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Illinois Theatre Association

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ITA EVENTS

August 26, 2017

ITA Gala

Harper College, Wojcik Center, Palatine, IL

August 27, 2017

ITA Annual Meeting

Wyndham Gardens Schaumburg, IL

Submit an Event

ITA MEMBERS!

You are invited to join the ITA as it honors excellence in all divisions of theatre. This two-day event features red carpet entry (black tie optional!), cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, and awards on Saturday, and a keynote speaker (tba), ITA's Board Induction Ceremony, division meetings, and more on Sunday!

When & Where

Saturday, 8/26:

**Haper College Wojcik Center
1200 W. Algonquin Rd.
Palatine, IL 60067**

Sunday, 8/27:

Wyndham Garden Hotel

JOB POSTINGS

- Maine West High School is also seeking a Choreographer for the Winter Musical.
- Maine East High School has openings for the Variety Show Director, Swing Choir Director, and Musical Vocal Director.
- Old Orchard Junior High School has a full-time drama teacher position (to cover a one-year leave of absence).
- 2nd Act Players is looking for individuals who want to grow this theater company by joining its board of directors for 2017.
- The Latin School of Chicago has a technical theatre position open for the 2017-2018 school year.
- Timber Lake Playhouse is hiring an Artistic Director.
- Carmel Catholic High School is hunting for a part-time tech director for Fine Arts events. Lighting and sound only.

Submit a Job Posting

AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are no postings at this time.

[Click here](#) to visit the ITA's Audition Announcements for more details.

**1725 E. Algonquin Rd.
Schaumburg, IL 60173**

One Day Packages Available!

[Get more information now!](#)

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PREVENTING BULLYING IN CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

By Stacy Deemar

My priority as a middle school drama teacher is to ensure each student's emotional safety. One of the most important strategies I use to reduce bullying in my theatre is the specific format that the students are required to use when they constructively critique a scene.

In my middle school drama classes, one-third of the grade is participating in constructively critiquing a scene using theatre/drama vocabulary and citing evidence from the scene to support a point. **Before each scene, I have a topic that I introduce to the students such as subtext, character relationships, pantomime, etc. I model both an "A" response and a "0" response.** An example of a "0" response is, "I couldn't hear anything you said." The "A" response, on the other hand, might begin with, "In your next scene, try projecting your voice. I had a difficult time understanding your creative dialogue."

Again, critiques are required to be constructive so a student has a specific direction to work on in the next scene rather than receive an insult that would hurt his self-esteem causing him to feel inferior. The objective is to mitigate this negative response that could lead to the beginning of a bullying situation.

There are times when a student makes a comment that may suggest a negative undertow. This can occur from a student using an inappropriate choice of words or a negative tone in their voice. When a critique is moving in a direction that is derogatory or unsupportive, I stop the comment midstream and redirect the student. When a critique begins with "I did not like", I stop the critique and tell the student to restart the comment and begin with, "Next time you can work on....please finish my sentence."

After using formative assessment a few times to redirect the critiques, students have a good understanding of the process of how to participate in our discussions. Even when it appears like the whole class has mastered the format of critiquing a scene, I never stop modeling the proper techniques. In fact, after the students contribute to commenting on a scene, I also model the constructive criticism format for each scene.

Finally, at the beginning of our nine-week drama rotation, I have students sign a contract. One of my classroom rules in the contract is that discounting, belittling, ridiculing your fellow classmates will not be tolerated. Thus, establishing the expectations on the first day of class and consistently reinforcing them, modeling the format for a proper constructive

[Submit an Audition](#)

FEATURED PERFORMANCES

Oak Park and River Forest High School
The Addams Family, the Musical
 7/14/17 - 7/16/17
 Fri. & Sat. at 7:30p
 Sun. at 3p
 Region 3: Oak Park

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College/University Group Discussion

Community Theatre Group Discussion

critique, and redirecting students when the comment is moving towards an insult will prevent bullying from even starting.

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LGBTQ TYA: MANY "INITIALS" DEFINE INITIAL SEASON FOR PFP CAMP!

By Joan McGrath

Summer and theatre combine for a unique learning experience as performance arts camps get underway around Illinois.

There are dozens of esteemed programs which offer immersive instruction in theatre arts and invaluable on-stage opportunities for youth/teen actors, singers, dancers and technical theatre students.

This summer, Pride Films and Plays (PFP) initiates one such program, "Pride Camps", designed specifically for middle school and high school aged LGBTQ students and allies. The camp uses theater arts to help young people understand our increasingly complex world.

The program's administrator, Derek Van Barham explains the spirit of the new venture.

