

IN THIS ISSUE...

[ITA's 40th Annual Convention - 9/21/13 - Save the Date!](#)

[ITA Seeks Nominations for Board AND Awards of Excellence](#)

[Illinois Humanities Council Recognizes ITA Member](#)

[Community Theatres - An Offer That's Too Good to Refuse](#)

[Big Changes for 2014 Illinois High School Theatre Festival](#)

[All-State 2014 Announces Auditions for "The Grapes of Wrath"](#)

[ITA Now Accepting Submissions for IHSTF 2016 Executive Director](#)

[What Are We Waiting For?...Godot?](#)

[Meeting Standards with Theatre Education](#)

[Colleges Celebrate the Best of High School Talent](#)

[Theatrical Skills Workshops - Input Needed TODAY!](#)

[Colin's Corner: New From New York](#)

[ITA Member Spotlight: Kate Klemp](#)

[Alternative Job Opportunities for Theatre Teachers](#)

[Make Art Work Meeting in Peoria](#)

[Discussion Boards](#)

[ITA Announcements/Events/Other Events of Interest](#)

SAVE THE DATE

ITA's 40th Annual Convention

Play Right! Rediscovering the Playful Side of Chicago

September 21, 2013

The ITA is thrilled to celebrate its 40th year by rediscovering the playful side of Chicago via bus!

This year's Convention provides ample opportunities to:

- **Network with fellow colleagues.**
- **Tour some of Chicago's hottest theatre companies.**
- **Engage with area playwrights.**
- **Network with fellow colleagues.**
- **Play games and win prizes.**
- **Celebrate the achievements of ITA's Award of Excellence winners.**
- **Enjoy dinner and a show - Chicago style!**

The cost for this year's Convention is \$85 for students, \$105 for ITA Members, and \$125 for Non-Members. Please mark your calendars today. Registration is limited and will be available shortly. For more information, visit www.illinoistheatre.org.

[**Back to Top**](#)

ITA Seeks Nominations

By Betsy Williams, ITA 1st Vice-President

2013-2015 Board of Directors

Attention ITA Members: Are you interested in serving on the ITA Board of Directors? We are currently seeking nominations for the following positions on the 2013-2015 Board: President-Elect, First Vice-President, Treasurer, and a representative for each interest area (College/University, Community Theatre, Creative Drama, Professional, Secondary, and Theatre for Young Audiences).

For more information or to nominate a candidate, please contact Betsy Williams at betsywilliams11@gmail.com, or visit the [Board page](#) of the ITA website.



ITA Board Member Karen Hall presents the 2012 Award of Honor to fellow ITA Member Mark Begovich

2013 Awards of Excellence

Each year the Illinois Theatre Association recognizes both individuals and organizations for their significant contributions of promoting quality theatre throughout Illinois. Recipients are nominated by the Illinois Theatre community, selected by ITA's Division Representatives, and approved by ITA's Board of Directors. For more information about how to submit a nomination, and a list of the ITA's 2012 Awards of Excellence winners, [click here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

ITA Member Receives Recognition from the Illinois Humanities Council



Dan Haughey, past ITA President and Director of Advocacy, has been selected for the Illinois Humanities Council 2013 "Road Scholars" Speaker's Bureau roster for his new one-person show entitled, "E.A. POE: The Imagination of Edgar Allan Poe." Haughey is one of 28 performing artists and humanities scholars selected for the 2013 I. H. C. touring roster. For over 15 years, the I. H. C. "Road Scholars" program has persisted in its statewide popularity throughout Illinois.

In his monodrama on Poe, Dan becomes a modern literary critic for a prominent metropolitan newspaper as he reflects on and illuminates through the art of oral interpretation the life epic and excerpts from some of Edgar Allan Poe's most entertaining literary works including "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Raven." "E. A. POE" can be booked by schools, libraries, non-profit venues, and clubs across Illinois at the Illinois Humanities website, www.prairie.org, or at www.danact3.com. In a recent "Road Scholars" article, Haughey states, "I want to take audience awareness beyond the foreboding nature of Poe's words. I will explore the musicality and sensations of

his words." Haughey is a Professor Emeritus in Speech and Theatre Arts from [Black Hawk College](#), Moline, Illinois.

[Back to Top](#)

COMMUNITY THEATRE

An Offer That's Too Good to Refuse

By Dr. Joan E. Kole, ITA Community Theatre Division Representative

We community theatre people are proud of what we do, and we should be. We donate our time, build skills and friendships, and provide live theatre in our communities. Each of our theatres has a mission statement, and that mission statement should contain strong language about "improving the quality of what is put on a stage." But what if your theatre is in a community that does not send a reviewer or critic to see your shows? What if your theatre cannot afford to send anyone to state, regional or national workshops? How can your theatre learn about what it is doing to honor production values and, more importantly, do an even better job of it? There are a number of ways that can be accomplished. Ask someone who has a background in theatre to critique a performance; ask someone who has no theatre background to tell you what they "got" from a performance; or find a college near you and ask a faculty member to see a performance and critique it. But one very good way to gain that kind of insight is to have your show adjudicated.

