



eFollowspot

June, 2013
www.illinoistheatre.org

IN THIS ISSUE...

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

[Something for Everyone](#)

[So Many Factors to Consider When Designing a Lesson](#)

[Emerald City Theatre and First Stage's Production of "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer"](#)

[Internships: Suddenly This Summer](#)

[#theatretheoriginalsocialmedia](#)

[Community Theatres Ignite - Announcing Plans for a Statewide Festival](#)

[ITA Member Spotlight: Mike Miserendino](#)

[New Discussion Boards](#)

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



40th Annual Convention



September 21, 2013

A pub-crawl style day of theatre around Chicago!

Classy coach bus transportation around the city with stops at: Black Ensemble Theater, Broadway Costumes, Emerald City Theatre's new Little Theatre, Redmoon Theatre, and The New Facility at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Free parking will be available for the day at Niles North High School where the buses start and end the day, or ride Chicago's public transit system to join the buses at their first stop of the day!

FEATURING

- ◆ Lunch from Blue Sky Bakery
- ◆ Play Time! (an opportunity to participate in a breakout session of your choice – stay tuned for details)
- ◆ Special recognition of ITA's Corporate Sponsors and Lifetime Members
- ◆ ITA's Annual Meeting and Board of Directors elections
- ◆ ITA's Annual Awards of Excellence Ceremony
- ◆ *4,000 Miles* at Northlight Theatre (optional evening performance)
- ◆ Networking, raffle prizes, games, and more!

Early Bird Registration (7/21/13 deadline):	\$100 (member)	\$120 (non-member)	\$80 (student)
Regular Registration (7/22/13-9/16/13):	\$115 (member)	\$140 (non-member)	\$95 (student)

Special group hotel rates provided by: Hampton Inn & Suites, Skokie - \$129

SPACE IS LIMITED...
Reserve Your Spot Today!



Back to Top

SECONDARY SCHOOL THEATRE

Something for Everyone

Karen Hall, ITA Secondary Division Representative

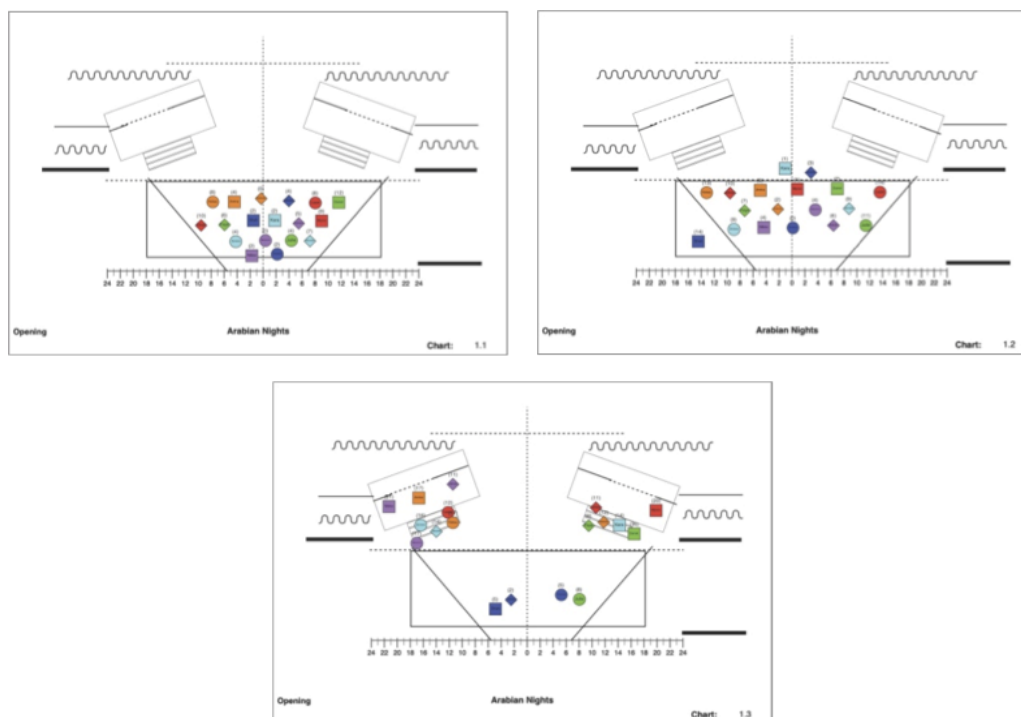
Happy Summer Everyone! As you head into a few months of rest and rejuvenation, I thought I would share a few quick items to check out over the summer.

