youth Theatre Conference 2023

Building Arts Leaders through the Power of Theatre

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

The conference is for young people, ages 12-18, who aspire to be leaders within the arts and theatre communities. 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 both challenging and fun.

Space is limited, and spots are filling up fast. Register now for this exciting conference! More information is available at aact.org/youthconf



Facilitator **Jennifer Van Bruggen-Hamilton**

has served as the facilitator for the AACT Youth Theatre Conferences at AACTFest 2017 in Rochester, Minnesota, and at AACTFest 2019 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

As Jennifer explains, "the AACT Youth Theatre Conference gives youth attending AACTFest 2023 an opportunity to network with other young theatre-lovers from around the country. You will get to participate in a Q&A with a panel of theatre professionals who know the nuts and bolts of how to run a community theatre, directing productions, and much more. You will also have the opportunity for small group and/or one-on-one interviews with knowledgeable leaders in their theatrical field, whether it be administrative, artistic, or technical. You will get to hone your audition skills in an audition workshop, just for youth. Plus, the AACT scavenger hunt, scene studies, workshops specifically designed for youth, and much more. Space is limited so I urge you to reserve your spot today!"

Because the Youth Theatre Conference is held in conjunction with AACTFest and YouthFest, participants will have access to over a dozen exciting productions from theatres across the country. You'll enjoy comedies, dramas, and musicals from both adult and youth production companies.



Register Now!

Register for AACTFest 2023 Youth Theatre Conference when you register for AACTFest 2023. The Youth Conference fee is only \$40, and includes a \$75 discount on AACTFest registration.

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AACT 2023 Design Competition

In conjunction with AACTFest 2023

Hybrid Model Opens Door to Opportunity!

The AACT 2023 Design Competition has gone hybrid, allowing entries to be displayed and adjudicated either virtually or on-site during AACTFest 2023 in Louisville, Kentucky.

For those designers whose busy schedules or limited budgets preclude shipping design displays to Louisville, or travel to AACTFest 2023 in June, virtual entries are welcome.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to showcase your best design work and possibly take home a cash award. Go to aact.org/design23 to view guidelines and display suggestions, as well as the rubric our adjudicators will use when evaluating design entries.

Entry Categories

The five Design Competition categories include **Scenic, Lighting, Properties, Costume, and Special Design**. Entries must be the work of an AACT Individual Member or be a design used for a production staged by an AACT Organizational Member. Designs must be from productions staged between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2023.

*The deadline for submitting entry forms is **May 19**.*

Awards

AACT will award a \$300 prize to the design chosen as Outstanding Overall Design. Awards will be given, at the discretion of the adjudicators, to the combined pool of on-site and virtual entries. Adjudicators also have the option of awarding prizes of \$100 for Outstanding Design in each of the five categories.

Adjudicators



Christian Bowyer is the Technical Director and resident designer at Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. He specializes in adapting found and unusual spaces for theatrical use and has worked on several conversion projects locally and throughout the country. Christian is currently finishing his Masters of Interdisciplinary Studies degree

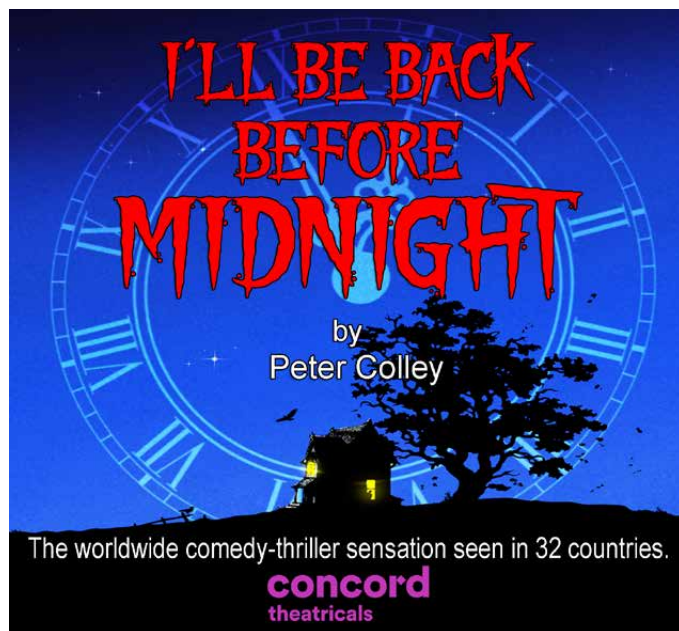
at Indiana University and plans to continue his research on the relationships between art, design, public opinion, and civic engagement. His most recent artistic achievement was the production design for *Blindness*, a non-traditional play adapted from José Saramago's novel, in its first college and regional performance.