Adjudication is descriptive, not judgmental. I often hear community theatre directors/producers say, "We have first time actors in our show, and if they hear something negative they won't be back." Trained adjudicators aren't negative critics! Trained adjudicators describe what they see and hear, using theatrical standards. Is your theatre company ready to have an adjudication experience for FREE?

An offer too good to refuse? Nothing is ever really free? Well, this offer is too good to refuse and is free.

All too often, our community theatre productions are not reviewed, let alone adjudicated, leaving us without the benefit of an endorsement that reinforces what we are doing well in our home theatres and what and where we might be even better.

Dr. Joan E. Kole, an **AACT** trained adjudicator who has served as an adjudicator for AACT's state and regional festivals will adjudicate a performance of one of your productions F R E E! All you need to do is contact her, send her a copy of the script you will be performing ahead of time, and provide her with a complimentary ticket to one of your performances. She's also willing to conduct a workshop for you... for FREE!



Your company will decide if the adjudication will be "public" (with audience members who want to hear the adjudication following the performance) or "private" (delivered to only the cast, staff and crew).

Too good to refuse? Free? Yup! Contact Dr. Kole at 815-398-8090 or jekdirector@rockriver.net

Back to Top



SECONDARY SCHOOL THEATRE
Big Changes for 2014 Illinois High School Theatre Festival
 By Mark Kaetzer, ITA Secondary Division Representative

Ah, spring! A season when most high school theatre teachers are putting the finishing touches on their final productions of the school year, and have visions of summer vacation in the not too distant future... But spring is also when planning for the **Illinois High School Theatre Festival** kicks into high gear.

The 2014 Festival's theme is "Explore the Extraordinary" and promises some exciting new innovations. The biggest changes involve a reworking of the schedule of events. Thursday evening's activities will kick-off in a much more engaging fashion by offering students and teachers three options of events to attend. These include a performance of the All-State play, a master class workshop, and another performance yet to be determined.

Continuing in the spirit of making the Festival more engaging, many of the performances, workshops, and activities throughout the weekend promise to be more interactive than in the past. Finally, in place of the traditional opening performance, there will be a culminating closing performance featuring flying effects by **Hall & Associates** and a video montage of the Festival weekend.

Executive Director Demetrios Pappageorge shared some comments about the 2014 Festival saying he is "excited about the changes and encourages schools to explore the extraordinary characteristics that make theatre unique from film and television. This could mean submitting to the Festival a play that is staged in a unique a style or presenting a production that audiences rarely have the opportunity to see." He added, "It all starts with asking oneself two simple questions: What makes theatre unique, and how can we make it extraordinary?"

For more information, teachers and students are encouraged to peruse the spring web posting at **www.illinoistheatrefest.org**. It currently includes information about auditions for the All-State Production: *The Grapes of Wrath*. Information on submitting full length and showcase plays to perform at the Festival, Workshops and much more will be available in May.

[Back to Top](#)



**ATTENTION
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:**

**Announcing Auditions for the
2014 Illinois High School Theatre Festival
All-State Production**



THE GRAPES of WRATH

Written by John Steinbeck, Adapted by Frank Galati
Directed by Mark Kaetzer (Glenbard East High School)

**AUDITION INFORMATION
IS NOW AVAILABLE ON-LINE!**

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

The deadline for submission is May 21, 2013.

Questions should be directed to:
Justin Mayo, Producer at jmayo@ihstf.org

This program is partially funded by a grant from



The ITA is Now Accepting Applications for

IHSTF 2016 Executive Director

REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for selection, the Festival Director applicant must:

- a) have served at least two years on the Festival Committee.
- b) be a member of the Illinois Theatre Association.
- c) have had previous Festival experience, i.e. bringing students, evaluating performances, conducting workshops, and/or presenting productions.
- d) agree to a three-year commitment: * one year as Executive Director elect * one year as Executive Director * one year as Executive Director Emeritus.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The applicant must either submit a letter which at minimum includes:

- a) previous Festival experience.
- b) qualifications.
- c) the names and phone numbers of three references. (Two of these should be people who worked with the applicant on a Festival Committee.)

OR complete an [on-line form](#). All on-line submissions must be received by May 15th. All snail mail submissions must be postmarked by May 15th. If sending via snail mail, send to:

Illinois Theatre Association
Attn: Kristen Mackie, President
123 Mill Pond Drive
Glendale Heights, IL 60139

[Back to Top](#)

CREATIVE DRAMA

What Are We Waiting For? Godot?