First, I admit it: I am a technology geek. I love apps and websites that can make my day 100% easier and better. The app I am currently crazy about is Stage Write. How many times do you find yourself scribbling blocking charts on multiple pieces of paper, trying to keep track of all 40+ kids in the production number, only to realize that somewhere on chart 6, you lost track of two kids and

now your stage pictures are off? Or, how often do you have to give blocking to kids who were missing from rehearsal? I don't want them to take my blocking book, but they need to get the blocking somehow. Stage Write has solved that for me. As the Stage Write website points out, "Any stage manager, director or choreographer will attest that the process of documenting staging and choreography is a tedious process. Until now, there's been no method available except that of hand-drawn charts which are unappealing, often inaccurate, and are difficult to share. With this method, the user only has to enter the stage dimensions ONE TIME, create the actor icon ONE TIME, and then easily drag the performer icons into the desired position. This method saves thousands of HOURS of time and the final product is clean and easy-to-share."



I tend to block straight shows on my actors, - I have a game plan before I walk into rehearsal - but sometimes when I get inspired, it all goes out the window while I am working. This fall when I directed *Arabian Nights*, I used Stage Write for the first time. I gave my iPad to my assistant director at the beginning of each rehearsal, and as each stage picture changed, she easily notated it for me. AND at the end of a scene, all of a sudden my blocking was accurately notated, and then I could share it with the cast so they had something to refer to as well. Here's what a few of my charts looked like:



The app allows you to import your set design, create individual icons for each actor and copy charts to each new picture. If you want to know more about it, check out [this video](#). I'll admit it was a bit pricey - \$199.99 - but it's been worth every dime!

Another item to check out this summer is a book I've been recommending to all of my juniors who are planning to major in theatre: [I GOT IN! The Ultimate College Audition Guide For Acting And Musical Theatre 2012 Edition](#). Amazon.com states, "In this updated 2012 Edition, nationally recognized college audition coach, Mary Anna Dennard, shares her expertise on how to prepare for the highly competitive college audition process. Included are exclusive audition tips from college auditors, a list of colleges with performing arts degrees, guidance on monologues, songs, wardrobe, head shot and resume, and how to schedule college auditions." It's a clear and concise guide for anyone who is about to start the college audition process. I also use her chapter on choosing material when I teach my auditioning unit.

A third resource for your classroom was recommended to me by a colleague of mine. Krista Price is a speech teacher who uses the flipped classroom concept with her speech students. Because of this, she has created a number of YouTube videos that are great resources for any Speech class. I



am particularly fond of her videos on the Communications Model and on Ethos, Pathos and Logos. You can check them out by [clicking here](#). Finally, we all need to laugh during the summer. I've become addicted to the web series Submissions Only. "SUBMISSIONS ONLY is about auditioning for theatre in New York City and follows a group of friends as they navigate the trips and falls, callbacks and train wrecks experienced while working in the business. The first season attracted a slew of Broadway's brightest guest stars including Kristin Chenoweth, Chita Rivera, Cady Huffman, Michael Rupert, Rachel Dratch, Danny Burstein, Rebecca Luker, Barrett Foa, Alan Campbell, Ann Harada, Tyler Maynard, Steve Rosen, and many more" (BroadwayWorld.com). This web-series, created by Kate Wetherhead and Andrew Keenan-Bolger, is a perfect summer break. You can find Seasons One and Two [here](#). Season Three is currently in production. I'm

hoping to watch that this summer.

Have a great vacation everyone!

[Back to Top](#)

CREATIVE DRAMA

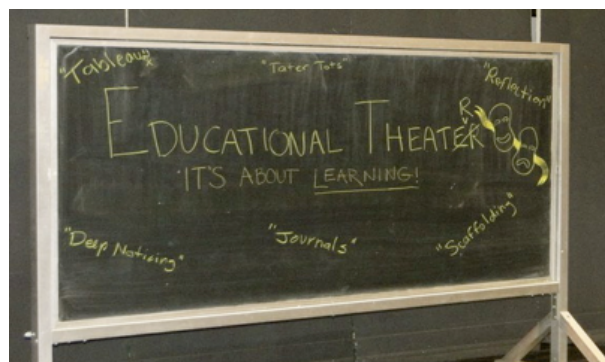
So Many Factors To Consider When Designing A Lesson

Stacy Deemar, ITA Creative Drama Division Representative

Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness;
But direct them to it by what amuses their minds,
So that you may better able discover with
Accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.
- Plato

Can I tell you a secret? Promise me you won't tell anyone? Good. I knew I could count on you. Phew. This is the first time I have told this to anyone. Just thinking about disclosing my secret gives me goose bumps down my spine. I hope I don't shock you or give you the wrong impressions, but the truth is, I have been differentiating my drama lessons since I first started teaching. I had never heard the pedagogical jargon "differentiated instruction" in any of my education classes, staff development workshops or meetings eighteen years ago. Yet the concept that every student's ability to learn varies has been apparent from the moment I entered a classroom.

