

Illinois Theatre Association

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ITA EVENTS

January 5-7, 2017
Illinois High School Theatre Festival 2017
"Find Your Truth: Discover, Uncover, Reveal"
 University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

February, 2017
37th Annual Statewide Non-Equity Professional Theatre Auditions

University of Illinois at Chicago

Stay Tuned for Info

EVENTS OF INTEREST FROM ITA MEMBERS

eFOLLOWSPOT October, 2016

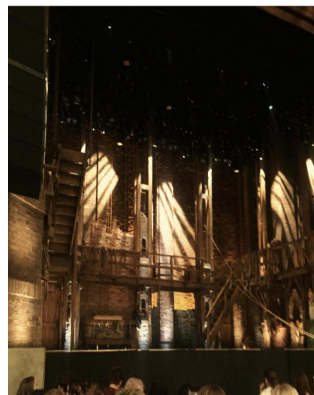
NEVER TOO MUCH HAMILTON

By Susan Antman

As a North Sider, it's tough to be excited by anything beyond the Cubbies success, but in the theatre world, it's not an exaggeration to say we've won our own world series with the Chicago Production of *HAMILTON - AN AMERICAN MUSICAL* at the PrivateBank Theater.

Full disclosure: I am not a reviewer here. I'm a raver. Just like many, I have been a rabid *Hamilton* fan since it opened on Broadway (yes, late to the party). Played the lottery with 300 fans in NYC, bought season tickets from Broadway in Chicago, stood in the-line-around-the-theater for tickets for my loved ones, and helped my 6th graders produce their homage to *Hamilton*. Like many, I know every song, and have imagined the show with visuals from You-tube, newsreels, and books as my guide.

When I finally got to see the show on Saturday, October 15th, I was so excited. Naturally, I had impossibly high expectations and elatedly (though not really surprisingly) I wasn't disappointed. It was simply enthralling. The cast of Chicago's *HAMILTON* knocked it out of the proverbial park. (Thank you, Cubbies)



Just seeing the bare stage, as I raced to my seat, and glanced at the full house, I was prepared for a joyous adventure. But from the first iconic line: "How does a Bastard, Orphan, Son of a --" (you know how it goes) through to the last chord, I had to stifle my urge to sing along, as I marveled at the terrific performers who beautifully interpreted the characters I've come to know. I was delighted to see how artfully each performer brought subtlety and their creative choices to the songs and the story.

In fact, I'm happy to have a few more tickets to see the production again. I look forward to being able to focus on other inspiring aspects of the spectacle. I loved how expertly every ensemble member was woven into the story, and how brilliant their performances as they transformed from scene to scene. The choreography, and all matters of design contributed dynamically to the experience.

That's the magic of *HAMILTON*, and in my opinion why it's such a success.

There is no denying the phenomenon that *HAMILTON* is this year. And a LOT of folks may see it just because of the hype. Still, as a theater teacher, goer, and lover I'm grateful for how *HAMILTON* brings the sometimes abstract storytelling style of theater to a whole new audience. It showcases the power of theatrical storytelling to a new generation of theatergoers, and brings hundreds of thousands of new audience members into the experience of great theater.

I'm sure ALEXANDER HAMILTON, down in his tomb, is exceptionally pleased with his posthumous fame and adulation. Still, while he did have to "wait for it," his story has finally been told, and we citizens of Chicago this fall, with both the Cubs and *HAMILTON* playing, are "lucky to be alive right now."

But from the first iconic line: "How does a Bastard, Orphan, Son of a --" (you know how it goes) through to the last chord, I had to stifle my urge to sing along, as I marveled at the terrific performers who beautifully interpreted the characters I've come to know. I was delighted to see how artfully each performer brought subtlety and their creative choices to the songs and the story.