By Stacy Deemar, ITA Creative Drama Division Representative

The perpetual smartphone pollution occurring in our theatres is appalling. Regardless of the art being performed, the movie being projected onto the screen, or the socioeconomic, racial or gender of the audience members, smartphone pollution is an epidemic that desperately needs to be abolished.

As a small child, I developed a strong reverence for the theatre and all of its facets. My love for the arts began with my ballet teacher and continued with my family and school teachers. I have never strayed from my great role models and the discipline they taught me. Furthermore, I carry on the same traditions in my own practices. Unfortunately, several theatre patrons do not share similar views and instead choose to be consumed with their smartphone during performances.

Where have we failed as actors, directors, playwrights, stage managers, house managers, dancers, singers, musicians, lighting designers, set designers, costume designers, sound designers, stunt doubles, cinematographers, artistic directors, drama teachers, etc. that are theatres are filled with toxic smartphone pollution? Why are we failing our own industry? Why aren't we taking a stronger stand on this matter?



There are many tactics people have claimed to try in their theatre in order to reduce smartphone pollution. Common strategies include announcements before the show begins, commercials, signs, notes in programs, etc., and these messages have made unsatisfactory progress in eliminating smartphone pollution.

Let's first acknowledge that we have failed at getting this situation under control. Moreover, we are nowhere near our ultimate goal of eliminating the problem. Most of the industry is in denial about this epidemic; otherwise, we would not be in this unfortunate predicament.

Many theatres are afraid to take the necessary measures to stop smartphone pollution for fear of alienating their customer base. Kowtowing



to the perpetrator appears to be more important than addressing loyal patrons like myself. This mentality needs to change or theatres are going to continue to lose patrons.

Michael Bloomberg, in his ban on restaurants and bar smoking in New York City, did not acquiesce to those inflicted with a smoking addiction. Restaurant and bar owners complained incessantly that their businesses would be drastically tarnished by a smoking ban. Determined to change the air quality, Mr. Bloomberg did not deviate from his plan and the results were successful. Non-smokers like myself, no longer had to be subjected to air pollution while eating a meal, and restaurants and bars did not lose

revenue.

If Michael Bloomberg impacted air pollution in restaurants and bars, then the performing arts industry can certainly put an end to noise pollution in theatres. Theatres are sacred and people who participate in creating art deserve respect. As a community, we must unite in our message and demand that audience members act responsibly or they are unwelcome. If we continue on our current course of addressing smartphone pollution, audience members will forever disrupt and destroy our art.

Our mission begins by informing patrons when they purchase tickets for a theatrical performance and/or movie that smartphone use is prohibited during the presentation. When a smartphone sounds or a patron uses his smartphone during the presentation, he will be asked to leave immediately with no refunds. This disclaimer can be printed on all tickets and be posted on all theatre websites, doors, and lobbies.

Theatres can implement a mandatory cease-and-desist order for all performers when there is smartphone pollution in the audience. The performance will continue only when the perpetrator is escorted out of the theatre.

In the Chicago tri-state area, there are cameras at numerous intersections to remind drivers to follow the rules of the road. There are also signs that read, "Photo enforced" with a picture of a traffic light at many intersections, too. Perhaps we need to implement a similar system in our theatres. We can set up signs that read, "Photo enforced" with a picture of a smartphone and a line through it and place cameras on the audience. When a patron violates the smartphone rules, the patron will be escorted immediately out of the theatre with no refund. Furthermore, the patron will be banned from that theatre for one year.



Placing smartphone mailboxes with keys in theatre lobbies will also eliminate smartphone pollution. All patrons will be required to lock their smartphones in the mailbox that corresponds with their seat assignment. Smartphones will be safely stored outside of the performance area and are collected upon exiting the theatre.

If the signs, posters, cease-and-desist orders, cameras, and smartphone mailboxes fail to make profound changes in our audiences, then banning smartphones in our theatres is our best resolution. Smartphones are currently banned in testing centers, courtrooms, specific areas of hospitals, during take off and landing on an airplane and while driving in many U.S. cities. Including theatres on the list of places where smartphones are banned may be the respite so many avid theatergoers, like myself, gladly welcome.

We have the tools to eradicate smartphone pollution. What are we waiting for? Godot?

[Back to Top](#)

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES Meeting Standards with Theatre Education

By Annie Rezac, ITA Theatre for Young Audiences Division Representative

Through my work at [Communities In Schools of Chicago](#), I am fortunate enough to partner with many amazing theatre organizations that provide quality educational programs to students across the Chicagoland area. These organizations include About Face Theatre, Adventure Stage Chicago,



American Theatre Company, Barrel of Monkeys, Chicago Children's Theatre, Emerald City, Imagination Theatre, Lyric Opera, and Writer's Theatre to name a few.

One thing that all of these theatres have in common is that they are passionate about providing accessible and meaningful creative opportunities for students who need them. Every day, I am in awe of the dedicated people working tirelessly and without significant monetary gains to positively impact the lives of children. These efforts are not without incredible challenges.