Rebekkah J. Meixner-Hanks

is a faculty member of the Indiana University Southeast Theatre Department. She serves as the Department Coordinator/Chair as well as a Professor of Theatre-Design. In addition to teaching, she is the resident

scenic and lighting designer. Her design work has been seen at regional theatres and universities throughout the country. In 2010, she designed the scenery and lighting for the world premiere of Lee Meriwether's one-woman show *The Women of Spoon River*, which two years later was part of the New York Fringe Festival. Design credits cover a wide range of productions, including *The Orphan of Chao*, produced by the University of Louisville's African American Theatre Program for performances in Louisville and the Republic of Singapore.



World Theatre Day 2023

World Theatre Day was celebrated March 27, with this year's message presented by the Egyptian actress, Samiha Ayoub.



In her 2023 World Theatre Day message, Ayoub observed, "What we do in the world of theatre as playwrights, directors, actors, scenographers, poets, musicians, choreographers and technicians, all of us without exception, is an act of creating life that did not exist before we got on stage. This life deserves a caring hand that holds it, a loving chest that embraces it, a kind heart that sympathizes with it, and a sober mind that provides it with the reasons it needs to continue and survive."

Born in the Shubra neighborhood of Cairo, Ayoub graduated from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in 1953, where she was taught by the playwright, Zaki Tulaimat. Her credits on the stage over the course of her artistic career amounts to approximately 170 plays.

Read her full message and bio at aact.org/message

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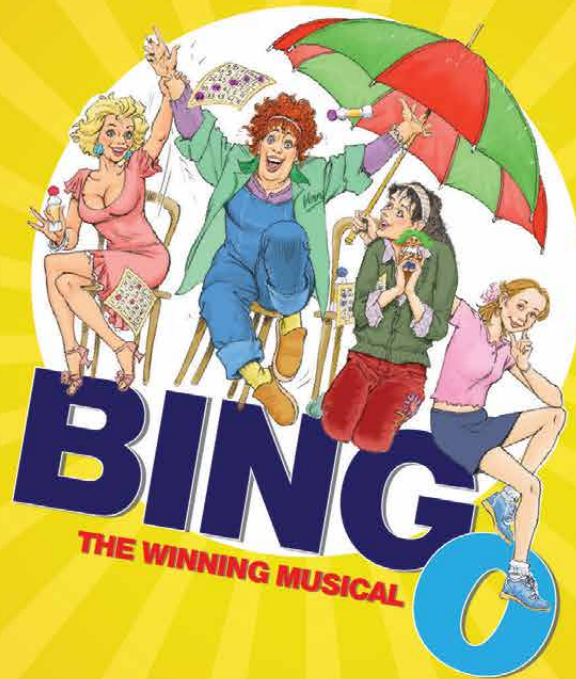
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Membership Testimonial



Lou Ursone

Executive Director/Producing
Artistic Director of Curtain
Call, Inc in Stamford,
Connecticut.

How can you send 13,000 fewer annual appeal letters and bring in more money than ever before?

I'll explain in a bit, but if I never got anything more from my involvement with AACT, every penny ever spent over that past 15 years or so would still be worth it.

The "trick" mentioned about came from when I attended the Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) leading up to AACTFest. Until that time, I felt as most community theatre leaders do once in a while; that I was all alone at the top. Being in the room for that workshop, I made friendships and found mentors to look up to.

A few years later I read a book that has been one of my favorites: *The Presidents Club*. It explains how US Presidents support the Office of the President after their time in office because no one else truly understands what it's like to have that job. It's that kind of camaraderie and support that comes from getting involved in AACT. Sharing ideas and support with colleagues across the country has been invaluable for me.

The AACT National Directors Conference is held every other year and is a similar yet deeper educational and professional experience to take advantage of. This three-day, biennial conference is held exclusively for individuals who are employed full-time in an administrative or artistic position in a community theatre organization and gave me the opportunity to meet and really get to know staff/leaders from the major licensing agencies—another invaluable opportunity.

These connections—mentors, friends, colleagues—were never more valuable than during the pandemic. Learning that most theatres were having better results

when asking for contributions from streaming events than putting a price tag on them saved us the time of our own trial and error.

The regular webinars and roundtables when we were living in Zoom-world kept us all connected and sharing more ideas and, maybe more important, moral support. We lifted each other up and helped each other come out on the other side.

