



California Educational Theatre

News

From the President



Happy New Year everyone!

This past November we had a very productive Board Retreat in Los Angeles. We worked on the vision and goals of CETA and how we can continue to provide members with networking

and resource opportunities. I am encouraged by the passion and dedication of the '06-'08 Board Members. I would like to thank CETA past-president, Carol Hovey, for her tremendous work over the past two years and especially on chairing the successful 2006 CETA Conference "Capitolizing on Theatre" held in Sacramento.

Now some new news. CETA has united with the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC) and California State Thespians to create a tri-website. The links, play submission and employment opportunities will make this an invaluable tool for all of us.

Also, one of CETA's top priorities is to join with other organizations in the development, approval, and implementation of a California Theatre Credential. Last summer I met with Susan McGreevy-Nichols from the California Dance Education Association (CDEA) to strategize and join forces for both a theatre credential and a dance credential. I wish to thank those of you who answered the credential survey. Here are some statistics that might be of interest:

153 Surveys Total (93 different districts)

Union Memberships: National- 39, State- 85
(79 were CTA), Local- 75

104 teach fulltime programs

94 teach under an English Credential

84 have 100+ credits in dance and/or
theatremnn3444

149 would support a credential

106 believed their administrator would support
a credential

The California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) is working on this too, and on April 13-14, Los Angeles Unified School District will host a Theatre Credential Conference. I am also looking forward to the collaboration on this project of CETA, DTASC, CA State Thespians, and CDEA along with the vocal support of California Music Education Association (CMEA) and California Art Educational Association (CAEA).

As far as our upcoming events, CETA will again support the North Middle Stage Fest, the South High School Theatre Festival, and California Youth In Theatre Day. This year CETA is holding a brand new North One-Day Conference in hopes of becoming an even stronger resource for the northern members. We are already in the works for our annual CETA Conference entitled "Defying Gravity," which will be held in North Hollywood, October 2007. And, yes, we are ordering tickets for *Wicked*.

I am looking forward to an exciting year with the California Educational Theatre Association. The best to everyone in '07.

Amanda Swann



Rozan Gautier
V.P. Middle Schools

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA MIDDLE STAGE FEST

A Drama Festival for Grades 6-8

On the wall in my classroom at Walnut Creek Intermediate School are five framed documents:

Certificates of Participation in the Northern California Middle School Theatre festival since its inception in 2002. Looking at those certificates conjures up recollections of excellent times spent with my students.

Some of my best memories of being a high school theatre student are the times we went to the state drama festival. I still remember the excitement of being with so many other drama students, the stage fright, the relief of completing my performance, the anticipation of earning a medal and the fun of watching the other kids perform. When I became a theatre teacher, I wished that something similar was available for my middle school students, so I was thrilled when in 2002 the creative and energetic Carolyn Elder conceived of and developed a theatre festival for middle schoolers in Northern California.

At the Middle Stage Fest on a February Saturday in Sacramento, the students have the opportunity to perform scenes and monologues, to have feedback on their performance from the judges, to earn medals, to participate in theatre workshops and to mingle with other middle school actors. As their teacher, I have the opportunity to see them grow as they prepare and perform at the festival, and I meet other middle school theatre teachers and see some of the outstanding work my colleagues are doing.

Thank you Carolyn and CETA for the Northern California Middle School Festival.

Rozan Gautier
Walnut Creek Intermediate School



Robin Lithgow
V.P. Elementary Schools

GOOD NEWS: AP THEATRE AND DANCE TEST PROGRESS

The College Board Academic Advisory Committee on the Arts met in New York City on September 28 thru 30. The push for AP Theatre and Dance tests was the main topic on the agenda, and we are optimistic about the progress that is being made.

First of all, a "Report From the Arts Advisory Committee" was submitted and approved by the College Board Governance back in 2000. Leonard Lehrer, the chairman of the committee, successfully located the report itself and notes relating to its approval that specifically spelled out steps to be taken; but at the time, because of staff changes and other obstacles, nothing was done. When governance was confronted with the paper evidence of the resolution, the process was jump-started. Now, six years later, these steps are underway.