Putting aside the constant funding challenges and the obstacles of navigating the public school system, theatres are faced with the increased pressure to develop their curriculums in such a way that align with new Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Illinois State Standards, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards, The Chicago Cultural Plan, The CPS Arts Plan and a plethora of other expectations. With all of these standards having a specific purpose and level of importance, it can be very confusing to scaffold a curriculum that meets all of them.

The question becomes, is it important to meet all of them? I can tell you from my experience with theatres, schools and funders that a certain level of proficiency in aligning to certain standards, along with the ability to show measurable outcomes in meeting said standards is becoming increasingly important.

The saving grace in all of this is that theatre, by nature, aligns with the new Common Core State Standards. CCSS really focuses on accessing student's higher order thinking skills. Theatre explores human nature and requires students to critically think about their existence, actions and relationships. CCSS was developed to hold students to a higher level of thinking and reflection. Finding ways to align theatre curriculum with CCSS standards is a natural fit.



That being said, there is still an enormous amount of complexity when it comes to building an effective and impactful program that also meets the standards and expectations of a vast amount of constituents. The theatre partners that I work with are thoughtfully and rigorously addressing this consistently changing landscape in theatre education. There is trial and error, ups and downs, but always inspiring, dedicated and engaging teaching that is looks to be progressive and innovative.

If you are part of an organization that is working toward building or enhancing a curriculum for students and are looking for more resources, I would encourage you to reach out to other theatres and start a conversation. The more we all share ideas and collaborate, the more effective our programs will be and the more impact we will have on students' lives.

Back to Top

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATRE

Colleges Celebrate the Best of High School Talent

By Allan Kimball, ITA University/College Division Representative

Well, the 2013 **Illinois High School Theatre Festival** is now just a fond memory. What a wonderful weekend it was at the University of Illinois. Outstanding shows and workshops were topped off with the amazing performance of *Memphis*!

But out of the spotlight of these shows and apart from the workshops was another unforgettable Festival experience... college acting auditions and tech portfolio presentations. The 2013 Festival had over 180 eager and talented young people looking for a school where they could pursue their passion for theatre.

Being my first year on the Festival planning committee, I was not sure what to expect on Friday as we started the day-long audition/portfolio process. WOW! The level of talent and professionalism I saw from these young aspiring performers was far beyond what I had even dared to imagine.

As the Division Chair for Humanities at **Southeastern Illinois College**, I saw firsthand what a valuable recruiting tool was being provided to these college representatives who got to spend the day experiencing the talents of these young people. In this day and age of shrinking budgets and growing demands on each member of a department, we are all looking for the "best bang for our buck." Well



look no further! The ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE FESTIVAL and the College Auditions are it!

Over the course of the two-and-a-half day festival, college representatives got to see these students at their performance and technical best. But the icing on the cake is they were also provided the opportunity to meet with prospective students face-to-face to talk about what specific type of program each student was looking for and what the individual institution's program could offer.

So, I want to pass along an invitation to be a part of the 2014 IHSTF College Auditions. This past year, the Festival welcomed over 40 colleges, universities and performance academies. Here in Illinois, we have some of the most talented young people in the nation. As they graduate from high school, they are looking to us (the states colleges and universities) to help shape their futures. And if we (the states colleges and universities) are not attending the Illinois High School Theatre Festival and getting the amazing opportunity to meet these talented young actors and technicians, then it is our loss. They will look somewhere else.

The 2014 Festival is still a little over eight months away, but it is never too early to start planning. I would encourage any school or academy to register to attend the festival and participate in the audition/portfolio process. In addition, I would further encourage schools to be exhibitors. This will allow you to get your school's program in front of close to 4,000 students. To be a part of the 2014 Festival, contact the Illinois High School Theatre Festival at info@ihstf.org.

Back to Top



Chicago Spotlight, Inc.

There's so much more to see!

Theatrical Skills Workshops

2013-2014

AND

Possible Scene Painting Workshop This Summer

Planning is underway for more of our popular workshops in lighting, rigging, painting and sound. We will continue to keep you informed through our emails and here on our website. Watch your inbox!

SEEKING INPUT ON AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY THIS SUMMER

Please reply if interested

IMPORTANT:

To be included in this opportunity you must reply to Steve@ChicagoSpotlight.com by April 26 so we know if we should move forward in our planning.

Chicago Spotlight, Inc. and The USITT Midwest Regional Section are seeking input to hold an intensive 2-day scene painting workshop at American Players Theatre (APT) in Spring Green, WI (approximately 3 hours from Chicago, 1 hour from Madison) around the APT production schedule. We must have enough interest if we are to continue with our planning.

Tiffany Fier, APT's Scenic Charge Artist and a university professor who has previously taught intensive scene painting sessions, will lead participants through hands-on practice in a variety of painting techniques. Exact techniques will be determined based on a survey of participants.

