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PRECONFERENCE 2014

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

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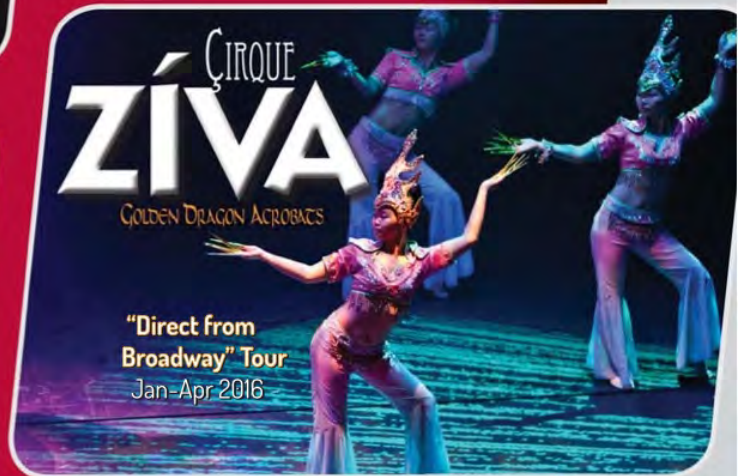
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VOLUME 26, NUMBER 4
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

FEATURES

10 (UN)BUILDING BARRIERS

APAP and the Duke Foundation collaborate on an arts initiative.

BY RAY MARK RINALDI

18 A FULL GLASS

Radio personality Ira Glass returns to APAP|NYC.

BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

25 DAY IN THE LIFE

Arts festival leaders share daily agendas.

BY HILLARY CASAVANT

DEPARTMENTS

7 FROM THE PRESIDENT

8 VOICES

Get updated with news from the field.

30 FAIR GROUND

5 Minutes to Shine allows members to offer their best and brightest.

32 ADO

Spotlight on Corey Ross of Starvox Entertainment.

THIS PAGE: Wesleyan University Center for the Arts presented Seldati Tari Aceh from Northern Sumatra as part of a Building Bridges grant.

COVER: Alda Shahghasemi, Iranian American musician and vocalist, performed at the University of South Florida for a Building Bridges project.

“Building Bridges galvanizes our efforts to promote a deeper understanding of curatorial practice.”

SCOTT STONER, PAGE 10

INSIDE ARTS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS



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APAP is a national service and advocacy organization with nearly 1,600 members worldwide dedicated to bringing artists and audiences together. Leading the field, APAP works to effect change through professional development, resource sharing and civic engagement.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



AS WE DIRECT OUR ATTENTION TO APAP|NYC 2015, I would like to take a moment to underscore the exciting developments happening within our organization. Our team at APAP is always looking for the value we can bring to you, our members, and this year has been particularly notable.

First, we are in the process of analyzing, assessing and testing our assumptions about every aspect of our role as a national service organization. With funding from an EmcArts grant targeting innovation in arts agencies, we began this process of adaptive thinking in July and will continue throughout 2015 to identify issues and potential outcomes with a cross-section of members and others who support the performing arts. It is our aim with this process to develop and deliver information, services and resources that will effectively expand and sustain the arts presenting field.

Also, through our Leadership Development Program, we have continued to seek input from artists, agents, managers and presenters, including at the regional arts conferences. We are imagining a new Leadership Fellows Program through the collaborative guidance of Fan Taylor Award recipient Ken Foster and APAP programs director Scott Stoner. Their aim is to develop the capacity and aptitude of mid-career professionals that is essential to a strong and stable future for our industry. Application guidelines for the Fellows program will be announced soon.

Thinking about the future inevitably leads me to consider the past: the leaders who have laid the groundwork for where we are today and have inspired us to move forward. When we come together at APAP|NYC 2015, I will be announcing a new initiative underway at APAP for our retired members. It's another way of saying thank you and assuring that we continue to draw upon the experience and wisdom of our elders.

Speaking of January in New York, we have again united with colleague organizations to highlight and promote the many arts events and festivals that take place during the month and bring together thousands from far afield nationally and internationally. After all: Our conference theme is "together." On behalf of the conference committee and all of us on staff, I want to thank the many members who contributed proposals and ideas for the APAP|NYC 2015 annual conference. Please join us - in person or virtually - for what promises to be an energizing and productive time - together! - January 9-13, 2015 in New York.