" Having taught other classes and camps in Chicago, it has always been fun to see kids use theatre to express themselves. I've had a boy play the Witch in Into the Woods, and led an all-female cast of Grease. I'm so proud to see the Pride Arts Center go even further in that direction, allowing students an opportunity to express themselves even more truly and fully."



The curriculum ranges from Shakespeare to puppetry, examined through LGBTQ insights.

Located at the Pride Arts Center, 4139 North Broadway in Chicago, the camp classes will be taught by highly credentialed theatre professionals:

Derek Van Barham, PFP's Assistant Artistic Director, who is also a member of the Red Tape Theatre ensemble, and a former Artistic Director of The Ruckus.

Carly Crawford, Associate Education Director at Emerald City Theatre who also has worked as an actor, teaching artist, and administrator for companies in Memphis, Lexington and Cincinnati

Amber Ray Snyder, a PFP Artistic Associate, who has performed, taught and directed in Chicago as well as Texas, Iowa, Tennessee, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Florida and South Korea

Tristan Tom, costume and puppet designer who trained and toured with Sesame Street Live and whose "puppet

Creative Drama Group Discussion

Professional Theatre Group Discussion

Secondary School Theatre Group Discussion

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Illinois Theatre Association

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The ITA is a network of dedicated theatre artists and educators advocating quality theatre throughout Illinois. Please join us!

123 Mill Pond Dr.
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
312-265-5922 (office)
312-265-6101 (fax)
www.illinoistheatre.org

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Northern Illinois University School of Theatre and Dance

project" was selected as the artistic portion of the 2015 Life Learning Center's "Peace Camp"

Lesley Fisher Chapman, Chicago-based theatre teacher and director with Dream Big Performing Arts Workshop, who also performs, directs and stage manages at a number of prestigious companies.

Here is a rundown of camp classes offered this summer, taken from the PFP website (pridefilmsandplays.com):



RAINBOW SHAKESPEARE
High School students can sign up for Rainbow Shakespeare, a week-long workshop taught by Pride Films and Plays Artistic Associate/Asst. Artistic Director Derek Van Barham that uses Shakespeare's plays to explore changing gender norms. (Two sessions, July 10 and July 24.)

OUR WORLD OUR WAY

Middle School students can sign up for OUR WORLD OUR WAY, a one-week workshop creating a musical which celebrates life today. (Week of July 17.)

PUPPET WORKSHOP

Students of all ages are invited to take a one-week class using puppets to create their very own performance. (Week of August 1.)

Tuition for each camp week is \$385.

[Click here](#) for information about classes and enrollment.

PFP is also initiating a Theater for Young Audiences (TYA) program featuring plays for families looking to share stories with their children that have themes/characters living outside of society's traditional gender binary. These performances are by professional actors and include:

PRIDE EVER AFTER, written by Carly Crawford, directed by Amber Synder, from 2-3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays July 8 to 30

GRANDMA D's PUPPET PLAYDATE, an adventure in story telling by puppeteer Tristan Tom, 2-3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays August 5 to 27.

PFP's LGBTQ camps and TYA are the newest addition to the rich Illinois summer theatre education scene - and that's initialed "A-OK!"

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DID YOU KNOW?
By Susan Antman

This video came to me via my Arts Integration Certificate program from Education Closet -- a wonderful internet resource for Arts Educators.

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The Illinois Theatre Association is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

I found this "Did You Know" video profoundly thought provoking as we all grapple with the exponential pace of technological change, and its impact on our lives as educators and artists.

[Click here](#) to check it out!

[Click here](#) for a link to Educational Closet.

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**A CONVERSATION WITH BEN CAMERON**

By Kevin Long



On Monday, May 22, I traveled to Victory Gardens Theater to hear the deeply inspiring Ben Cameron, (For Ben Cameron's Bio: [click here](#)) current president of the Jerome Foundation and former executive director of Theatre Communication Group, speak about some of the issues that

affect our work in the theatre and ways to address them in a time when our cultural environment in the United States is in constant flux. As Victory Gardens promoted, "Ben is an inspirational thought leader in our field and is a frequent speaker on theatre and the arts throughout the country." The League of Chicago Theatres sponsored the event.

Ben shared with the audience his deep passion for the live professional performing arts reiterating that our theatres will continue to have importance to our communities and provide opportunities for artists to ply their craft and earn a living with dignity. However, Ben then addressed the fact audiences are dwindling. He boldly stated that people today are making active choices to stay away from the live performing arts. What is causing this to happen?