Trevor Packer, Executive Director, AP, met with us on Thursday and told us that a large-scale analytics program has been funded for now. Two full-time strategic analysts have been hired to prepare a full exploration of the nation-wide field of dance and theatre programs in high school and higher education and submit a proposal in mid-May for next year's budget for test development. These contracted analysts have been given deadlines for a three-stage quantitative and qualitative review that would result in a proposal based on rigorous research.

Pam Paulson, the dance representative for dance on the Arts Committee, submitted a position paper proposing a Dance Theatre test that was closely modeled on the Theatre Position Paper submitted in April. The dance proposal was signed by the presidents of the Congress on Research in Dance (CORD), the Dance Notation Bureau (DNB), the Laban Institute

of Movement Studies (LIMB), the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), and the National Registry for Dance History Scholars (SDHS). This position paper will join the Theatre Position Paper for additional advocacy, and these organizations will join the national theatre education organizations - NAST, AATE, EdTA and ATHE - as advisory parties in test development.

But the thing that we found most exciting of all was that the Board is seriously exploring the possibility of developing portfolio, performance based tests at the same time as the written tests, putting theatre and dance on the same footing as visual arts. The College Board is rightly concerned about the apparently elitist demographics of its test taking population, and they would like to give greater access to under-represented student groups. Their statistics show that the portfolio test in studio arts shows the smallest gaps between white, Asian, African American and Latino students taking the test, and portfolio tests in dance and theatre could bring in thousands more of these students.

Trevor Packer assured us that now, “powerful players are putting this forward.” We came out of the three-day meeting full of optimism, if not outright confidence. r

a semester. When they finish, they are able to respond to the work in a variety of ways: character description, plot summary, plot analysis, design assignment, or critical review.

Below are three suggestions for plays that could be read as part of an SSR program:

The Gate of Heaven by Lane Nishikawa and Victor Talmadge is an interethnic story between the Japanese American soldier Sam who had liberated the Polish-Jewish Leon at Dachau. Leon uses the blanket Sam left him to trace and find him and develop a lifelong friendship. Inspired by the lives of the playwrights’ fathers, factual and cultural information adds to the richness of the text. The cast consists of the two men. Though not the type of play secondary school would do, the story, the themes and the characters are interesting.

Two Donuts is a new play by José Cruz González and good reading for all ages and is appropriate for middle school production. In it, Pepito learns about Guatemala from his grandmother as they eat their donuts. After she dies, she appears to Pepito and gives him Worry Dolls and tells him to make a wish. In a dream sequence, he is swept up and off to Guatemala and with the help of the Great Sea Tortuga he defies a dictatorship.

Nathan the Wise, set in 1192 in Jerusalem, tells how Muslims, Jews and Christians live in harmony under a declared truce. A Templar of the Third Crusade breaks the truce and then rescues the Jewish Nathan’s daughter Recha from a fire and falls in love with her. Which is the one true faith is a question Nathan must answer to save his life. The play by Paul D’Andrea after G. E. Lessing is a Western classic on religious tolerance.

Ellen Sell



INCORPORATE DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Finding ways to incorporate diversity in the theatre classroom often proves challenging. One way I have

found is to have students read plays reflecting diversity during a Sustained Silent Reading time. The SSR give students a chance to explore plays that will not be part of the production schedule for the year, and gives the teacher time to take attendance and sit down to read some plays as well.

For about ten minutes at the beginning of the theatre class, I let students read these scripts. I order two or three copies of a number of plays reflecting playwrights of diverse backgrounds. In this way, students become familiar with three to six or more plays

Ellen Sell, Cultural Diversity Chair



Arlene Hood,
V.P. High Schools

Theatre Mantras

As the second semester begins, I'm gearing up for auditions for *Guys and Dolls*. The production team is coming together and as I sit here planning production meetings, I'm also looking ahead to the next school year. The fall production will be a milestone for me – the 50th show I will have directed for Moreau Catholic. As you all know and experience everyday, that's a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. But more importantly, a whole lot of love, passion, and devotion to this art form.