So how did I learn to raise more money by sending out fewer requests? Simply by writing to the few hundred people who had contributed the year before and asking for an increase. Fortunately, we had also taken the time to build a giving database that included details like when was a patron's first show with us, what their most recent experience was, and how much they had given the year before.

That deeper level of personalization sent to less than 5% of our previous appeal mailings netted an increase of almost 25% in the first year—significantly more than the annual AACT dues. That's a great ROI in my book.

Twenty-three years in my role as executive director has taught me many valuable lessons, none more than that, the more I learn, the more I realize I don't know enough. Access to webinars, roundtables, and the amazing database of topics on the AACT website are all part of why I believe in AACT and volunteer my time for service on the Board of Directors. It's that important to me.



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WOMEN AND MEN
IN OUTRAGEOUS
SHORTS**
by Jones Hope Wooten

FAIRYCAKES
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BOCA
by Jessica Provenz

**MUSINGS OF A
CRAZY TEXICAN:
EIGHT SHORT PLAYS**
by Alvaro Saar Rios

**MS. HOLMES &
MS. WATSON - #2B**
a play by Kate Hamill

MS. HOLMES AND MS. WATSON - #2B

by Kate Hamill
3F, 1M (doubling)

This darkly comic modern take on the famous sleuth and sidekick is a fast-paced romp that re-examines the classic adventure stories you love with a bold new female lens.

FAIRYCAKES

by Douglas Carter Beane
12-20 actors

What happens when those woodland fairies aren't busy with the business of A Midsummer Night's Dream? Why, it seems they all have jobs in some of our favorite fairy tales!

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LICKETY SPLIT: WOMEN AND MEN IN OUTRAGEOUS SHORTS

by Jones Hope Wooten
3M, 3F

This wonderfully hilarious romp from America's favorite comedy writing trio explores the hilarity of men and women at their worst and best!

BOCA

by Jessica Provenz
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BOCA is a series of short intertwining comedies that follow a group of retirees in a fictional retirement community, the Boca Oasis, who, between rounds of golf, bridge and botox, discover the key to happiness lies within their very community.

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For more than 35 years, AACT has been committed to providing theatres with the best, most timely resources to help you succeed.

Annual AACT memberships are valid September 1 through August 31. Monthly AACT memberships are also available. See below for more information, or visit aact.org/fees.

Discount on AACT Events

- Community Theatre Management Conference, June 11-13, 2023
- AACTFest 2023, June 14-20, 2023
- AACT Member Roundtables
Free access to members only
- National Directors Conference
November 16-19, 2023

Individual members receive:

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- Member-only discounts on many theatre services
- Peer-to-peer networking with theatre professionals nationwide

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- A digital and/or printed copy of *Spotlight* magazine plus weekly digital communications
- Peer-to-peer networking with other organizational members, and with theatre professionals nationwide
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How to Join or Renew

To join or renew your membership, go to aact.org/join.

If you or your theatre are having financial difficulties, reach out to Karen at karen@aact.org to discuss payment plan options.



If your organization has previously not paid electronically, we ask that you start doing so online at aact.org. AACT has moved all membership join/renew processes online. (If you require assistance, please let us know by calling 817-732-3177.) Paper invoicing will be available by request.

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A playbill for the play 'America in One Room' by Jason Odell Williams. The background features a stylized American flag with stars and stripes. The title 'AMERICA IN ONE ROOM' is in large, bold, blue letters. Below it, 'by Jason Odell Williams' is written in a smaller font. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of text describing the play and the TRW logo.

AMERICA IN ONE ROOM
by Jason Odell Williams

90 minutes, Comedy-Drama
AMERICA IN ONE ROOM
by Jason Odell Williams
CASTING: 4M, 5F

When eight strangers receive an invitation to the America in One Room event in 2019, promising robust discussions on a wide range of social and political topics, sparks fly, tempers flare, and comedy abounds. At a time when everyone thinks they're right, it will take more than political debate to find common ground. Inspired by the real-life convention of the same name, **AMERICA IN ONE ROOM** is a comedy-drama that tackles our nation's past, present and future (and even employs a little audience participation) to answer the question: is there hope for our country?