Whether I was teaching at-risk 17 to 21 year old students in an alternative New York City high school, a Chicago vocational high school, or numerous elementary and middle school classrooms in Evanston, the children filling these classes vary in socioeconomic status, culture, religion, language, gender, personal interest, ability and disability, maturity and motivation. With so many factors to consider when designing a lesson, it is the educator's responsibility to accommodate each child's learning needs and adjust the lessons accordingly so that each student will achieve success.



As a novice to teaching creative drama and/or theatre, making alterations may appear to be overwhelming. The thought of having to modify a lesson for a dozen students in a single class looks impossible at a glimpse. But once you have developed strategies for different types of learners, you will be able to apply your plan by tweaking it to meet the needs of each student. This process of making accommodations will become a simple routine.

In a drama class of twenty-four students, the types of learners can include hearing impaired, visually impaired, learning disabled, emotionally disabled, English as a Second Language (ESL), autistic, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), extremely shy, selective mutism, and gifted. Over half the students in each class will need specific accommodations in order to flourish.

The philosophy of teaching creative drama in District 65 Evanston/Skokie is that the work is improvisational and processed centered. The drama specialist guides the students to imagine, enact, reflect and be respectful audience members.



In a sixth grade drama class where a processed drama may be the primary focus of study, the teacher uses a story telling approach to tell a scene, model the characters, and block out the scene on the stage. Students cast themselves in their desired rolls and work improvisationally to present the scene. There is no rehearsal and a discussion follows each scene.

Each student is responsible for remembering the sequence of the scene, blocking, and creating dialogue for the character while using pantomime, facial expressions, body language, and sustaining commitment and believability.

Students not participating in the scene are required to listen and watch the entire presentation with focused attention.

Visual learners can benefit substantially from the teacher modeling a scene. In this format, the teacher improvises each character's facial expressions, body language, blocking, and pantomime and plays the entire scene and all of the characters for the class. A list of discussion questions, detailed information about the scene, and drama/theatre vocabulary words used during the discussion component of the class, is also helpful for visual learners. Learning disabled, hearing and visually impaired, shy, autistic and ESL learners can prosper from utilizing these methods.

Because students cast themselves in the parts they want to play as opposed to being assigned a part, students who are unable to remember the sequence of a scene, all of a character's dialogue, or are frightened to speak in front of a group, have the option to select pantomimed parts only.

Gifted students can spotlight a scene as a model for the class. Gifted students can also assist in working with autistic students. When an autistic student is in a scene, a gifted student is selected to stand behind the autistic student as their shadow. The gifted student explains and models the pantomime, facial expression, blocking, etc. for the autistic student while the scene is in progress.

Shy, hearing impaired, selective mute, ESL and autistic learners who are uncomfortable or unable to make an oral comment using theatre/drama vocabulary can be afforded the opportunity to make their critique in writing. For those students who are unable to make a critique orally or in writing, they can make a critique in the form of a picture.

Allowing an ESL learner to improvise a scene in his native language can be beneficial for the entire class. Although the class may not understand the language, the ESL learner can be assessed on his tone of voice, facial expression, body language, concentration, and pantomime and the audience can focus on those elements too during discussion.

Hearing impaired learners should be seated close to where the teacher models the scene and where the scenes are presented. For those who have hearing apparatuses such as microphones, the teacher must wear the microphone during the modeling of a scene and during class discussion. The main character presenting a scene should also wear the microphone.



Sitting close to the presentation is a requirement for all visually impaired students. Larger fonts are used in both the information on the board as well as handouts. Visually impaired students are also given the option of having a shadow work along side them during a presentation. The shadow models the character's facial expressions, body language and pantomime in addition to assisting the visually impaired learner with the blocking.

Giving attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) learners specific jobs in the classroom that require them to get out of their seat can be extremely helpful in getting these types of learners focused. At the beginning of class, ADHD learners can take attendance, erase the board and/or assist in setting up technical equipment. These types of learners can also be assigned the role of writing the name of the students next to the characters they will be playing in the scenes. Once presentations commence, ADHD learners can have breaks to get up and stretch in addition to having paper and pen to doodle.