Dates: Please reply to all dates below that would be workable for you. The date and registration will be announced about May 22 via e-mail to those who have replied to this notice.

Possible Dates:

Sunday, June 30 and Monday, July 1
 Sunday, July 7 and Monday, July 8

Sunday, August 11 and Monday, August 12

Cost: Exact amount of the workshop is TBA, but will be no more than \$75.
 Transportation, lodging and food will be at participant's expense.
 Attendance at the Sunday night performance at APT would be optional

Information about the area:

American Players Theatre: <http://americanplayers.org/plan-your-visit/>
 Spring Green is located in a beautiful part of WI and is a tourist destination known for being the former summer home of Frank Lloyd Wright and his architecture school along with several other buildings he designed. Located only 5 miles away is the " House on the Rock."

Again - it is important to reply -

To be included in this opportunity you must reply to steve@chicagospotlight.com by **April 26 so we know if we should move forward in our planning.**

Interested in Hosting a Chicago Spotlight Theatrical Skills Workshop?

We are always looking for new venues for the Theatrical Skills Workshops.
 If your school or theatre is interested in hosting, contact Steve Jacobs for additional information.
 Host schools/theatres receive a discount for their students/staff.

Address all inquiries to:
 Steve Jacobs
 Director of Training Workshops
 Chicago Spotlight, Inc.
 1658 West Carroll Street
 Chicago, IL 60612
 312-455-1171
steve@chicagospotlight.com

Back to Top

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE

Colin's Corner: New from New York

By Colin Douglas, ITA Member

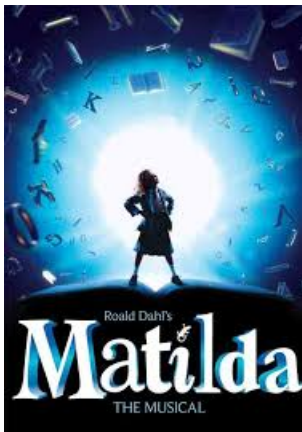
Thinking about a Spring Fling in the Big Apple this year? With the weather warming up, it's a great time for taking in some of Broadway's (and Off-Broadway's) newest plays and musicals. Some shows opened a week earlier, some I caught in their final days of previews, and one I enjoyed in its final performance. But more about that later.

If you're planning a trip, I highly recommend going online first to www.Playbill.com and registering (forfree) for their discount club.

You'll receive notifications in your e-mail (or you can just shop at their site) regarding discounted Broadway and Off-Broadway theatre tickets. With savings from 20-50% off box office prices, your entertainment dollar will go much further. Of course you can always check at the **TKTS Booth in Times Square** each day for their discounts (the Theatre Development Fund also sponsors a cell phone app that allows you to see what's available, even before you leave your hotel room), but if the weather's inclement or you simply prefer dealing directly with the box office ticketing agent at each theatre (which I prefer), printing out their online coupons is the best way to get terrific seats. You can even use those same discounts when ordering online or over the phone, but I prefer face-to-face interaction with the ticket agents. I find the service friendlier and more personal that way, and I think I usually get a better seat. By the way, www.theatrebox.com is another online source for theatre discounts, as well. Sometimes the discounts may be even better at one site over another, so comparative shopping is smart.



That said, some of Broadway's best productions in years are either currently playing in previews, have just opened or are about to do so. The BEST show on Broadway this season is, without a doubt, *Matilda*. Based on Roald Dahl's delightful children's novel, this family musical tells the story of a highly intelligent little girl with great imagination and super powers, who learns how to deal with her selfish, short-sighted parents and a monster of a school headmistress. This production features four



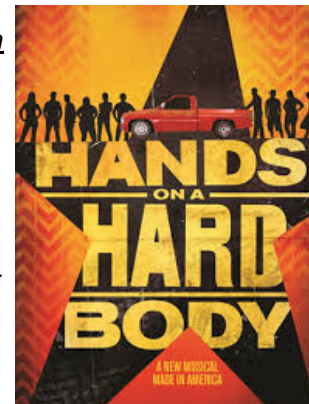
different young actresses sharing the role of Matilda throughout the eight-show week, in addition to a cast of super-talented, highly-energetic children and adults. In drag, Bertie Carvel plays the role of Miss Trunchbull, the evil headmistress as a real force of nature. Lauren Ward's Miss Honey, Matilda's sweetly supportive teacher, is unbelievable, as are Gabriel Ebert and Lesli Margherita as the Wormwoods, Matilda's ignorant parents. Together, the cast, the astounding sets, choreography and music make *Matilda* THE show to see this year.