December 3, 2016

Theatrical Skills Workshop

Show Control Possibilities

Stevenson High School,
Lincolnshire**Submit an Event****JOB POSTINGS**Quincy Community
Theatre seeks a full-time
Technical Director and
Designer.Guerin Prep HS seeks a
choreographer for its
spring musical, *Honk!*Oak Park and River Forest
High School seeks a
choreographer for its
winter musical, *Mary
Poppins*.Maine East High School
seeks a Vocal Director for
its March, 2017 production
of *The Addams Family*.The School of Theatre and
Dance at Illinois State
University seeks an
Assistant Professor for a
full-time, 9 month, tenure-
track position as
Coordinator of the Theatre
Teacher Education
program.Click here to visit the ITA's
Job Board for details and
more postings!

Submit a Job Posting

**AUDITION
ANNOUNCEMENTS**There are no auditions
posted at this time.**IN THE THEATRE, THERE REALLY IS EQUITY.****By Joan McGrath**

At 16, I spent my first summer as an apprentice (read: very willing indentured servant) at the White Barn Theatre in Pennsylvania. It was glorious - up at dawn to size flats, paint props, dust audience chairs. I loved it. I was in professional theatre!! One of the souvenirs of that magical summer was a pair of red high heels, given to me by one of the summer stock company's resident actresses. They were her "Equity Fund Shoes," provided by the actors' union, to enable actors walking the pavement from audition to audition to not look "down at the heels." This perk goes back to 1945, when actor Conrad Cantzen, believing that spiffy shoes made a positive impression on casting directors, left his fortune to Actors' Equity Association with the sole (forgive the pun) condition that it fund shoe purchases. I have saved those pumps for many decades. That summer was the beginning of my education about the century old actors' union.

Many consider a membership card in the Actors' Equity Association as a theatre professional's insignia. Since it was founded in 1913 in New York City, the union of actors and stage managers has stood for the highest standards of performance and production. To be "in an Equity show" confers status as well as union protections.

Most young actors say they "would kill" to have an Equity affiliation. In Chicago's robust theatre community, however, is membership the best choice for dedicated performers? It depends.

Before exploring that question, a brief primer on what AEA is all about.

According to the organization's website, "Membership in Equity makes you a part of the most distinguished body of professional Actors and Stage Managers in America. Members working under Equity contracts are entitled to a wide range of contract benefits, including minimum salaries, guaranteed safe and sanitary working conditions and other benefits. You also have access to affiliated organizations that provide services such as free tax assistance and a credit union."



And Equity members are entitled to take part in Equity-exclusive show auditions. Back to this thought in a moment. There are three ways you can be eligible to join AEA:

- If you are cast in a show produced by an Equity company
- If you have prior membership in any of these "sister unions": SAG-AFTRA, AGMA, AVMA, GIAA
- If you are an actor or stage manager-in-training and you "bank" credits working in an Equity theatre toward future union membership (50 weeks work are required for this Equity Membership Candidate Program)

The costs of joining AEA include an initiation fee, currently \$1100, twice-yearly Basic Dues and, if you are employed, Working Dues.

AEA has offices in New York, Los Angeles, Orlando ... and Chicago.

So if you are a Chicago actor or stage manager aspiring to do the best work in town, should you make provisions to join?

Chicago's theatre scene is uniquely robust. The League of Chicago Theatres counts 240 companies as members. Lots of audition opportunity for young, new-to-town and returning artists. Of those, however, only 40 are Equity-affiliated. And significantly, once you are a union member, under most circumstances you cannot rehearse, perform or stage manage with a non-Equity company.

So for many actors, it becomes a question of working episodically for a guaranteed minimum salary - or working at all.

Another perspective comes from Leslie Hinderycxk, former Chairman of the Theatre Department at Northwestern University, who has taught and mentored hundreds of eager actors. He offers this mindset on when to join:

Click here to visit the ITA's Audition Announcements for more details.

Submit an Audition

FEATURED PERFORMANCES

There are no performances listed at this time!

Want your performance to be featured here? Visit the [ITA Performance Calendar](#) for details.

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College/University Group Discussion

"One should be qualified to work in the theatre business before beginning to join Equity. I like the traditional way - get some experience first, find ways to work and get a firm sense of the business. Earn your way in by playing small roles, auditioning lots, accumulating some experience.