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PLAYS
TRW

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2023-2024

| Individual | Annual Rate | Monthly Rate |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
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| Youth | \$15 | |
| Couple | \$135 | |
| Military/Wounded Warrior | Complimentary | |

| Organizational Annual Budget | Annual Rate | Monthly Rate |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
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| \$10,000-\$24,999 | \$135 | \$15 |
| \$25,000-\$99,999 | \$200 | \$25 |
| \$100,000-\$249,999 | \$330 | \$37 |
| \$250,000-\$499,999 | \$440 | \$50 |
| \$500,000-\$999,999 | \$630 | \$70 |
| \$1 Million and Over | \$1,055 | \$120 |
| State Associations | \$95 | |





Selecting Your Season

Dorinda Toner

No matter what time of year, I always find myself planning my next season. As the Producing Artistic Director of Twilight Theater Company, whenever I read a new script or see a show, my first thought is: “Would this be a good fit at Twilight?”

Besides seeking works on my own, shows are often recommended to me. Actors, directors, producers, and patrons often have suggestions. And, of course, there are so many great playwrights putting out new works—locally, nationally, and beyond.

Add to that already hectic mix, there are these considerations: organizational mission, venue constraints, financial restrictions, cultural sensitivities, demographics to support the show in question, educational content, audience reception, entertainment value, time spent, talent required, and resources available. Add to that a dash of earnest artistic vision, love for the community, and, if you are anything like me, a personal need to please everyone. Selecting a season can become a Herculean task!

Bishop Desmond Tutu once said, “There is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time.” Likewise, breaking down your season into digestible bites is an effective and pragmatic way to tackle this huge task.

It’s also critical to consider both the tangible and intangible goals of each season. Your tangible choices may include the number of shows you aim to produce, number of performances per show, number of seats in the theatre, and the price of each ticket. And, of course, consider budget, set requirements, and how much time and labor would go into each selection.

Intangible concerns are a little trickier to pin down, but worth just as much consideration. What is your company’s mission? What do you want to say? How do you want to say it? And, perhaps most important, are you the best one to tell this story? For example, in presenting a play centered on themes of disability, make sure your company has both the people and resources to produce such a work with equity and compassion. Always be mindful of who is in your community, and how you can best serve them.



Consider choosing a theme to unify your season. I always do this. It makes me feel as though I’m making a cohesive statement, and I believe it deepens the audience experience. As patrons see multiple shows over the course of a season, each experience is enriched by the continued exploration of an ongoing theme.

And while it’s very tempting to choose works you personally enjoy, it is critical that you consider your audience and the value your theatre brings to your community. Strive to represent and include everyone somewhere in your season.

Perhaps most important, don’t be afraid to take risks, challenge your audience, and have something to say. And, don’t be too proud to accept feedback. After all, this is how we learn and grow, together.

Here’s to a great season!

Dorinda Toner is the Producing Artistic Director of Twilight Theater Company in Portland, Oregon. She has performed on stages across North America for over 36 years. An award-winning director, she studied Theater/Directing in her native country of Canada. For AACT, she has served as a panelist for virtual roundtables, co-facilitated the virtual 2022 Community Theatre Management Conference, and as a member of the Board of Directors.

| | |
|---|---|
|  Consider using a theme to build coherency in your productions and marketing. |  Know your theatre’s mission statement. Ensure every selection embodies your mission. |
| Consider the entertainment value. (Remember not everything needs to be FUNNY to be entertaining.) | Ask yourself if this piece addresses a need in your community? Will it spark conversation? |
| Is the script well written? Does it have a strong narrative including conflict, diverse characters, and resolution? | Is this piece feasible in your theatre in terms of set design, costuming, casting, and cost? |



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Friends We'll Miss

Darlene DeLorenzo:

A Woman of Great Love and Loyalty

Julie Crawford

Darlene DeLorenzo was a woman of great love and loyalty, who could fill a room with her smile.

She joined the AACT staff in March 2001 as an administrative assistant. Within two years she found her niche in advertising sales. By 2005 she also was providing support to festivals. (A festival chair said that even before she met Darlene in person, she could feel her smile over the phone.) In every capacity, Darlene had a gift of reaching out to make people feel comfortable.

As AACT grew and increased its programs, *Spotlight* magazine grew as well, and Darlene's advertising sales kept up with it. In 2015 she became Vendor Services Coordinator, helping vendors reach theatres across the country regarding their products and services through *Spotlight* and other publications. She also worked with festival exhibitors and was on hand to make sure their needs were met.

Darlene loved AACT and working for AACT. When the national office moved from Lago Vista, Texas, to Fort Worth, Texas, in 2008, she became our first staff member to work remotely. Her strong work ethic continued to include finding new and better ways to make connections that benefited vendors, theatres, and AACT itself.