Now that I have shared some of my secrets with you, I hope you will be adventurous and implement my strategies in your classes. The "one size fits all" mentality has no basis in a differentiated classroom. Whatever strategies you utilize for one specific learner may not have the same great success for a similar type of learner. Therefore, you must try different accommodations until you find one that is effective for that learner. With so many factors to consider when designing a lesson, I hope that you will find truth in this ancient proverb, "In teaching others, we teach ourselves."

[Back to Top](#)

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Emerald City Theatre and First Stage's Production of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

by Ernie Nolan, ITA Professional Theatre Division Representative



LIGHTS UP THE BROADWAY PLAYHOUSE NOVEMBER 14 - DECEMBER 29, 2013

CHICAGO - (June 18, 2013) [Broadway In Chicago](#), [Emerald City Theatre](#) and [First Stage](#) are thrilled to announce their partnership for the holiday classic, *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*®. *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*® will play the [Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place](#) (175 East Chestnut) Nov. 14 - Dec. 29, 2013.

The beloved stop-motion classic

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER® and his friends soar off the screen and onto the stage this holiday season. From fleeing the Abominable Snow Monster TM to saving Christmas, join *RUDOLPH*® and his friends Clarice TM, Hermey the Elf TM and Yukon Cornelius TM as their adventures teach us that what makes you different can be what makes you special. Don't miss this wonderful holiday tradition that speaks to the little misfit in all of us.

Honoring the tradition of the original animated television special, Emerald City Theatre and First Stage bring to life the magical world of the North Pole in a large-scale, spectacle-filled musical with all the classic songs. *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*® is appropriate for all ages.

Adapted from the Animated Television Special "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer®" and all elements from the 1964 television special "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" © and TM, presented under license from [Character Arts, LLC](#). All Rights Reserved.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with First Stage Artistic Director Jeff Frank and his artists from First Stage," said Emerald City Producing Artistic Director Ernie Nolan. "Jeff Frank's enchanting, original adaptation is a feast for the eyes with heartwarming holiday cheer. I can't wait to add a little Emerald City magic to the recipe. Together we promise Chicago audiences a great BIG toe tapping musical that the whole family can savor."

Critics praised First Stage's 2012 production of *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*® in Milwaukee:

"...To every mother's child wondering whether reindeer really know how to fly... head downtown, where the soaring new production of *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*® will put all doubts to rest..." - Mike Fischer, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

"A must-see for holiday cheer" - Christina Wright, Third Coast Daily

"The magic of Christmas is certainly alive in First Stage's joyful production of *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*®." - Anne Siegel, Shepherd Express

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER® creative team includes: First Stage Artistic Director Jeff Frank (Director); Emerald City Producing Artistic Director Ernie Nolan (Choreographer and Associate Director); Brandon Kirkham (Production Designer); Jason Fassel (Lighting Designer); and Matt Whitmore (Sound Designer).

Jeff Frank (Director) has been First Stage's artistic director since 2003. Over the past 12 seasons Jeff has directed many First Stage productions. Among his favorites are: CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY, PETER PAN AND WENDY, U: BUG: ME, THE NEVERENDING STORY, SLEEPING BEAUTY, LILLY'S PURPLE PLASTIC PURSE, A CHRISTMAS STORY and THE GIVER.

Ernie Nolan (Choreographer and Associate Director) is the Producing Artistic Director of Emerald City Theatre, where he has directed and choreographed over 20 productions including PINKALICIOUS: THE MUSICAL. A resident artist of The Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, MO, he made his Off-Broadway debut as a choreographer last spring with LUCKY DUCK at the New Victory Theatre. His work as a TYA playwright has been featured both nationally and internationally.

ABOUT EMERALD CITY THEATRE

Founded in 1996, Emerald City Theatre creates theatre experiences that inspire early learners through play. Emerald City is one of Chicago's most attended non-profit theatres, with an annual programming reach of 80,000.

Through a rigorous collaboration between innovating artists and leading educators, Emerald City develops new work for young audiences, with over 29 world premieres; produces professional productions at the Apollo Theater in Lincoln Park, The Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place, and the Little Theatre; and provides acclaimed educational programming throughout Chicago through Emerald City Theatre School.

ABOUT FIRST STAGE

Since 1987, First Stage has grown to become one of the nation's most acclaimed children's theaters and the second largest theater company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. First Stage touches hearts and transforms lives through professional theater productions that engage, enlighten and entertain more than 115,000 audience members annually. Committed to new play development, First Stage has presented nearly 50 world premieres in its history and has collaborated with renowned artists including Harry Connick Jr. and Stephen Schwartz, and award-winning authors Lois Lowry and Cornelia Funke. Its Theater Academy, teaching life skills through stage skills, is the largest theater training program of its kind in the nation. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-in-education programming, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote active learning in our schools and our community, serving over 20,000 children each year.