Mario Garcia Durham, PRESIDENT & CEO



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PRECONFERENCE 2014 INSIDE ARTS 7



VOICE

PUTTING THE "ART" IN PARTNERSHIP

SOMETIMES, SEMANTICS ARE EVERYTHING.

When the Germantown Performing Arts Center in Tennessee entered into a three-year funding agreement with the Memphis-based investment firm Duncan-Williams, Inc., the company called the naming gift a "partnership." GPAC management decided to follow the firm's lead.

"To them, a partnership means being good stewards of the community, and people who pay attention to the performing arts center will pay attention to their firm," says Paul Chandler, executive director of GPAC. "What we did was grab the term, look within our organization and then look at other nonprofits we work with, want to do projects with or want to perform in our space."

So began the GPAC "partnerships" theme, which takes dollars from the Duncan-Williams donation and reinvests them in the local performing arts community.

One successful partnership involves the Madonna Learning Center, a nearby school for children

and young adults with disabilities. For years, the school had produced a standing-room-only holiday show in its cafeteria. It was a big deal: Student actors started rehearsing six months in advance, and the performance was always packed with satellite broadcasts in other parts of the school. In 2013, GPAC offered its venue to the school free of charge, and three shows sold out in the 868-seat concert hall.

"It was a nice combination of community and the performing arts," Chandler says.

As GPAC begins work on a new strategic plan, the partnerships theme will evolve, perhaps taking the art out of the performing arts center and into new spaces.

"We're using the money we've received from Duncan-Williams to strengthen these other organizations and events we co-present," Chandler says. "We're paying it forward. We can help these other organizations grow; at the same time, it helps us recognize the gift further down the road."

For more information, visit gpacweb.com.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

THE CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL has awarded more than \$1 million in grants through Creative California Communities, a new program that aims to revitalize neighborhoods through the arts, foster arts engagement, stimulate tourism, create jobs for artists, invest in youth and build relationships among arts, business and government entities. The funding will support 24 initiatives statewide, selected from 157 applications. "The Creative California Communities program supports many significant projects in large and small communities across California, demonstrating the power of the arts to transform our state," says Wylie Aitken, chair of the California Arts Council. "Our council was inspired by the overwhelming response to this program, which revealed the scope of unmet needs for the arts in our communities." Funded projects include

DETROIT: ARTS CITY

SEVENTEEN METROPOLITAN DETROIT ARTISTS AND ONE COLLECTIVE have been awarded Kresge Artist Fellowships for 2014. Each of the 18 fellowships for artists working in dance/music and a new theater/film category includes an unrestricted prize of \$25,000. The work of the 2014 fellows encompasses creative practices that push boundaries and blur lines between established disciplines, advocate for social justice and embody Detroit's complex, evolving narrative. Awardees include world-renowned musicians working in diverse genres, multidisciplinary artists incorporating sound and new media, local filmmakers presenting stories with universal themes and emerging artists bringing fresh perspectives to their chosen media. Recipients include Juan Atkins, electronic musician; Diane Cheklich, screenwriter and film director; Ben Hall, sound and interdisciplinary artist; Tony

The Harmony Project of Los Angeles is dedicated to music education for youth in low-income communities.



a multimedia stage work intended to address the prevention of high school bullying, an effort that brings at-risk youth together with professional musicians and two initiatives aimed at raising awareness of watersheds. Recipients include A Reason to Survive, San Diego; AmadorArts, Amador County; Arte Américas, Fresno County; Arts Council of Kern, Kern County; Arts Council Santa Cruz County; Filipino-American Development Foundation, San Francisco County; First Voice, San Francisco County; Friends of Olympia Station Inc.; Santa Cruz County; Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County; The Harmony Project, Los Angeles County; The Japanese American Cultural and Community

Center, Los Angeles County; Kala Art Institute, Alameda County; LA STAGE Alliance, Los Angeles County; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Oakland Museum of California, Alameda County; Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, Alameda County; Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County; PlacerArts, Placer County; Plumas County Arts Commission, Plumas County; San Benito County Arts Council; Watts Village Theater Company, Los Angeles County; YoloArts, Yolo County; Youth in Arts, Marin County; and Yuba-Sutter Regional Arts Council, Sutter County, Yuba County. Creative California Communities grants are supported by one-time funds from the California State Assembly.

For information on the program, visit arts.ca.gov.