The cost of a theatre ticket has become outrageously expensive. Theatre is becoming something for only the privileged few. In 1953, a Broadway ticket to see *The King and I* cost \$2.00 for balcony seating and \$5.20 for orchestra seating. Today, a Broadway ticket to see *Hamilton* cost over \$500.00 for balcony seating and over \$1,000.00 for orchestra seating. Ticket prices are mindboggling. We all know how valuable it is for our students to see the high quality live professional theatre here in Chicago; yet again, it is simply out of the financial reach of my students to do so. I work hard to find avenues of revenue to help offset the ticket price so that my students can afford our Chicago professional theatre ticket prices.

Technology has affected and changed our assumptions of cultural consumption. We now can get anything we want, when we want it, delivered directly to our homes. We can shop at home, at work, on our phones while on the train going to work, sitting in a Starbucks sipping coffee, etc. Moreover, online purchases can be personalized and customized to meet our specific wants and needs. This type of personalization and customization cannot be met in the theatre where certain times are set, in a set venue, coupled with the inconvenience of

traveling to the theatre and finding parking. With this in mind, what is our future when we ask a perspective audience member to pay an outrageous amount for a ticket to see one of our professional theatre productions when they are used to downloading movies, songs, and more on the Internet for \$0.99 to \$7.00? Not to mention what technology has done to the average person's attention span. New plays have gone from two to three acts to 80 minutes with no intermission. Ben then joked, "Aren't you glad you invited me speak to brighten your day today?" We laughed, but realized the depth and seriousness of what he was laying out for us.

Ben stressed that even though many who work in the arena of live professional performing arts feel the performing arts are threatened, endangered by technology, that we actually should choose to believe that we are engaged in an arts reformation that is caused, in part, by technology. Technology cannot replace the live professional performing arts because the very nature of live performing arts causes us to gather as a community and breathe the same air together - to conspire together: in the theatre this means actor to actor, actor to audience member, and audience member to audience member. In the time of our 45th president, where the level of character attacks is shocking, the endorsement of violence is appalling, where ideas are reduced to tweets, and there is a blatant violation of our American principles, the live performing arts provide intelligent dialogue, deep listening, empathy, inclusion, civic discourse and the creation of true community. A community and home for every race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affinity that celebrates the things that bind us rather than divide us.

How can we bring our audiences back to the enriching experiences that we provide? Ben provided us with some excellent advice.

1. The way we talk about the arts alienates us from our audiences. In our advertising, marketing, and when discussing the live performing arts, use words and phrases that stress "creative expression" or "creativity" rather than "the arts."
2. Know that our audiences value the social bonding aspects of live performing arts. Ben mentioned a marketing campaign that took this knowledge to heart. Instead of producing specific show logos for a theatre season and beautiful pictures of past shows, the campaign used images of couples and families enjoying the experience together. Images which caused people to say, "Where can I get that?" Audience attendance grew.
3. The live performing arts need to incorporate the audiences as co-creators of the art. We need to make experiences that are springboards to creativity. In his Ted Talk, "Why The Live Arts Matter," Ben made this statement:

Chris Anderson, someone I trust you all know, editor in chief of Wired magazine and author of *The Long Tail*, really was the first, for me, to nail a lot of this. He wrote a long time ago, you know, thanks to the invention of the Internet, web technology,

minicams and more, the means of artistic production have been democratized for the first time in all of human history. In the 1930s, if any of you wanted to make a movie, you had to work for Warner Brothers or RKO, because who could afford a movie set and lighting equipment and editing equipment and scoring, and more? And now who in this room doesn't know a 14 year-old hard at work on her second, third, or fourth movie?

All you have to do is turn on the television, walk into a coffee house, attend a film festival, witness a religious service, or perform a search on YouTube, and you will see that people are participating in creative activities. Some of these amateur artists are actually presenting work that is of high professional quality. This presents a challenge to what we consider our traditional venues of live performing arts. Ben stated, "We now live in a world defined by participation." We can capitalize on this.

With this in mind, a professional orchestra created what they called the "Rusty Musicians Program." Audience members, who play an instrument, audition to perform with the orchestra. For one concert, the size of the orchestra is doubled. The selected "rusty musicians" play the concert sitting next to the professionals. The audience members are co-creators of the art. Needless to say, these concerts sell out.

Many productions of The Music Man incorporate local high school marching bands to participate in the "76 Trombones" finale. The examples are many.