TICKET INFORMATION

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER® is part of the Broadway In Chicago 2013 off season specials. Group tickets for 10 or more are now on sale by calling Broadway In Chicago Group Sales at (312) 977-1710. Individual tickets for *RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER*® will go on sale at a later date. For more information, visit www.BroadwayInChicago.com

**Media Contacts:**

Amanda Meyer/Alexi Kovin
 Margie Korshak Inc.
 312.751.5559/5528
 ameyer@korshak.com/akovin@korshak.com

Back to Top**COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATRE****Internships: Suddenly This Summer**

by Janice Pohl, ITA University/College Theatre Division Representative

At my theatre house, we're getting the emails and Facebook invitations to a nice array of summer theatre offerings from some of our students and alums out in the world. Grassroots and community



theatre ventures should be bustling with the college students now home - or away from home - and invested in hands-on work of creating theatre in the summer. Summer-stock seasons are opening up show after show.

Summer theatre projects for our students, alums and colleagues also include a high dose of workshops and summer camps. As with any camp, there's a lot to be gained from the retreat quality of any camp structure. We just finished a mini-week with junior high students doing a college-exploratory session. The workshops included a sampling of the fine arts. I enjoy the good bursts of insight and perspectives I gain in working with alternate age groups, and so the addition of a week of drama activity at vacation bible school with preschool and primary grade was a treat.



Faced with all these good things, it was a bit troubling to listen to the news this week following the recent legal suit brought by interns at a major news network. My colleague and I talked briefly about the impact this may have on internships in the not-for-profit sector. We're not the only ones wondering - I heard a vigorous phone-in segment about this on WGN radio. It's hard to reconcile the past years of conversation everywhere in which the yet-to-be-employed are being encouraged to apply for internships, to gain that hands-on experience that will help them get jobs. Theatre companies of all sizes have worked hard to structure internship opportunities that support their ongoing programming and still yield a worthwhile job-

training set of experiences.

I would like to be Pollyanna and refuse to believe the unpaid internship in not-for-profit organizations will go away, but Pollyanna may not serve us well. (I don't even want to think about the conversation leeching into the waters of student teaching.) I'm going to try not to see doom looming around the corner, but it will be important for all of us to stay attuned to the conversation. Arts advocacy may be taking on a new project. For the moment, though, I'm going to make sure to tune in to the good work of this summer's interns and productions.

I'll be interested to hear conversations about this in our theatre conferences this summer and at the ITA conference in September. What steps are you taking in your neighborhood?

[Back to Top](#)

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE #theatretheoriginalsocialmedia

by Ernie Nolan, ITA Professional Division Representative



During a break in tech this past winter, I went backstage to check on the five young actors who were alternating as Things 1 and 2 in Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat*.

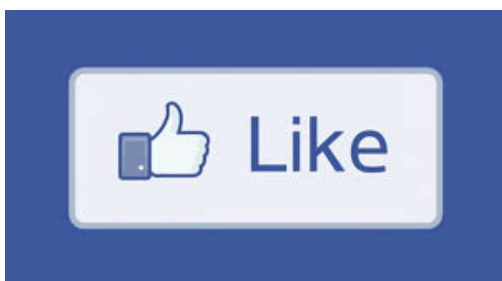
They had been quiet that day...surprisingly quiet...like the "quiet before some sort of deliciously devious prank to pass away the tedious time of tech" quiet. Hoping that our stage manager's nerves wouldn't be more frazzled than they already were, I headed to the Green Room to remind the young professionals that I was always watching, just like Santa. When I entered, much to my surprise, the five fifth-graders were all silent, sitting in a row on the couch, each with an Apple computer product in their hands. When I made a remark about the assortment of iPads, iPhones, and

iPods, I was corrected by one of the young professionals that he had an iPod touch, a digital music device with internet capabilities, camera, and games, **not** just a regular iPod. He then showed me how he was in the middle of "liking" something on Facebook.

As I walked to ask the adults who were smoking outside, "Doesn't anyone read paperback Judy Blume books from the library anymore?," I realized that it's not only my technically savvy young cast members, but also my young audiences who have hardly known a world without broadband Internet, Wi-Fi hotspots, smart phones, and social media. Today's young audiences live in a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, App infused world. They are Generation Tech, connected, entertained, and informed with the flick of a finger on a glass screen. "Instead of whiling away the hours discovering wilderness with friends, young people are exploring in solitude the less pristine warrens of the Internet," remarks Teddy Wayne in his [New York Times article](#) "...Youth's New Wilderness." Wayne not only reveals in the same article that Justin Bieber has the power to reach out to 36 million young fans with the swipe of his iPhone on Twitter, but also that a 2010 Kaiser Family Foundation report reveals that children ages 8 to 18 spend 77 minutes per day more with entertainment media than they did five years ago.