D'Annunzio, documentary film director; Jeedo, aka Waajeed, composer, producer and arranger; Donovan Glover, music video and film director; Kisma Jordan, classical vocalist; dream hampton, director and writer; Gayelynn McKinney, composer, drummer and band leader; Leon Johnson, film and theater director and interdisciplinary artist; Stephen Nawara, composer, guitarist, bassist and vocalist; Daniel Land, screenwriter

and film director; New Music Detroit, new music collective; Rola Nashef, screenwriter and film director; Tracy Halloran Pearson, choreographer; Jasmine Rivera, screenwriter and film director; Britney Stoney, singer/songwriter; and Sherina Rodriguez Sharpe, playwright.

To learn more about the program, visit kresgeartsindetroit.org.

Each of the Detroit-area artists received a \$25,000 Kresge Arts Fellowship.

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(UN) BUILDING BARRIERS

BY RAY MARK RINALDI

APAP AND DUKE COLLABORATE ON AN ARTS INITIATIVE TO SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON MUSLIM ARTS AND CULTURE IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AND BEYOND.

When we talk about art as a universal language or tout its ability to break down international barriers, we're most often dealing in metaphors. Sure, music, dance and theater expose our commonalities, but to cast art as an actual peacemaker, a unifier of cultures at odds for centuries? The idea is easier to speak about in colorful prose than to accomplish.

Building Bridges, an initiative of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, takes a literal approach to the concept. It posits a pure belief that poetry and plays - in this case, ones from Muslim traditions - can start a revolution in communities and across the world. To make this happen in the past decade, the program has invested millions of dollars in film series, painting exhibits, public festivals and other events.

10 INSIDE ARTS PRECONFERENCE 2014

Algerian singer-songwriter and rapper Meryem Saci offered a workshop at the Center for the Arts/Wesleyan University.

COURTESY CENTER FOR THE ARTS/WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



“We have a commitment because Doris Duke had a commitment to the preservation and promotion of Muslim arts,” said foundation director Zeyba Rahman, who partners with the overall Doris Duke Charitable Foundation in awarding Building Bridges grants. The goal, she says, is to expose Americans to the highest forms of contemporary Muslim art and “use those expressions to create experiences that will bind communities together.”

“Our belief is that art connects to individual people emotionally,” she says. “And in that moment of emotion, there can be a new path created for a connection to others.”

In 2012, the foundation upped its promise – generously – with a \$1 million grant to create a Building Bridges: Campus Community Engagement program at colleges and universities with the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. The partnership builds on APAP’s previous Creative Campus grants program, which has generated inter-disciplinary cultural events at higher-ed institutions since 2006.

For APAP, the partnership realizes important goals for the organization and the field.

“Building Bridges galvanizes our efforts to promote a deeper understanding of curatorial practice,” says Scott Stoner, director of programs and resources at APAP. “The grants will support the production of well-documented and fascinating benchmarks for expanding audience engagement in the future.”

The first six Building Bridges grants were awarded in 2013 and they are, to put it bluntly, ambitious. Campus presenters will attempt to rewrite the rules for cultural programming at their schools by showcasing local artists with Muslim backgrounds alongside international stars who rarely get to play in the U.S. They’ll reconfigure their campuses’ roles in the community by submitting a dialogue between Muslim residents and the wider population. They’ll try to reshape their own audiences with programming meant to expose millennials to new art forms.

And they will do much of it while bravely walking on eggshells, appeasing the conflicting manners of diverse cultures and navigating the very real impact of current events on their missions.

“Who knows what will happen in the world between now and then?” asks Andrea Assaf, artistic director of the politically minded Art2Action art collaborative and project director for “THIS Bridge,” the Building Bridges component at the University of South Florida in Tampa. “This is an exciting time, but the flip side of exciting is the controversy that can come with it.”

She has already felt the pressure. While putting together the USF program, which will expose the campus, as well as the wider Arab, Islamic and Middle Eastern population, to the art of Muslim women, news accounts blasted stories

COURTESY MITCHELL CENTER FOR THE ARTS/UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



Slavs and Tatars, creators of the sculpture *Tongue Twist Her*, were artists in residence at Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts/ University of Houston.



The Building Bridges project at Cedar Cultural Center at Augsburg College will focus on Somali musicians. The Somali Youth Against Violence group performed the Somali dance dhaanto in a workshop.

of a violent beating of a Palestinian student by Israeli police in Jerusalem. The student happened to be from Tampa and the East-West tension reverberated through the Florida community.

Assaf has done considerable outreach to local groups, Muslim and otherwise, on- and off-campus, to determine programming that will get to the heart of the matter in a metro area that has – just to highlight its demographic variety – 25,000 Muslim-identified residents, 350,000 military veterans and a growing number of new refugees from Iraq and Syria.