In the category of Best Revival of a Musical, the Award has to go to Diane Paulus' extraordinary re-imagining of the Stephen Schwartz musical, *Pippin*. Set in a circus overflowing with unbelievable feats of artistry, this production will leave you breathless. Patina Miller, the star of Broadway's *Sister Act*, is a brilliant Leading Player. Broadway veterans Terrance Mann, Andrea Martin and Charlotte d'Amboise play Charlemagne, Berthe and Fastrada with finesse and sheer joy. And Matthew James Thomas greatly impresses in the title role. And then there's Schwartz's wonderful score and his book with a message that is so timely. This is another must-see production.

Cinderella, the Rodgers & Hammerstein classic that held such great promise for me is, alas, pretty disappointing. Most of the original score still remains, but far too many tunes from the composer's trunk of forgotten music clutter up the show. The result is a production that's far too slow and long. Laura Osnes is fine in the title role and Santino Fontana makes a dashing Prince Topher. Harriet Harris, Marla Mindelle and Ann Harada make the most of the Stepmother and Stepsisters (with Harada the most triumphant), and Victoria Clark's Fairy Godmother becomes the musical's shining star. However, Douglas Carter Beane's new, updated book just doesn't work, which is a shame, but the real reason to see this show is for William Ivey Long's glorious costumes, especially the instantaneous transformations for Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother.

The new revival of *Annie* is lush, polished and fun to see again. Lilla Crawford is a strong, no-nonsense young heroine and Tony-winner Katie Finneran is a funny, but often shrill Miss Hannigan. However Anthony Warlow may be the best Oliver Warbucks I've ever seen or heard. He's terrific! The sets, costumes and the entire ensemble of hard-working actors and dogs make this an enjoyable evening of theatre, especially for youngsters.

Two musicals I saw were either in their final days or soon will be. *Hands on a Hardbody*, the new musical with the unusual title about ten Texans vying for a chance to win a brand-new pickup truck, is sweet, funny and touching. It's like *A Chorus Line* for everyday folks, and I have no doubt that it will find a new life in regional theatres (Marriott's Lincolnshire would be a perfect venue for this show). It contains music ranging from gospel, to rock-a-billy to country pop, and the choreography is inventive and astounding. Hunter Foster, Keith Carradine and the entire ensemble are moving and very real in their portrayals of down-and-out citizens hoping for their piece of the American Dream. It unfortunately closed this past week, but watch for a new production to be remounted within the next year or two.



The other musical that isn't long for its Off-Broadway world is Gerard Alessandrini's most recent incarnation of scalding theatre parody, *Forbidden Broadway: Alive and Kicking*. This scintillating musical revue lampoons such recent productions as *Once*, *Evita*, *Rock of Ages*, *Newsies*, and *The Book of Mormon*. He even takes a stab at television and movies with scathing looks at "Smash" and *Les Miz*. This cast is, as always, unbelievably talented and versatile and will leave your sides aching with laughter.

Two plays well worth a look are the Nathan Lane star turn in *The Nance*, Douglas Carter Beane's heartfelt look at 1930's New York, burlesque, and gay rights. Lane is brilliant, both in his comedy and his dramatic, poignant moments. His supporting cast, including Jonny Orsini, Lewis J. Stadlen, and Cady Huffman, make this a play that must be seen to be appreciated.

But Christopher Durang's latest comedy, *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike*, is the absolute jewel, in my opinion. Starring Frasier's David Hyde Pierce (in a Tony Award deserving performance) and film star Sigourney Weaver, with brilliant performances by Kristine Nielsen, Billy Magnussen, Shalita Grant, and Genevieve Angelson, this comedy is loosely based upon the plays of Chekov. Durang takes a close look at fame, aging, and coping with an ever-changing world. It's a funny, beautifully-acted play



that will appeal to more mature audiences who will easily see themselves in several of the characters.

So if a trip to New York is being planned, consider these new productions and take advantage of the great discounts for tickets available to you online. You'll be able to see more for less and even come home with money in your wallet and a smile on your face.

[Back to Top](#)

ITA Member Spotlight: Kate Klemp

Submitted by Judy Klingner, ITA Second Vice President

Please describe your first experience with the theatre.

I don't remember my very first experience with the theatre; my grandparents took me to plays all the time as a child, earlier than I can remember, and I grew up on musical soundtracks such as *Godspell*, *A Chorus Line*, and *Into the Woods*. My first experience acting in a show was in the 4th grade; I played "Viola La Bamba" in a children's play about musical instruments. Once I found costuming, tech, and directing in high school, I was sure theatre was in my future in one capacity or another.

Tell us about your education/training in theatre.

Other than my extracurricular theatre in K-12, I attended a children's theatre camp founded by my aunt (a theatre teacher and director in Wisconsin). After a few changes of college majors (and colleges), I ended up at Illinois State University in the theatre program with a directing emphasis. By the end of my first year, I got talked into exploring the Theatre Education program, and I finished with a double-major in Theatre Education and Theatre Design/Production, with a minor in History Education.

Tell us about your career path.