Although still relatively uncharted territory, similar social and entertainment media studies have found that adolescents who demonstrated Facebook and Internet addiction scored higher for obsessive compulsive behavior, generalized and social anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, introversion, maladaptive behavior, and a state that has been labeled Facebook Depression. Another study of adolescent girls found the more they used texting, instant messaging, and other social media to discuss their problems, the more depressive symptoms they represented. The ease of technology allowed the young women in the study to "co-ruminate," that is dwell on problems without trying to create solutions.



In addition to other obstacles, our theatres try to reach a fast paced, 4G audience that now communicates in sound bites and code. The poetry and word play of our playwrights collides with texting vocabulary like "PAW" (parents are watching), "NOOB" (new person), and "BCNUL8R" (be seeing you later). Can our theatres battle and break this new millennial Da Vinci code? When entertainment and answers are at the fingertips of so many, what do we as theatre artists really have to offer and say that can't already be found on YouTube?

How can we sift through the bad and ugly power of social media and harness or celebrate the good?

Perhaps the idea isn't to harness social media, it's to throw the harness off of ourselves as artists and celebrate the fact that theatre is the original social media. As defined by Webster's, "social media is a form of communication through which information, ideas, and personal messages are shared." But wait... isn't that what we are trying to do as institutions for young audiences in this country? Give information? Ignite and inspire ideas? Share our own personal messages with our audiences? Their parents? Our community partners? Our country? Our world?

Do we need an Internet to connect us?

Moments before Finnegan Krukemeyer's inspiring closing night speech at [One Theatre World 2013](#) in Cleveland, I sat talking with friends in the house. I suddenly noticed an email on my own iPhone from a colleague wishing me congratulations on the completion of construction of Emerald City Theatre's Little Theatre, the country's first theatre space specifically dedicated to the very young.

Earlier that evening my company's marketing team had posted photos of the toddler friendly space in an e-blast and on Facebook. Not only did my phone light up with other well wishes, some from others sitting in that very theatre, but I was able to be a proud papa and show everyone around me the pictures of the beautiful new space on my phone. I fully celebrated having an Apple device much like my young actors did during tech. I received and scrolled through comments on Facebook from colleagues in Germany, Australia, Canada...even Iceland. Perhaps some researchers would call what I was doing "co-ruminating." Others might say that my international colleagues were showing "virtual empathy." Either way, I was certainly not in an Internet isolationist state.

After I read my flurry of technological kudos, the lights dimmed, I put away my phone, and the eloquent Tazzie, Krukemeyer, took the stage. Even though moments before he spoke I thought I felt connected to others, it was Finnegan's very human, very eloquent, and very insightful real information, ideas, and personal message that connected me to the others in the room, to my theatre, to my audiences, to the [ASSITEJ](#) network of artists, and to the world.

Like many modern conveniences, the Internet isn't entirely bad or entirely good, but it isn't neutral either. As we navigate our new relationship with both it and the way we use it to communicate, just remember that the Festival of Dionysius had the idea to connect large amounts of people first, not Apple or Mark Zuckerberg.

[Back to Top](#)

COMMUNITY THEATRE

Community Theatres Ignite -- Announcing Plans for Statewide Festival

ITA Community Theatre Division Reps are currently exploring the possibility of producing a statewide Community Theatre Festival in late 2014, early 2015. The Festival would be produced in collaboration with the American Association of Community Theatre, with a goal of sending an Illinois community theatre on to the AACT Regional Competition in 2015.

A festival of this magnitude, however, requires the expertise and efforts of many volunteers. We need your help! If you are interested in serving on the planning committee for this festival, helping out in any way, or simply sharing an idea, please send an email to aimeelynn@illinoistheatre.org.

[Back to Top](#)

ITA Member Spotlight: Mike Miserendino

by Judy Klingner, ITA Second Vice President

What is your name?

My name is Mike Miserendino, but my students call me Mr. Mez.

Please describe your first experience with the theatre.

I have always been into the performing arts. After performing magic shows in my living room with my brother, my parents enrolled me



Photo courtesy of the Cutting Hall Performing Arts Center / Music On Stage. Photographed by Tony Schiavone.

in a children's theatre class at the College of DuPage when I was in the second grade. I was in my first professional production as Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* in the third grade. I also remember seeing my first Broadway production-Donny Osmond as Joseph in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. I quickly became addicted to the soundtrack (on cassette), and I knew then that I always wanted to be involved with the theatre.