My thoughts bring me back to my college days and the experiences that helped shape my artistic and aesthetic sensibilities. I recall fondly my costume and makeup design professor, Richard Barulich. He had a passion for opera and adored me immediately from the moment he met me because I was Italian and my mother's name was Aida. His sense of humor helped me to recognize the paradox that is theatre and the ever-present ironies that provide the foundation of artistic work. He summed it up in one simple phrase, which was to be the title of his book about life in the theatre: *We Have One - but It Doesn't Work*. How often did that mantra get repeated throughout my experiences! "Where's the staple gun?" – "Well, we have one, but it doesn't work." "Can we borrow your fog machine?" – "We have one, somewhere, but it doesn't work. But if you think you can get it going, you're welcome to borrow it." Anytime frustrations mounted because of production roadblocks, we would sigh, repeat the phrase, and our frustrations would melt away as we laughed at ourselves. This simple sentence helped me to keep my sanity, although I was already used to odd or unexpected production challenges.

During high school, I was a member of a teen theatre group of our local community theatre. The adult group used the facilities of the community college, but the theatre for the teen and children's groups was a converted carriage house (read: barn) on an old estate where we had to back the tractor out of the back door to get to the horse stalls where our flats were stored; where our theatrical lighting consisted of 10 or

12 coffee cans with floodlights; where gels really were a gelatin compound that would dissolve in a variety of colors all over your hands if you happened to get them wet while you were working. We surely devised some crazy things to troubleshoot any problems that arose. So it was nice when I eventually started college and realized that problems didn't magically disappear just because of a better facility and/or bigger budget. And dear Richard enlightened me on the ways of theatre and how to cope.

So, now I'm in the middle of my 20th year at Moreau Catholic. The school has a theatre, and I'm VERY grateful for that, but it's a really odd space. It's actually an auditorium, and the architects designed it for multipurpose use, with theatre being the very last consideration. All 600 un-padded, uncomfortable seats are wooden (hmm...parochial school...) and the first 8 rows have hinged writing desks. The stage has a 40' proscenium opening, but hardly any offstage space and sadly no fly loft. The backstage used to be the adjacent cafeteria, but when the student center was constructed, the old cafeteria was converted into art rooms. So now I have a green room that doubles as a scene shop, but the ceiling is only 10' high. There are double doors that lead to backstage but they are of standard height. With each production we face many challenges working around our pitfalls. I don't recall which show, but several years ago we were trying to work out a lighting/set problem. I can't remember all the details now, but at the time we were just having a terrible time trying to attain the desired results. Finally, things began to take shape and during our tech rehearsals we kept refining and trying new things until we unexpectedly achieved something even better than what we had envisioned. Our new phrase: "That looks great... You'd think we'd planned it!"

That's my mantra now. And I really get a kick out of saying it when the happy accidents inevitably occur. Because when they do occur and I can whisper my little phrase, there is definite light at the end of the production tunnel. I wish you all happy and successful spring shows!

Arlene Hood

Would you like to write an article for the newsletter? Or do you have noteworthy theatre news, experiences, or accomplishments outside your regular school activities that you would like to share? We encourage all of you to consider submitting items to the newsletter. Here is a list of submission deadlines:

March 4
June 1
November 4

Submissions should be emailed to Kaleta Brown at kaletab@earthlink.net



Gai Jones, V.P. Membership and California Youth in Theatre

LOOKING FOR FUTURE THEATRE EDUCATORS

I love being a theatre educator. It is one of the best occupations ever. Where else would I be able to work with talented theatre students, committed theatre educators, supportive parents, and wonderful audiences who take time to see live theatre?