My career path has been focused on education. I started in international education, teaching English as a Foreign Language in China after I graduated from ISU. When I returned from that excellent experience, I taught summer school in Decatur, IL. Due to the tight job market, I had to wait two more years before getting a job teaching theatre part-time at Plano High School in Plano, IL.

Have you ever worked with theatre in a different capacity than you do now?

If there's a theatre job, I've probably done it. I design costumes for Music Makers of Western Springs. I worked as a tech crew member and stage manager at Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts. I stage managed at Community Players in Bloomington, IL. I was the assistant costume designer on a show at Chemically Imbalanced Theatre in Chicago. I worked at Timber Lake Playhouse early in my college years in the costume shed. My focus is usually costuming or stage management, but I'm always up for any job that's related to theatre.

What is the best advice you have received regarding your career goals?

Keep at it. My dad is always the first person I turn to about teaching. He coached a lot of young people, and he knows what it's like to make a connection with them (or to miss a connection with them). Any time I have a great day or a terrible day, I call him and we talk about the feeling you get when you see comprehension dawning on a student's face, or the feeling you get when you know you didn't do your best and wish you could go back and fix it. Regardless of how good or bad the day is, you have to keep at it, because the job is never done. There's always more to do and more to learn.

Please share details about a theatre project/production with which you are currently involved.

We actually just finished *These Shining Lives* by Melanie Marnich at Plano High, and I was really excited to get the kids involved with a project that has local relevance and major impact. *These Shining Lives* is about female factory workers in Ottawa, IL in the 1920s and 1930s who contract radium poisoning from painting glow-in-the-dark-watch dials. We took a field trip to Ottawa's Historical Society to learn more about the women the story is based on. We then took a second field trip last week (a month after our show closed) to see the same production at Aurora University. My students got an excellent opportunity to watch the work they had done from the audience's perspective, and they made some great connections between the shows.

What is the biggest challenge you face related to your work in the theatre?

The biggest challenge I face right now is having time to accomplish everything I want to in a theatre season. The show goes up, but you never get to do everything you wanted to do during rehearsal or during technical crew calls. It's hard letting go of that sometimes. The nicest thing for me has been training the students to run the show themselves. That way, it's much easier to let go of the show when it opens and let it be what it's going to be.

Of what theatrical accomplishment are you most proud?

I'm most proud of teaching my students to take responsibility for the production. They rose to the occasion in all cases - I had two freshmen stage managers this year, and both of them called the shows like professionals. I was really pleased to turn the light board and the sound board over to tech students. Watching some of them go from fearful to confident in front of the equipment in a matter of days was a wonderful experience.

What inspired you to join the ITA?

I was looking for a way to reconnect with the theatre community. I've been moving all over the state since I returned from China, taking every theatre job I can get, so I felt a little disappointed. I was grateful for the opportunity to connect back with the community and I volunteered at the ITA Professional Auditions in Chicago this winter. I had an excellent time trading stories and methods with my fellow ITA members while we helped a new group of actors get their moment in front of some of Chicagoland's most amazing theatre companies.

Back to Top

Alternative Job Opportunities for Theatre Teachers

By Kate Klemp, ITA Member



Once again I find myself on the job hunt for theatre teaching positions, and I must admit, the prospects are not very promising. Almost all of the public education jobs in Illinois are posted on [K12JobSpot](#). As of last week, only two high school theatre positions were available in the state of Illinois, as well as one position in a middle school. It is safe to say these jobs are highly coveted and will have an influx of candidates. Most alumni of high school theatre education programs have a supplementary teaching certificate in another subject, primarily English. I am in a unique position as my supplementary certificate is in Social Studies. This makes the job search even more difficult; most schools with few theatre classes supplement their theatre teaching position with English classes. Thankfully, I was able to get a phone interview for a theatre position last week. The questions I was asked focused on topics such as formative assessments, developing a strong theatre program, and which skills students are expected to master in a beginning acting course. I currently have one year of teaching experience in a part-time theatre position, and I used the conclusions I have drawn from that job to answer the questions to the best of my ability.

Despite the fact that the teaching market is fairly discouraging in our field (and it has been for several years), it is not the only way to use a theatre education degree. I've begun searching for jobs in the non-profit sector; jobs in this arena that require or prefer a background in education are actually quite prevalent.

Many of Illinois' finest non-profit organizations deal in educational outreach, extracurricular activities, and supplemental academics. Often, these non-profits are looking for people with creative experience as well, and a theatre degree (with or without the teaching certificate) may go a long way to make a candidate stand out. Sources for jobs in this arena include websites such as [Lumity Nonprofit Opportunities](#), [Idealist](#), and [The Chronicle of Philanthropy's job board](#).



Good luck to all job seekers!