Outline your education/training in theatre.

After performing in plays and musicals in junior high, I continued to be actively involved in the theatre program at Lake Park High School with Susan Rothchild, Larry Studt, and the late Michael Dice, Sr. as my teachers and directors. As a distinguished alumnus of Illinois State University, Mr. Dice encouraged me to attend ISU's Theatre program. I

attended ISU's School of Theatre from 2003-2007 and learned about every aspect of the theatre: from acting and directing, to set design, make-up, costumes, lighting, sound, and theatre education. The education that I received at ISU fully prepared me in pursuing a professional acting career. I have been a professional actor around the Chicagoland area since 2007 and have worked at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, Northbrook Theatre for Young Audiences, Oak Park Festival, and Light Opera Works, in addition to performing in a variety of community theatre productions.

Tell us about your current teaching position at Bartlett High School.

The 2013-2014 school year will be my second year at Bartlett High School. I will be teaching three sections of Senior English, Acting I, Acting II, and Children's Theatre. This will be the first time that I get to teach a high school theatre course, and I'm really excited! In addition to teaching the theatre courses, I will direct the Fall Play (hopefully a few more productions along the way), and sponsor the Thespian Troupe and Drama Club. It's going to be a fun year!

Have you ever worked in the theatre in a different capacity? If so, please elaborate.

I've worked in all aspects of the theatre, from acting and directing, to teaching, designing, and participating in the Illinois High School Theatre Festival and IHSA Drama and Group Interpretation competition.

Of what theatrical accomplishment are you most proud?

This is a tough question to answer. I'm proud of all the work that I've done so far. As of right now, I would say that I'm most proud of performing the role Princeton in the Chicagoland premier of the musical *Avenue Q*. Other than the Broadway production, this was the show's first production performed in Illinois, and I was thrilled to play such a fun role in this hilarious musical. I'm sure that pretty soon my greatest theatrical accomplishments will be those of my students. I'm grateful that I'll have the opportunity to work with them in the classroom and on productions after school, and I'm looking forward to watching each of them grow, explore, progress, and achieve greatness on and off the stage.

What is the next theatre project/production on your schedule?

The next theatre project that I have already started to work on is writing a curriculum for the Acting I, Acting II, and Children's Theatre courses, and directing the 2013 Fall Play *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* at Bartlett High School. It's going to be a busy school year, but I'm looking forward to working on all of these projects with the students. Unfortunately, my acting career has been postponed, but I'll get back into it soon enough.

Define the biggest challenge you face related to your work in the theatre.

To be honest, I can't say that I have faced too many challenges thus far. However, as a younger teacher, I am sure that I will have many questions about theatre curriculum, expanding a theatre program, directing high school productions, and other obstacles I may face along the way. This was one of the primary reasons for my creating the Facebook group.

Please share details about the Facebook Group you created for ITA Theatre Teachers.

I originally created the Facebook group "[Illinois Theatre Association High School Theatre](#)" because I wanted to collaborate and communicate with other high school theatre educators. It started off with my inviting a few theatre teachers that I knew from ISU and other aspects of my life, and it quickly grew to having over 65 members-and it's still expanding! I wanted to have a forum where we could discuss the challenges that I previously outlined. At the time, I wasn't aware of the discussion board on the [ITA website](#). Since its creation, group members have been collaborating on theatre curriculum, play selection, sharing of materials and props, drama clubs, thespians, fundraisers, and we've been able to publicize workshops, camps, and productions. What's been neat is that when teachers from other schools post their upcoming productions, I then post and publicize these performances in my classroom and my students and I have attended shows at other high schools. It's a great way to support other high school programs and to see as much theatre as possible. I can already tell that this group will continue to expand, and I'm looking forward to working with other theatre educators around the state.



Mike Miserendino with Chad Kimball at Theatre Fest 2013.

What do you hope to gain from your ITA membership?

I am a huge advocate for the value of theatre in today's society and in the lives of individuals, which, coincidentally, is part of the ITA's mission statement. I'm thrilled to know that the ITA aims to support theatre artists and communities, and I hope that the Facebook group "Illinois Theatre Association High School Theatre" will do just that. I'm looking forward to collaborating with other artists, educators, organizations, agencies, and communities. I am also a proud ITA member due to its annual production of the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. I've attended most of the festivals since 2000 as a student, actor in the 2002 All-State production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, an ISU All-State chaperone, workshop leader, and teacher, and I'm thrilled that I can continue to bring my students to such an incredible event. I'm honored that I can be a member of the theatrical community. It's a place where a group of people from all walks of life can come together to create art. There are no right or wrong answers and people are encouraged to try new things and take risks. It's a supportive community that truly brings out the best in each individual. I've been blessed to have been part of this community for most of my life, will continue to do so for the rest of my life, and am excited to begin this next chapter of my life as a theatre educator. I hope to instill the same passion for the theatre and be a positive influence for all of my future students.