"When you join Equity, you're joining a union and a business organization. You need the tools to be 'business-like'.

"Of course, the breaks of the game have as much to do with it as do your own timetable. Fate steps in and changes everything. That fantastic role comes your way! I believe that you need to be well-trained in the techniques and principles of theatre and you need a certain amount of maturity, so that WHEN it's time, when the opportunity comes, you are equipped to seize it for the long run."

For more information, see the AEA website at: <http://www.actorsequity.org>.

And-Break a leg!!

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ITA'S COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY DIVISION EVENT: HAND TO GOD AT VICTORY GARDENS THEATRE. WE HAD A DEVILISH GOOD TIME!



Kevin Long, college/university representative to the board, organized the division's event to see *Hand to God* at Victory Gardens Theatre on Saturday, October 8, 2016. Twenty-five participants joined together for a wonderful evening of theatre, networking, fellowship, and fun!

The evening began at 6:30 PM in the upstairs rehearsal room with a wine and cheese reception hosted by Victory Gardens Theatre. The highlight of this preshow event was the drawing for several pairs of tickets donated by our top professional theatres in the city. The total value of the tickets donated to our drawing was close to \$1,000.00. Our theatre community is incredibly generous and Kevin is truly grateful. The college/university division raised \$220.00 for the Illinois Theatre Association. A special thanks to:

- BoHo Theatre: 2 tickets to any one performance of their 2016-2017 subscription series. Value: \$60.00. Winner: Fabian Tovar
- Chicago Shakespeare Theatre: 2 tickets to King Charles III. Value: \$156.00. Winner: Brianne Duncan Fiore
- Goodman Theatre: 2 tickets to Desire of Destiny. Value: \$140.00. Winner: Aggie Bielinski
- Paramount Theatre: 2 tickets to one of their Broadway productions. Value: \$120.00. Winner: KC Burkholder
- Remy Bumpo: 2 tickets to Pirandello's Henry IV. Value: \$100.00. Winner: KC Burkholder
- Steppenwolf Theatre: 2 tickets to any one performance in the 2016- 2017 subscription series. Value: \$175.00. Winner: Susan Antman
- Victory Gardens: 2 tickets to Roz and Ray. Value: \$120.00. Winner: Lulia Sarmiento
- Writers Theatre: 2 tickets to East Texas Hot Links. Value: \$110.00. Winner: Sarah Krause

The group then worked their way downstairs and into the theatre to see *Hand to God* directed by Gary Griffin. To say we had a good time is an understatement-it was an incredible show. This is a black comedy that is irreverent, raunchy, and incredibly funny. We never knew puppets could do what we saw them do. The play took us to truly unexpected places,

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THE WHOLE BODY LISTENER By Stacy Deemar

How many times in a forty-minute period have you asked your elementary students to stop talking, sit still, keep their hands to themselves, and/or refrain from swinging their feet? Have you found the more you ask students to adjust their body the more the distractions increase? Do you feel like you are spending more time managing physical behavior than teaching your lesson?

Community Theatre Group Discussion

Creative Drama Group Discussion

Professional Theatre Group Discussion

Secondary School Theatre Group Discussion

Theatre for Young Audiences Group Discussion

That old American idiom "she's got ants in her pants" is apropos for describing a student who is unable to keep still. My grandmother, on the other hand, used a Yiddish word when referring to all the extra energy that a child exudes as having the shpilkes. Others describe a child's perpetual movement as restless or fidgety. Regardless of the label, the educator's goal is to have strategies to minimize physical distractions during instructional time.

For many drama classes, the seating arrangements and environment are non-traditional. Students are not confined to sitting in a chair behind a desk or table. Instead, students are seated on the floor, in an open space with little or no furniture. This type of setting affords the children the opportunity to move around unencumbered. For kinesthetic learners, those who learn best by moving their bodies, they thrive in this type of environment. But an unobstructed space still requires the same discipline and structure as a conventional classroom

One of the best classroom management tools that promote self-control is The Whole Body Listener. The Whole Body Listener depicts a young child sitting with his legs crossed and his hands resting on his legs. His eyes are looking, brain thinking, ears hearing, feet still, mouth quiet, shoulders facing, and hands still. The labeled body parts exhibit how listening is not limited to just the ears.