What does the future hold for California theatre students and educators? We are hopefully moving toward an AP test in Theatre (see Robin Lithgow's article), perhaps a credential for theatre educators, a position paper stating CETA's tenants, and enthusiastically looking forward toward passing the torch of theatre education to future teachers who love the craft and art of teaching Theatre.

CETA members have contributed monies to support high school seniors who want to become Theatre educators and donated to the Charlotte Motter Theatre Educator Scholarship.

This scholarship is named in honor of Charlotte Motter. Ms. Motter was the quintessential theatre educator from 1944-1993, teaching junior high through college/university levels. She had an extensive career as a consultant, task force leader, judge coordinator, author, actress, business & publicity manager, and director. Ms. Motter volunteered as president of Legislative Action Coalition for Arts Education; she

is a fellow for the American Theatre Association; she was the founder of CETA and its first president; and was president of DTASC and CETA South. She was awarded the Gold Medallion by the American College Theatre Festival, Founders Award of Secondary School Theatre Association, CETA Outstanding Theatre Educator, the CETA Medallion, and CETA south Lifetime Achievement award among other prestigious honors.

Any teacher may aid a senior student in his/her pursuit of this scholarship by downloading the scholarship form from the website, giving it to the student who meets the qualifications, and submits it on or before the application deadline, April 15, 2007.

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Kim O'Rourke
V.P. Parochial and Private Schools

Parochial and Private Schools and Theatre

As VP of parochial and private schools, it has been very interesting to have conversations with a number of teachers regarding the theatre arts programs in their schools. To begin with, it is necessary to explain the difference between a "private" and a "parochial" school.

All "private" schools are not religiously based schools, although some are. All parochial schools are religiously based, as the word "parochial" is a derivative of the Greek word for church. Not all parochial schools are Catholic: many other denominations have schools. But not all Catholic schools are "parochial" because some of them are "private". The difference between a Catholic parochial school and a Catholic private school is that former belongs to and, to a great extent, is funded by the archdiocese, and the latter is supported by and run by an order of sisters (e.g. Benedictine) or brothers (e.g. Christian Brothers)

Now what does all this have to do with the arts? Plenty! And the issue of money is only one of the differences. Just like public schools, the on-going battle between money for sports and money for the arts is just as much of a problem. When parents pay anywhere between \$6000.00 and \$20,000.00 a year for tuition, plus books, plus uniforms, they are not always thrilled when little Hortensia or Beauregard chooses to go into the arts instead of becoming a doctor or lawyer. After all, they didn't spend all that money for their child to be unemployable in the future!

There are further restrictions regarding how and what kind of theatre is presented (and presentable!) depending on the community that the school serves; one schools may have no problems mounting a play like *The Children's Hour* (which we have staged successfully at my school, St. Lucy's Priory) where another must stick to *Life With Father* or *The Sound of Music* (ad nauseum!) Most teachers in these schools are well aware of their audiences and know how to choose appropriate material. In one respect, it is easier because the religious issue is not a diverse one as it is with the parents of public school families. But because most private schools draw from a larger geographical area, rehearsals are a problem because of transportation as well as the fact that homework loads can be outrageous in some schools.

There is also the added problem, often, of single sex schools finding enough material, especially for all girls' schools that do not have a "brother" school to fill the male roles in plays. At St. Lucy's, where I teach, we mount a Shakespeare play every year with an all-female cast. To date we have done *Midsummer* (who hasn't?), *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Macbeth* and *Titus Andronicus* (These have all been recycled) It is a wonderful experience for the female actors to play roles they will NEVER play in the real theatre world. All female shows have also included *Blithe Spirit*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *All I ever Needed to Know . . . Kindergarten*, *The Curious Savage*, *Greater Tuna*, *Fools*, *The Odd Couple* (both versions), *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *Lost In Yonkers* and *The Cemetery Club*.

In future newsletters, I hope to have some interviews with some private-parochial schoolteachers who might share some of their experiences, ideas, and problems, all of which may sound familiar to high school theatre teachers everywhere.