Darlene was part of a large, fun-loving family—and she was often the one who created the fun. Darlene and her beloved husband Joe loved entertaining family and friends, often with cooking-themed parties. In addition to the culinary arts, Darlene's family said her passions included traveling with family, playing games, bird watching, and enjoying a nice glass of wine with her husband. Joe was the love of her life—they were inseparable from the time they met in 1991 until his death in December 2021.

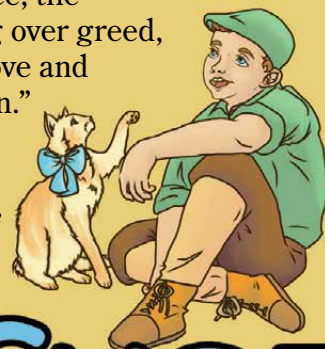
Darlene passed away February 12, 2023, but her smile still shines in numerous family photos and memories—and in our hearts.



“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.”

Curt Dale Clark
Artistic Director,
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New Roles



Steven H. Butler has joined the **Players Centre** in Sarasota, Florida, as its new Artistic Director.

Butler has roots in the area, growing up in Sarasota and graduating from Sarasota High. He previously served as Executive Director of Florida Theatre Conference (FTC), and as Executive/Artistic Director and co-founder of The Actor's Warehouse (AW). His work with FTC saw him refine and develop the organization's mission and objectives while interfacing with state, regional, and national organizations to ensure that FTC adopted best practices in community engagement, access, and inclusion.

"Steven's experience and skills checked off every important box for The Players," says company CEO William Skaggs. "His experience goes beyond artistic and operational competencies and into our community engagement mission, a key reason he is such a great fit for us."

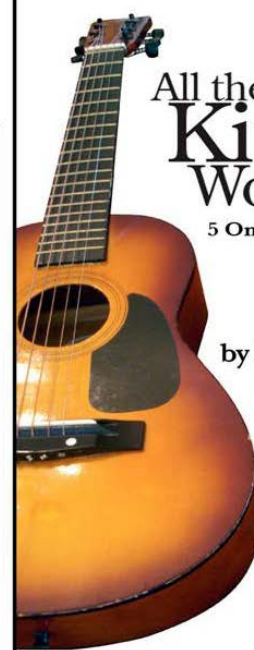
Butler also brings a wealth of directorial and acting credits around the state, including The Players where he assumed roles in various productions such as *Irma la Douce*, *Carousel*, *Cabaret*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. As a director, Butler helped produce renowned productions for The Actor's Warehouse, including *Steel Magnolias*, *Black Nativity*, and *Satchmo at the Waldorf*.

"I'm beyond grateful to The Players for trusting me to help lead them through a very exciting time," says Butler, "and I'm looking forward to connecting with all the dedicated and enthusiastic arts lovers that Sarasota is known for."

Congratulations to all those with new roles! It is wonderful to see so many additions our member theatres are making to their staff. If you have someone in a new role at your theatre, email info@aact.org to have your theatre and new staff featured in *Spotlight*.



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to Beyoncé!

From World War One
to Afghanistan.

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
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AACT On the Road




(left – right) AACT Region IV Festival adjudicators Kimberly Frick-Welker (Cookerville, Tennessee, Performing Arts Center), Nathan Miles (University of Alabama M.F.A. student), and Dennis Yslas (Texas Theatre Network) (in front), are joined by Region IV Festival Chair Lyle Tate, AACT Region IVa Representative Lynn Nelson, and Region IV Festival Commissioner Stephen Krempasky, backstage at the Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center in Lexington, Kentucky, during the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC), March 4.




(left – right) New Mexico state festival adjudicators Tim Jebson (Midland Community Theatre), Kay Armstrong (AACT Board of Directors), and John Sullivan visit with Kathleen Maldonado (Theatre New Mexico), and Festival Chair Eric Bjorklund (Los Alamos Little Theatre) during the New Mexico state festival at Los Alamos Little Theatre in Los Alamos, New Mexico, March 10




(left – right) Family members Alicia Frame, Michael Frame, Caryl Frame (virtual from Korea), Ann Frame (wife), Bob Frame (AACT Board of Directors), and Gillian Frame, join Bob at the newly named Bob Frame Black Box Theatre on the campus of Cayuga County Community College in Auburn, New York, March 18