Back to Top

MAKE ART WORK Meeting in Peoria

By Jim De Young, Emeritus Professor of Theatre Arts, Monmouth College

My wife and I drove to Peoria's new [Riverfront Museum](#) in March to participate in a program called [MAKE ART WORK](#) sponsored jointly by [Arts Alliance Illinois](#) and [ArtsPartners of Central Illinois](#). The



purpose was to explore how the arts support jobs, generate revenue for governments, attract tourists, and spark human creativity on all levels.

The keynote speaker was Randy Cohen, Vice President for Research and Policy for Americans for the Arts. His primary purpose was to highlight a major national economic study on the contributions of the arts to our national economy. To localize his talk, he concentrated on the figures from the state of Illinois and the Peoria area. So if you need a couple of key statistics to insert into a grant application or simply something to add to a conversation with someone enamored with cutting the so called "frill" areas out of budgets, here are a few quick notes:



- **Non-profit Arts Organizations contribute over 20 million dollars to the Greater Peoria economy and 2.75 billion dollars to the Illinois economy each year.**
- In the Peoria area, over 14 million of this 20 million comes in direct spending by arts and culture organizations in creating events, constructing and maintaining buildings, and paying their employees.
- The final 6 million comes from ancillary spending by consumers as they buy fuel for travel, lodge near the arts venue, purchase food or beverages, and shop at other commercial retail outlets during their stay.
- The national study covered over 33,000 arts related businesses in Illinois and also pointed out that those businesses employ almost 80,000 people statewide and account for 850 full time equivalent jobs in Peoria.
- The study also emphasizes that most of the spending by arts agencies and their customers stays local and thus returns tax revenues to states and municipalities.

As artists, we often want to push strongly for the human emotional benefits arguments when we are challenged, but as strong as we may feel about them, it also behooves us to emphasize that cutting the arts cuts needed revenue for a community. The bean counter needs to be told the following: "It makes economic sense to support the Arts!"

For more details on this report go to <http://artsalliance.org/research/arts-economic-prosperity>.

[Back to Top](#)

DISCUSSION BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Did you know that the ITA has Discussion Boards on its website where you can share stories, post job openings, and announce auditions? Click on the following links to access specific areas of the Discussion Boards:

DISCUSSIONS

College/University

[Click here](#) to be begin a discussion.

Community Theatre

[Click here](#) to begin a discussion.

Creative Drama and Theatre for Young Audiences Highlight:

How to Democratize Questioning -- Alternatives to Asking Questions Publicly and Verbally

[Click here](#) to be brought to this discussion.

Professional Theatre

[Click here](#) to begin a discussion.

Secondary Education Highlights:

Use of copyrighted photos and news clips in productions

[Click here](#) to be brought to this discussion.

Looking for *Brigadoon* Costumes? Contact Wheeling High School!

[Click here](#) to be brought to this discussion.

COMMUNITY AND LIFE EVENTS

Click here to be brought to this discussion.

JOB POSTINGS

Click here to be brought to this discussion.

AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Click here to be brought to this discussion.

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

Forum Highlight: Chicago Arts Educator Forum

Click here to be brought to this discussion.

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Did you know that you can also list your performances on the ITA Performance Calendar?

Click here to view current performances, or to list your show today!

FEATURED PERFORMANCE:



GreenMan Theatre

Presents

AFTER THE END OF THE WORLD

May 3-5, 10-12, and 17-19

Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30pm, Sundays at 2:00pm

Tickets

\$15-17

232 S. York, Elmhurst, IL 60148

630-464-2646

gmttboxoffice@gmail.com

GreenMan Theatre Website

WANT TO FEATURE YOUR PERFORMANCE HERE?

Be sure to list your performance on the ITA Performance Calendar and your show just may be featured!

Back to Top

ITA ANNOUNCEMENTS

The ITA's Annual Convention will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2013. Mark your calendars for a day full of theatre and fun with your ITA colleagues. Details and registration information will be available soon.

UPCOMING ITA EVENTS

September, 21 2013

ITA's Annual Convention

Play Right! Rediscovering the Playful Side of Chicago

Bus Tour, Chicago

All information above can also be found by visiting

www.illinoistheatre.org

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OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

April 26, 2013

Untapped: Discovering Resources & Exploring Possibilities

Chicago Arts Educators Forum
4545 N. Lincoln, Chicago, Illinois 60625

May 8-10, 2013

Theater One World Festival

PlayhouseSquare, Cleveland, Ohio

June 17-19, 2013

Community Theatre Management Conference 2013

American Association of Community Theatre
Carmel, Indiana

June 17-19, 2013

Technical Theatre Conference 2013

American Association of Community Theatre
Carmel, Indiana

June 24-25

One State Together in the Arts Conference

Inside Out - Arts & Community
Quad Cities, Illinois

Back to Top

ITA Links

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Board of Directors

Discussion Boards

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Performance Calendar

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Back to Top

Illinois Theatre Association

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

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Back to Top