[Back to Top](#)

NEW DISCUSSION BOARDS!

Join in on the Discussion!

The ITA is pleased to offer a new way for its members and friends to stay in touch...

As many of you are aware, the ITA has Discussion Boards on its website where members can post job openings, audition announcements, upcoming performances, discussions, and more. Because we live in a "Facebook" society, however, these board have not been utilized to their full potential. Who wants to visit a web page when we already connect through Facebook?

The ITA is thrilled to now provide group discussions via closed Facebook Groups Pages. Please click on any (and all) of the groups you'd like to join. Since these are closed groups, you'll be asked to request permission to join. Once you're a member of the group, you'll be allowed to share ideas, ask questions, participate in meaningful discussions, and gain invaluable support from your peers.

- Illinois Theatre Association's [College/University Group Page](#)
- Illinois Theatre Association's [Community Theatre Group Page](#)
- Illinois Theatre Association's [Creative Drama Group Page](#)
- Illinois Theatre Association's [Professional Theatre Group Page](#)
- Illinois Theatre Association's [Secondary School Theatre Group Page](#)

- Illinois Theatre Association's [Theatre for Young Audiences Group Page](#)

We look forward to having you join in on the discussion!

You are still encouraged to post job opportunities, audition announcements, and community/life events on the ITA Discussion Boards via www.illinoistheatre.org. Current highlights include:

JOB POSTINGS

Jones College Prep - Theatre/English Opening
Click here to be brought to this discussion.

AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Click here to be brought to this discussion.

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

Scenic Painting Workshop and Theatrical Skills Workshop
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:



99th Street Summer Theatre Festival
Produced by Mother McAuley High School

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE

July 11-13
8:00pm

Tickets
\$16 - \$20

3737 W. 99th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60655

773-881-6512
phaynes@mothermcauley.org

<http://www.mothermcauley.org/>

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](#)

UPCOMING ITA EVENTS

Now thru August, 2013 (various dates)
ITA's Summer Series Workshops
Summer Intensive Workshops for Teachers and Actors:
Michael Chekhov Acting Technique
The Moving Dock Theatre Company
Chicago
(CPDU Credits Available)

September 21, 2013
ITA's 40th Annual Convention

Play Right: Rediscovering the Playful Side of Chicago
Various Locations (pub crawl style bus tour), Chicago

January 9-11, 2014

39th Annual Illinois High School Theatre Festival

Explore the Extraordinary

Illinois State University, Normal IL

ALL INFORMATION ABOVE CAN ALSO BE FOUND BY VISITING
www.illinoistheatre.org

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

July 5-19, 2013

Youth Theatre Workshops at Timber Lake Playhouse

Mount Carroll

July 11, 2013

Arts & Business Council of Chicago

Workshop: Build the Board You Really Need

Chicago

July 19, 2013

**Illinois Alliance for Arts Education
& Columbia College**

Arts Alive 2013: Champion Creatively Alive Children

Chicago

July 24-28, 2013

American Alliance for Theatre & Education

ACT NOW! Conference 2013

Washington D.C.

August 1-4, 2013

Association for Theatre in High Education

PLAY: Performance, Pleasure and Pedagogy

Orlando, Florida

August 6-8, 2013

Creative Directions' 7th Annual Summer Drama Institute

Chicago

(ITA Members receive a \$25 discount!)

August 11-12, 2013

Chicago Spotlight

Scene Painting Workshop and Theatrical Skills Workshop

Spring Green, Wisconsin

[Back to Top](#)

ITA Links

[About the ITA](#)

[Advocacy](#)

[Board of Directors](#)

[Discussion Boards](#)

[Divisions & Regions](#)

[eFollowspot](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Join](#)

[ListServe](#)

[Member Organizations](#)
[Performance Calendar](#)
[Twitter](#)

PLEASE VISIT OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

[A & B Photo, Inc.](#)
[Broadway Costumes](#)
[Chicago Spotlight](#)
[DesignLab Chicago](#)
[Grand Stage](#)
[Intelligent Lighting Creations](#)
[USITT - Midwest Regional Section](#)



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

[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!

123 Mill Pond Dr.
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
312-265-5922 (office)
800-898-6897 (toll free)
312-265-6101 (fax)
www.illinoistheatre.org
info@illinoistheatre.org

[Back to Top](#)