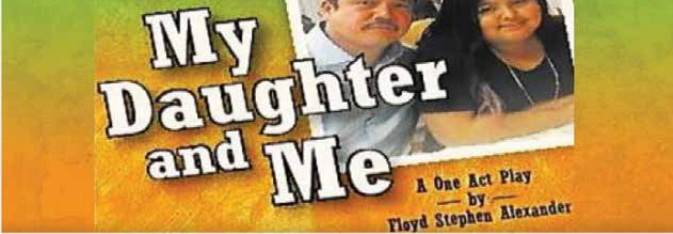

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If We Must Die

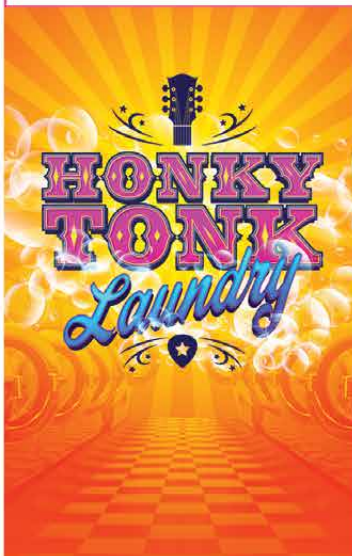
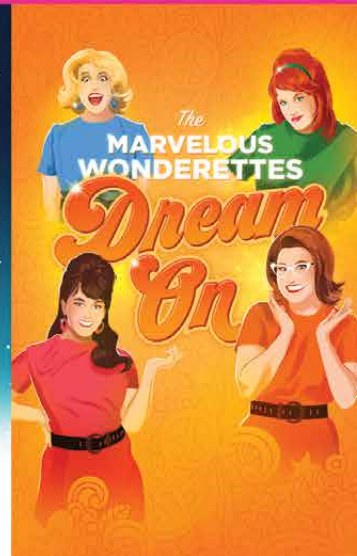
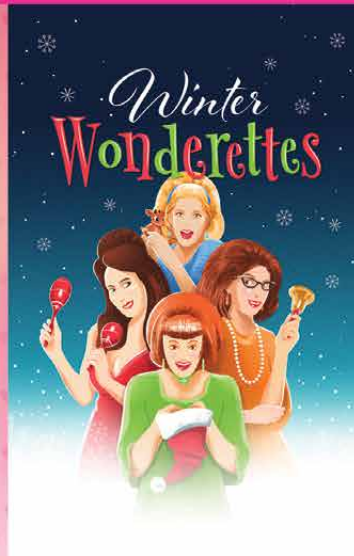
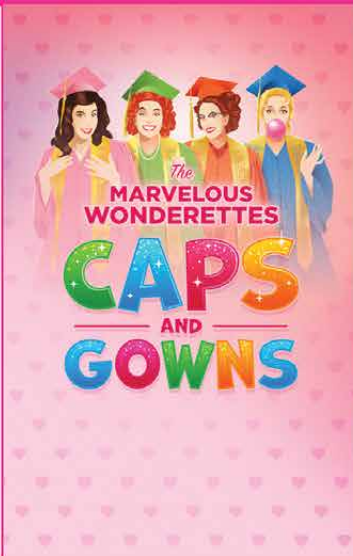
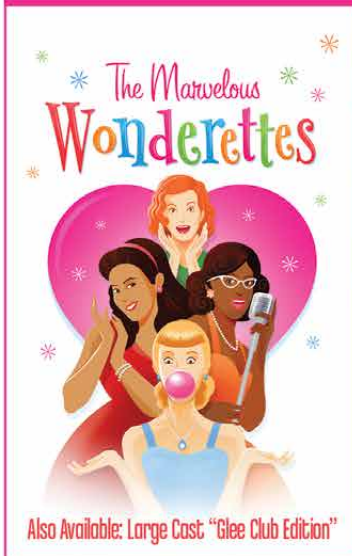


My Daughter and Me
 A One Act Play
 — by —
 Floyd Stephen Alexander

www.heartlandplays.com

"It's the perfect time for a big dose of Roger Bean!"