In the same TED Talk mentioned above, Ben also stated: Today's dance world is not defined solely by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or the National Ballet of Canada, but by Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange - a multi-generational, professional dance company, whose dancers range in age from 18 to 82, and who work with genomic scientists to embody the DNA strand and with nuclear physicists at CERN. Today's professional theater community is defined, not only by the Shaw and Stratford Festivals, but by the Cornerstone Theater of Los Angeles - a collective of artists that after 9/11, brought together 10 different religious communities - the Baha'i, the Catholic, the Muslim, the Jewish, even the Native American and the gay and lesbian communities of faith, helping them create their own individual plays and one massive play, where they explored the differences in their faith and found commonality as an important first step toward cross-community healing. Today's performers, like Rhodessa Jones, work in women's prisons, helping women prisoners articulate the pain of incarceration, while today's playwrights and directors work with youth gangs to find alternate channels to violence and more and more and more. And indeed, I think, rather than being annihilated, the performing arts are poised on the brink of a time when we will be more important than we have ever been.

While Ben's talk was only an hour long, I left feeling inspired to rethink how I can begin include members of the community into my work at Harper College. I am challenged to think beyond my "Coffee with the Director and Dramaturg" events to find ways for my audiences to become co-creators with me. I hope I was able to adequately capture what Ben did for us in attendance that day. It was an inspirational call to action. I encourage you to view his TED talk. [Click here.](#) You won't be

disappointed. In the end Ben praised us for our work, asked us to join him in his call to action, and to continue to hold high the value of our work in the live professional performing arts.

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ADVERTISING WITH SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR COMMUNITY THEATRE

By Kathy Missel

One of the biggest challenges community theatres face is marketing their productions. In the past, we sent out emails to local newspapers and crossed our fingers that one of them would actually be interested in running an article about the show. Maybe we did a radio interview or two, then sat back and hoped and prayed for the best.

Enter the world of social media. It's now much easier to reach local theatregoers over the internet in ways that previously were not possible. But just because social networking has become a part of our daily lives, that doesn't mean we are all internet marketing experts. Even if you've created Facebook events for show and posted updates on how to buy tickets, here are a few other things you can do to successfully promote your productions.

Show off your show with photos. Social network users are drawn to visual content, so keep them intrigued by posting photos on all of your social network platforms. Pictures from auditions and rehearsals give everyone a look at what goes on behind the scenes. Pictures from dress rehearsals show followers what they can expect when they buy a ticket. When people see how exciting your production looks, they'll want to get in on the fun and that helps build audience numbers.

Entertain your followers with frequent and diverse content. We live in an age where we're bombarded with information from the moment we log on to the internet. Post several times a week, but try to keep the content interesting. Repeatedly posting the same message "Come see our show" can get stale and sound desperate. Remember, that for your audience, it's what's in it for them. Feature cast member bios, use photos, run ticket giveaway contests and encourage everyone involved to like and share the posts to gain added exposure.

Check out other theatre pages. Look to see what other theatre groups are doing. Do you see posts that get a lot of "likes"? There's a good chance that your followers might like the same type of content. Take a look at the content that professional productions are posting on their social networking sites. While you won't be able to mimic all of the content you see on those professional social networking accounts, keeping an eye on them should certainly give you some ideas.

Social networking is a great opportunity for community theatre, but it requires knowledge and skill to fully utilize its

power to connect. Put these tips to work for you to help build your audiences.

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A PLAY FOR ALL THE FAMILY

By Liz Peterson

If you'd like to put on a play that is full of catchy songs and loveable characters who leave everyone happy and smiling, consider doing *THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*, a musical by Liz Peterson, based on the classic novel by Kenneth Grahame.



Rat, Toad, Mole, and Badger in Urbana, with Weasels looking on

The show was launched in a small way in Highland Park more than 30 years ago. The World Premier consisted of two sopranos, two altos, and a narrator performing the concert version in the living room of a friend. Since then *WIND* has been done many times in schools, youth theaters, and community theaters throughout the country, and at a boys' school in South Africa as well. In March of this year, at the University of Illinois Lab School in Urbana, there was an outstanding production featuring a new orchestration by Stuart Leitch, with Chris Guyotte as Director and Rick Murphy as Music Director.

The show is extremely flexible. It works equally well with a large or small cast and with simple or elaborate sets and costumes. The minimum requirements are four talented singer/actors of either gender, an imaginative director, and an enthusiastic supporting cast.

In times of crisis *WIND* has proven to be surprisingly resilient. There was the time when Toad resigned the day before opening night, the time when the director's boyfriend broke up with her on the day of the dress rehearsal, and the time when everyone in a not-small school had to have a speaking part. In all of these instances the play came through with flying colors. Once it even survived the Toad who couldn't sing.

[Click here](#) for photos, songs, and video clips from outstanding productions plus information about where to obtain scripts, piano/vocal score, accompaniment CD, and orchestration.

Some of the items are available from the playwright for free.

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