Kim O'Rourke

"You want to major in what?!"

Students who participate actively in theater during their high school years find themselves wanting to pursue the same field in college as a major. But parents often dissuade their children from choosing such an "unstable" career choice, and with the exorbitant cost of an undergraduate education, their concerns are to some extent justifiable. However, as arts educators and specifically as theater teachers, we have to separate a career in theater from the education that a theater major provides. They are not the same. This article is intended to help you begin a conversation with your students and their parents to help alleviate the fear of the perceived impracticality of a theater major, and to provide some practical advice that students and parents might find helpful.

First, to the students. Yes, you love theater and you cannot imagine your life without it. There is nothing more that you would rather do. Theater is your life-blood, your way of being in the world, your *raison d'être*, and nobody really understands your passion and desire to commit yourself to the art. Recognize that your teachers do, and that you should listen to them and others who have traveled a similar path.

"To BFA or not to BFA." Perhaps because I teach in a BA program I have a bias against the BFA degree. Tony Kushner once wrote that the traditional theater major should be abolished in undergraduate educational institutions because it is too narrow a field of study and prevents student from becoming more "well rounded." A BFA program is narrower than a BA, and while it might be beneficial to a few students, a BA provides a broader educational base. Students, however, don't often think about being "well rounded" and usually wince, if not visibly, then certainly underneath. But "well-roundedness" should not be underemphasized.

The "liberal" in "liberal arts" implies a broad range of educational experiences that students should have in an undergraduate career. Too often, theater students want to do "only" theater because that's what they "love." They often don't understand that their other courses help to provide them with a broader range of experiences to bring into their art. Psychology and sociology courses help the theater student to understand human behavior and social constructions of identity, community, and communication. Courses in history, literature, and philosophy help them understand the political, social, and theoretical constructs

of the world around them. Math and science, often the most difficult of requirements for theater people, are essential for engaging a part of the brain often unused in theater, the logical side. Students tend toward the passionate and emotive dimensions of the field mostly because it allows them a vehicle for expression that they so desperately desire.

With the high cost of an undergraduate education, many parents question the practicality of theater for their child's choice of educational major. "What can you do with that?" "Is it really practical?" "How are you going to find a job?" "I know how much you love theater, sweetheart, but can't you do it as a hobby instead of as a career?" Students must realize that their parents' fear is based usually on economics and the desire for their child to be self-sufficient and to make enough money to live comfortably.

A very practical solution to allay parents' fears and to simultaneously allow the student to enjoy their passion is to recommend that they double-major. Almost any other field of study in the humanities will enjoy strong connections to theater, and students should be encouraged to make those links in their undergraduate classes. Write papers on aesthetics in philosophy to better understand Plato and Aristotle's views of theater. Analyze human behavior or group dynamics in psychology and sociology—it will only enhance your understanding of relationships or of power dynamics on the stage. History and English provide the foundation upon which smart performers can thrive. The possibilities are endless.

True, double-majoring in school is a lot of work, and students should understand that they will probably not be allowed any electives; but the rewards are many and such study will allow them to broaden their horizons as both an artist and person. Parents will be much happier, and much more willing to contribute to their child's education if they feel that their child will be better equipped to enter the post-college world with many tools under their belt.

This is not to disparage a theater major—far from it. The next installment will discuss the benefits that an undergraduate major in the theater can bring, and why, more than ever, we need young people committed to the study this art.

Peter Novak,
V.P. Higher Education



HONOR YOUR STUDENT BY REGISTERING THEM FOR THE 9TH ANNUAL CA YOUTH IN THEATRE DAY.