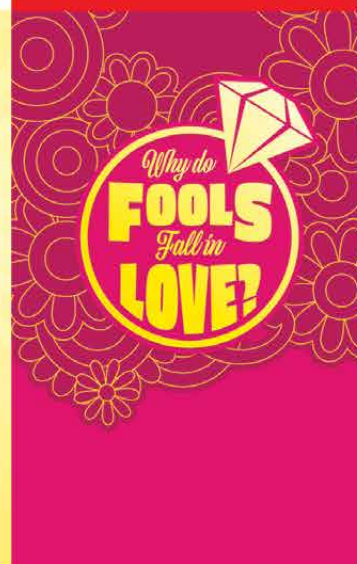
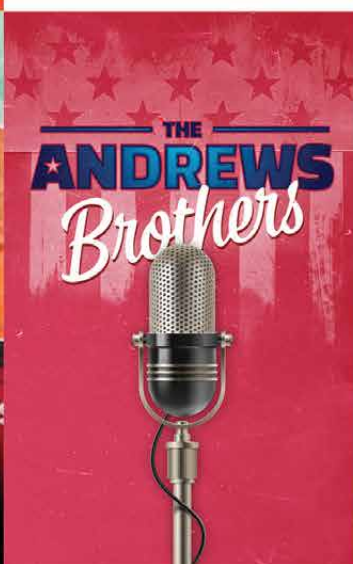
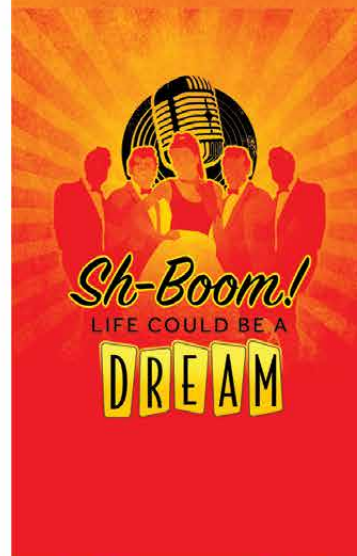
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Political Arts Advocacy

Reach out to your Members of Congress to support Arts in America. The Biden Administration released the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2024. Arts advocates are pleased to see that the administration's FY 2024 budget request calls for a \$211 million budget for both the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). While a modest increase, it is moving in the right direction and represents a \$4 million increase over FY 2023 levels. The FY 2023 Omnibus package at the end of last year included funding increases that moved both agencies closer to indexing their funding to \$1.00 per capita, up from 54 cents per capita to 62 cents—a policy proposal arts advocate strongly support. The proposed FY 2024 budget shows an ongoing commitment to the arts and culture sector as it continues to recover from the devastating effects of the pandemic.

President Biden also made increases to education funding in the areas of Titles I and IV, which will increase funding for well-rounded subjects, including arts education. The arts support the daily well-being of students, foster a welcoming and safe school environment, and encourage inclusivity through multiple pathways for every child's creative voice.

We encourage you to research to see where your legislatures stand on these issues. If there is opposition, we encourage you to contact them, share why it is important to you, and ask for their support.


americansforthearts.org

Web Power

Where did I read that piece on finding—and keeping—volunteers? Or that article on unconventional performance spaces? What was the name of that production I enjoyed at AACTFest 2021? Answers to questions like these can be found quickly in the *Spotlight* magazine archives at aact.org/spotlight-archive.

Once on the archive page, you'll see the contents of every issue of *Spotlight* back to 2013, plus a link to let you view, download, or print a PDF copy of that article—or the entire issue. Regularly updated, the *Spotlight* archive is always there when you need it. (The archive is also accessible from the site's drop-down menu, under Networking.)

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



SUMMERWIND
Productions

My Way—
A Tribute to the
Music of Frank
Sinatra

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I Left My Heart – A Salute to the Music of Tony Bennett
Simply Simone – The Music of Nina Simone
Babes in Hollywood – The Music of Garland and Rooney
One More For My Baby - A Sinatra Songbook
Town Without Pity – The Love Songs of Gene Pitney
Bonnie & Clyde
Club Morocco

PLAYS:

Dracula - The Case of the Silver Scream (Film Noir)
The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria
Casa Blue—The Last Moments in the Life of Freda Kahlo
Vampire Monologues
War of the Worlds

Scripts, Information, and Licensing at:
summerwindproductions.com

Calendar of Events

| Dates | Event | St | City | Phone | Email | Web Site |
|------------------|--|---------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| May 6 | Adjudication Training Last Session | Virtual | | 817-732-3177 x1 | winston@aact.org | aact.org/seminar |
| May 16 | Online Roundtable: Production Team, Roles and Responsibilities | Virtual | | 817-732-3177 x1 | dvanceleave@aact.org | aact.org/roundtables |
| May 19 | Design Competition Entry Deadline | | | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/design23 |
| Jun 11-13 | Community Theatre Management Conference (CTMC) | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/ctmc |
| Jun 12-17 | AACF Silent Auction | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/auction |
| Jun 12-17 | AACFest 2023 | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/23 |
| Jun12-17 | AACF YouthFest 2023 | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/youthfest |
| Jun14-17 | Monologue Competition | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/monologue |
| Jun 14-17 | AACF Youth Theatre Conference | KY | Louisville | 817-732-3177 x2 | info@aact.org | aact.org/youth |

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AACTFest 2023 National Festival Question?