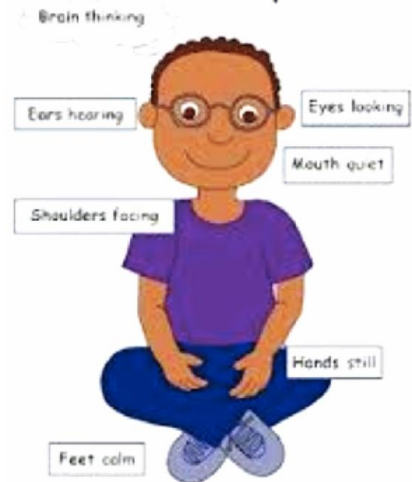
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For visual learners, those who learn from pictures, The Whole Body Listener is an exemplary device that children can comprehend. The posted image in the classroom is a daily reminder of the expectations and is readily accessible. Instead of telling a student to "stop moving," the teacher can reference the picture and ask him to adjust his legs to look like those in the picture.

Be a Whole Body Listener



Giving verbal directions to an English language learner about how to attentively listen might have marginal results. Utilizing The Whole Body Listener for learners whose native language is not English has many benefits. The non-linguistic cue reinforces the oral directions, acts as a model and visual aid, and makes the directions more accessible to the students. This practice can quickly define classroom expectations and prevent misunderstandings and discipline problems.

The Whole Body Listener also promotes a safe environment. For example, when an exercise has concluded, a teacher might ask the class to take a seat on the floor. "Taking a seat" can have many colorful interpretations including lying down, rolling, flailing one's legs over the head, diving, sitting on others, kneeling, crawling, tumbling, etc. When physical behavior is unreflective of the illustration, the teacher must intervene. Encouraging students to adjust themselves to look like The Whole Body Listener and referencing the image, can prevent accidents.

It is never too late to incorporate a new classroom management practice. Foster self-control by finding an image of a whole body listener on the internet, designing your own image, or asking the class to collectively create their ideal Whole Body Listener and displaying the illustration in the classroom. Once you incorporate The Whole Body Listener into your repertoire, physical distractions should dissipate.

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

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INTERACTIVE THEATRE AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN TYA By Jeremy Schaefer

Theater is a powerful means of provoking important conversations. Imagination Theater's *No Secrets* has been using interactive theater to teach sexual abuse prevention in schools since 1985. We interviewed Imagination Theater's *No Secrets* Coordinator, Ellen Cribbs, to learn more about this program.

How does the No Secrets program use interactive theater to address sexual abuse prevention?

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Spotlight

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Light Chicago

Midwest Event Solutions

Northern Illinois University

Spotlight Youth Theatre

USITT Midwest

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

ITA ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The No Secrets program takes the very serious and challenging topic of sexual abuse and presents it to children in a non-threatening way. The students experience a live performance with actors who first establish the difference between safe and unsafe touches. These unsafe touches can include pushing too hard in a game of tag, a hug that is too tight, or pinching someone's cheeks. By starting with the basic idea that an unsafe touch is any touch that makes one feel uncomfortable or unsafe, students learn the importance of respecting other people's space and bodies. Volunteers from the audience role play with our actors to practice

personal body safety and reporting to an adult. Once students are comfortable with the concept of protecting their bodies, we define the term "sexual abuse" and talk to students about the importance of reporting.

This can be a very sensitive topic, how does No Secrets take care of the audience?

We make sure the school is prepared for the No Secrets program. Knowing that some students have experienced similar abuse as discussed in the show, we provide a trigger warning at the start of the performance to let students know they may feel many different ways while watching the show and all feelings are valid. If the school is aware of a student with a history of abuse, many times they will give the student the option of skipping the show if they think they will be triggered. When we work within Chicago Public Schools, we partner with an organization called Rape Victim Advocates (RVA) who brings educators and counselors to speak with the students immediately after the performance. Students are given the opportunity to come speak with counselors in a safe room if they have any questions or need to disclose abuse. Outside of Chicago Public Schools, we encourage the school counselor to set up a similar safe room the day of the performance so that students have an outlet to talk. We also provide staff trainings and teacher packets to equip school staff with the tools necessary to continue the conversation with their students.