She is not one to shy away from difficult topics, however. The USF program, based mainly around a performance season that runs from fall 2014 through spring 2015, explores multi-layered ideas of gender identity. She will present poets, playwrights and comedians, and include both female and female-identified transgendered artists. “The definition of woman artist is inclusive and expansive,” she says.

Not everyone is comfortable with that, but it’s already building bridges, inspiring the campus’ main gay and Arab student groups, not so frequently

engaged, to co-sponsor events. “There’s potential for some really volatile situations and that means a potential for the arts to be productive in the dialogue,” she believes.

Each of the Building Bridges projects takes a unique approach. At Georgetown University in Washington D.C., a program centered at the Davis Performing Arts Center will engage students in creating works with artists representing multiple regions, including Iraqi-American playwright Heather Raffo and Egyptian actor Khaled Abol Naga. It will culminate in a Millennial Monologues Festival during which young Muslim performers will tell their stories.

A version taking shape at the Cedar Cultural Center at Augsburg College in Minneapolis will focus specifically on introducing Somali musicians to the region, employing local ensembles and importing acts from Somalia for performances and workshops tied to the learning curriculum.

Again, current events are making an impact on the proceedings. The civil war in Somalia devastated the country’s concert business and dispersed its community of musicians. Cedar Center

organizers are working with local promoters in that country to identify artists. So far they has lined up the Waayaha Cusub musical collective, now based in Kenya; British-Somali singer Aar Maanta; and the Dur Dur Band, legendary Somali hit makers in the 1980s whose leaders currently live in Columbus, Ohio.

The Wesleyan University Center for the Arts in Middletown, Conn., one of the first Creative Campus grantees, is taking part with the Muslim Women Voices Project. It’s a presenting series broad enough to include a night of hip hop with Algerian-Canadian artist Meryem Saci on the roster; a show of dancers from Syiah Kuala University in Indonesia; and a performance by Moroccan choreographer Hind Benali.

LaGuardia Community College, in Long Island City, NY, is turning the entire 2014-15 season of its 200-seat LaGuardia Performing Arts Center over to its Building Bridges project *Beyond Sacred: Unthinking Muslim Identity*. Programs will tap the rich diversity of Muslim performers across the New York region for 12 live events showcasing local Sufi dancers, Turkish playwright Ozen Yula and other artists.

COURTESY CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

Events also include a music series, a photography show, the creation of two new works by Muslim-identified playwrights and the promising *I-Slam* series, which will present translated readings of literary works.

"It's a very large risk but the whole focus of our performing arts center really is social justice," says project director Steven Hitt, who has never targeted a whole year around one theme. But this one fit perfectly.

The key component of his programming is simple storytelling. The poets, singers and players will all get a chance to tell how Islam has influenced their lives. As a result of his insights in putting the events together, he predicts that some participants will break stereotypes, others will reinforce them.

"I don't want to lay claim either way," he says. "We just want to tell the stories and let people say 'this changed my mind, or it didn't change my mind.'"

None of the Building Bridges projects was easy to put together and all have an evaluative research component that will determine their success. Research fellows aligned

with the individual programs will look at audience numbers, diversity and other elements. They'll get input from performers, presenters and the surrounding community.

"The question is: How do we compare these various initiatives across the board?" says John Cornwath, who is coordinating the assessment effort through the consulting firm WolfBrown. The goal is to gain data to guide grant making in coming years.

There are common challenges for the programs and that may be a starting point. Even defining the term "Muslim art" is daunting, since there are core populations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and more than 1.6 billion Muslims around the world. Does Muslim art have to be based on one particular tradition, or is any art produced by or for any Muslim to be considered?

Programs had to balance the presentation of art with the production of new work. They had to connect their efforts to the greater campus and communicate meaningfully with local communities.

A core goal was to reach 18-to-30-year-olds, not the typical

audience for fine arts venues, and programs had to adjust accordingly. That has meant, among other considerations, booking bands based on their YouTube vibe and placing a heavy emphasis on interactive projects that allow audiences to take part in the creation of work rather than passively watch it. Much of what gets shown will be developed in real time.

Interestingly, participants had to learn about the Muslim culture around them, to weigh the value of classical offerings against contemporary art, which this effort favors. They've had to adjust business as usual to lure patrons and participants that don't organically come to their venues.