Registrations are due February 16,
2007

Celebrate with performances for
delegates, legislators, and legislative
aides on March 27, 2007 at the Capitol
in Sacramento



For further information, contact Gai Jones at:
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or gaijones@ix.netcom.com

Meet Our Advisory Council

Joe Mantegna



Chicago native Joe Mantegna has a strong background in both theater and film. After making his Broadway debut in Stephen Schwartz's musical of Studs Terkel's *Working*, Joe was awarded the Tony and Joseph Jefferson Award for his acclaimed performance as cynical real-estate agent Richard Roma in David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

Closely associated with Mamet's work, Joe starred in the theatrical premiere of *A Life in the Theater*, *The Disappearance of the Jews at the Goodman Theater*, and in the Broadway production of *Speed the Plow* with Ron Silver and Madonna. In addition, Joe directed a critically acclaimed stage production of Mamet's *Lakeboat*, starring Ed O'Neil and George Wendt, in a successful Los Angeles theatrical run.

Always the baseball fan, Joe conceived and co-wrote the Off-Broadway play *Bleacher Bums*, inspired by countless afternoons watching the Chicago Cubs play in Wrigley Field. Once the Chicago PBS affiliate picked it up for production, the play both earned Joe an Emmy Award and gave him the opportunity to direct an updated version in a successful run at Chicago's Organic Theater. Joe also appeared in *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit* and *Cops*, along with taking two European tours with the Organic Theater Company. SHOWTIME has produced yet another version of *Bleacher Bums* that premiered April, 2002.



"The Water Engine"



"The Rat Pack"



"The Last Don"

Mantegna Filmography

Fact: Joe has been nominated twice for an Actor Emmy

(Dean Martin in “The Ratpack” & Pippi De Lena “The Last Don”)

And a Golden Globe for his role as Dean Martin in “The RatPack”

He has also won a Best Actor Tony for his work in *Glengarry Glenross*.

The Starter Wife (2007)...Lou

The Simpsons Movie (2007)...Fat Tony

Childless (2006)...Richard

West of Brooklyn (2006)..Gaetano D’Amico.

My Suicide (2006)...Dr. Chandasaker.

Elvis and Annabelle (2006)...Charlie

Lonely Street (2006)...Jerry

Club Soda (2006)...Mike

Cougar Club (2006)...Mr. Stack

The Kid and I (2005)...Davis

Edmond (2005)...Man in Bar

Nine Lives (2005)...Richard

A Very Married Christmas (2004)...Frank

Joan of Arcadia (2003)...Will

Stateside (2002)...Gil

Pontormo (2002)Jacopo

Uncle Nino (2002)...Robert

Mother Ghost (2002) Jerry Savior

First Monday (2002) (TV CBS)

Justice Novelli

Men Vs. Women (2002) (TV) Michael

Legoon (2002) Italy

Off Key (2001) aka *Desafinado*..

Ricardo Palacios

Holocaust: New York Tolerance Center (2001)

Narrator

Walking Shadow (2001) (TV) Spenser

Turbulence 3: Heavy Metal (2001) (V)

Frank Garner

Fall (2000)... aka *Fall: The Price of Silence*

The Trumpet of the Swan (2000) (voice) Monty

Thin Air (2000) (TV) Spenser .

More Dogs Than Bones (2000)

The Runner (1999) Rocco

Liberty Heights (1999) Nate Kurtzman

My Little Assassin (1999) (TV) Fidel Castro

Spenser: Small Vices (1999) (TV) Spenser

Airspeed (1998) Raymond Stone

Body and Soul (1998) Alex Dumas

Error in Judgment (1998) Eric

Boy Meets Girl (1998/II) *Il Magnifico*

Celebrity (1998) Tony Gardella

The Rat Pack (1998) (TV) Dean Martin

Hoods (1998)

“*Last Don II, The*” (1998) (mini) TV Series

Pippi De Lena

The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit (1998) Gomez

Jerry and Tom (1998) Tom

For Hire (1997) Alan Webber

Merry Christmas, George Bailey (1997) (TV)

Joseph/Nick

Face Down (1997) (TV) Bob Signorelli



“The Godfather, Part 3”
with Francis Ford Coppola



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