How does the program account for different age groups?

There are three versions of the No Secrets show. The Kindergarten - 2nd grade version focuses on safe vs. unsafe touches, the importance of saying "No" to an unsafe touch, not keeping touches a secret, and reporting to a trusted adult. The 3rd - 5th grade version focuses on similar skills, but includes more age-appropriate scenes (such as internet safety). The 6th - 8th grade show focuses more on personal body safety, sexual harassment, consent, and sexual abuse. While still emphasizing the importance of reporting sexual abuse, this version also sparks more of a dialogue between students about how we can change the current state of rape culture in our world.

What kind of reactions does the performance get, from both youth and adults?

Reactions vary greatly between students. One student expressed her gratitude because "no one talks about this, and it's important." Since this is a sensitive topic, we often get laughter during some of the show since students are surprised that we are talking about private parts of the body or sex. We tell the students that feeling a little uncomfortable and laughing as a coping mechanism is okay and perfectly normal. However, during most performances when the actors present the final scene dealing with a student disclosing sexual abuse, we can usually hear a pin drop in the audience because the students suddenly understand the gravity of the conversation.



This is a really important program, where could ITA members learn more about it?

You can learn more at imaginationtheater.org. You can also see how this program fulfills state-wide requirements for sexual abuse prevention education (Erin's Law) at erinslaw.org.

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INQUIRY AROUND ILLINOIS THEATRE TEACHER LICENSING

By **Melissa Thibodeaux-Thompson**

comprised of more than 3,000 theatre artists and educators from throughout the state). If you'd like to submit an item for inclusion in the weekly announcements, please click here.

(Suggestions for inclusion include: audition announcements, job postings, interesting theatre stories/experiences, lesson plans, community/life events, etc., theatre opportunities, etc.).

Also, please remember to submit your upcoming performances and/or events to the ITA's on-line performance calendar!!! Click here.

A few weeks ago, I logged into the Illinois Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) to enter some professional development hours when I noticed a new warning notifying me about changing requirements regarding teaching licensing for middle grades. It specifically states that starting in Feb 2018 anyone teaching a middle grades subject will have to attend accredited programs in those fields for those grade levels in order to obtain the necessary license.

One example from their "Future of Middle Grades" publication specifically mentions a secondary education English teacher who wants to change positions to teach drama to 5th through 8th grade students. The answer given explains that because this teacher "is seeking a new middle grades (5-8) endorsement and does not currently hold a middle school or middle grades endorsement, she must complete a full or focused middle grades (5-8) Theater/Drama program offered at any Illinois institution with an approved middle grade (5-8) Theater/Drama program" (The Future of Illinois Middle Grades, <http://isbe.net/licensure/pdf/higher-ed/future-of-illinois-middle-grades.pdf>, p.6).

The challenge with this new requirement is that there is no program in the state of Illinois in Theatre/Drama that focuses on the middle grades. They are all secondary education.

Given all this, I am interested in researching how current teachers in Illinois went about getting their licenses. Personally, I know that I went out-of-state because I knew I couldn't get what I wanted in Illinois. Are there others who did the same? Is there a different way to go about it that I'm not aware of? Are there any existing trends around how Theatre/Drama teachers earn their qualifications?

To gather some evidence and begin to answer some of those questions, I developed a google form survey. My hope is that the data I collect could help determine the most common procedure that future theatre/drama teachers might use towards licensure, what percentage of theatre/drama teachers turn to out-of-state or alternative programs, and how best to advocate for future licensing policies. This survey is anonymous and purely for gathering information. It should take less than 5 minutes to complete.

Here's a link to the survey... <https://goo.gl/forms/nBXJHnePqIDpwuv22>

Thank you in advance for your help!



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