AACTFest 2023 Staff

General AACTFest 2023 Questions aact.org/23

AACT office: info@aact.org | 817-732-3177

AACTFest 2023 National Festival Registration aact.org/23

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AACTFest 2023 Operations and Logistics

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Quiana Clark-Roland: quiana@aact.org

817-732-3177, x5

AACTFest 2023 Rules

aact.org/handbook

Jim Walker: jimlwalker@abe.midco.net | 605-870-1415

Festival Commissioner

Eugene Irby: eugene@plateautel.net | 575-703-5888

Festival Technical Director

Bob Frame: presencelighting@gmail.com

315-294-8640

Assistant Festival Technical Director

JR Bornemann: jbornemann229@gmail.com

989-615-6028

National Company Coordinator

Mary Jo DeNolf: maryjo@aact.org | 616-822-0006

AACT Corporate Partners/AACTFest Sponsorships

Jill Patchin: jill@aact.org

Volunteer/Intern Coordinator

Mary Jo DeNolf: maryjo@aact.org | 616-822-0006

Exhibitors

aact.org/exhibits

Jill Patchin: jill@aact.org



Workshops

aact.org/workshops

David A. VanCleave: dvancleave@aact.org

Monologue Competition

aact.org/monologue

Kristofer Geddie: kgeddie@venicetheatre.net

941-584-0639

AACT Silent Auction

aact.org/auction

Mary Jo Denolf: maryjo@aact.org | 616-822-0006

Adjudication Seminar

aact.org/seminar

AACT office: info@aact.org | 817-732-3177

Instructor Kristi Quinn: kquinn1655@msn.com

AACT Design Competition

aact.org/design-competition-2023

Bob Frame: designcompetition@aact.org

315-294-8640

Rich Gannon: designcompetition@aact.org

630-853-0735

AACT Board and Committee Meetings

aact.org/aact-summer-meetings-2023

Quiana Clark-Roland: quiana@aact.org

817-732-3177, x5

AACTFest 2023 Marketing and Promotions

David Cockerell: david@aact.org | 817-732-3177, x3

AACT YouthFest

Chad-Alan Carr

Chad@gettysburgcommunitytheatre.org

717-688-5098

David A. VanCleave: dvancleave@aact.org

AACT 2023 Youth Theatre Conference

aact.org/youthconf

July 14 – 16, 2023

AACT office: info@aact.org | 817-732-3177

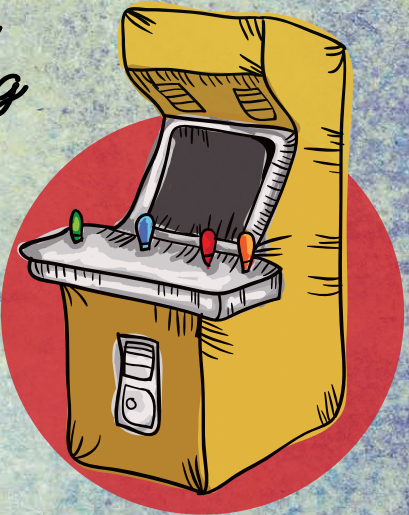
Instructors Jennifer Hamilton: jvbhamilton@gmail.com

785-249-5341

from **dpc** Dramatic
Publishing

jj's place

By José Casas



Mario is a hardworking, struggling auto mechanic in East LA who is left to raise his son, JJ, after the passing of his mother. In order to honor her memory and cope with his lack of connection with his father, JJ begins to build machines and arcade games out of leftover cardboard from his dad's handyman shop. It is through JJ's imagination and ingenuity that he is able to connect to himself, his family, and his community. In the end, father and son come to an understanding as they look toward a brighter future together.

Cast size: 3m., 1w. dramaticpublishing.com/jjs-place

Desvelado

By José Casas

A young child named Little One is having trouble sleeping. Little One's family has moved to a new neighborhood, and he is nervous about attending a new school. With the help of *la luna*, a.k.a. Harvest, *Música* and the audience, Little One learns that everything will be all right and that new friends and experiences are a good thing. The show is designed to create a truly interactive experience for young audiences.

Cast size: 2 to 3 any gender. dramaticpublishing.com/desvelado

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Facilitator
Chad-Alan Carr
Executive/Artistic Director
Gettysburg Community
Theatre, Gettysburg, PA;
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aact.org/ctmc



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