"Muslim culture and theater culture don't necessarily go together unless you're intentional about it," says Assaf, who has just finished scheduling several dozen events. "I never thought about taking into consideration sunset prayer time but that will influence who can actually attend." **IAA**

Ray Mark Rinaldi is the fine arts critic for the *Denver Post*. He is a regular contributor to *Inside Arts*.



Maimouna Youssef (Inset) and Riffat Sultana performed at Wesleyan. The university is taking part in the Muslim Women's Voices Project.

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A FULL GLASS

BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

STUART MULLENBERG

RADIO PERSONALITY IRA GLASS RETURNS TO APAP|NYC – THIS TIME AFTER TOURING WITH A DANCE COMPANY, PRODUCING IN TV AND CREATING A MUSICAL.

The phrase you always see next to Ira Glass' name is "radio personality." His public radio show *This American Life* is one of the landmark moments of radio history, largely because Glass combined his reportorial curiosity and probing questions with a conversational voice to cover under-the-radar stories. He changed the tone of radio, and he changed our expectations for how much we are allowed to enjoy public radio and stories about life's quirky, sometimes inexplicable side. He taught us to stay tuned because, you know, everyone's story holds some universal truth. The last time Glass was featured in this magazine, he was speaking at the APAP conference in 2007. He had also recently

moved to New York City from Chicago, where he built his career. (He's from Baltimore.) Glass will be the Sunday plenary keynote performer during APAP|NYC 2015. In the eight years that have passed since we last spoke, the phrase "radio personality" has remained an accurate label for Glass but it can no longer contain the scope of his work. Now, he has produced TV, developed (and stars in) a touring show with a dance company, created an original musical with a creative team from Broadway and collaborated with many artists, including the writer Mike Birbiglia and composer Philip Glass, who is his uncle (and winner of the 2014 APAP Award of Merit). This time, I asked Glass to talk about collaboration and what draws him to working with artists.

How's life in New York? When we last talked, you had just moved to the city from Chicago.

Like many people who move to New York, I feel very resentful about how much everything costs. Before I moved to New York, I never thought about money even when I was broke. Here, I think about money all the time, even though I'm making money. The one big advantage to it has to do with the theme of your conference, which is about collaboration. The best thing I like about New York is that I end up knowing and running into people I would not meet or have a chance to work with in Chicago or really anywhere else. There's such a concentration of interesting people doing interesting work here. I tour with a New York dance company doing a show where I tell radio stories, and they dance. In June, we did a show at BAM on the opera house stage. It was a mini musical with all Broadway people, actual Broadway stars, a Broadway director, and a Broadway designer and a Broadway lighting guy sound guy, Broadway dancers and a Broadway choreographer. Plus a mini opera by my cousin Philip – Philip Glass – who I didn't really know that well before I moved to New York. You can do something like that in another city, but there are so many people here, and there are institutions set up to bring people together. It's at the heart of BAM's mission to make people work together on stage, to force the alchemy to happen.

How do you think about collaboration?

I guess in an abstract way, I am a programmer putting out 30 hours of original programming a year in the same way an arts presenter is programming probably a lot more than that at one of their venues. The most exciting stuff we do is bring in people we've never worked with before and invent stuff together. I do notice that the people who are good at forcing collaborations are very careful curators. Understanding that Maira Kalman, the visual artist, will be a good match for Daniel Handler who writes the Lemony Snicket books. You would have to really understand both of their works and to have met both of them to make that call. You really have to get close to the artist. As an arts presenter, that's a lot of the fun of it, right? It's nice pleasing the audience but it's nice getting to know interesting people who make stuff. The reason why they would want to do collaborations with creative people is because it's such fun to work with people who are trying something they have never tried.

Has your work collaborating with dancers uncovered anything new for you in your primary work?

I wish I was a profound enough artist to say yes. But the answer is no. I feel like the radio show is so on its own course that it is really hard to take any lessons from dance. The radio show continues to change but it's really on the talent and interest of the producers who are now working on the show. It's a creature with its own evolutionary path.



Ira Glass with his cousin, the composer Philip Glass, APAP Award of Merit winner in 2014.

I've been thinking about evolution and adaptation, and how much you have done that in your career - from NPR reporter to what you're doing now. It's like that old saying: Adapt or die. Are you always questing? Are you driven by curiosity? Boredom? What's propelling you to these new formats and projects?

I feel like the right answer to this question is to say: I have to keep changing to keep things interesting to me, and businesses have to move forward, and all of us have to adapt to the new digital age to what our audiences expect. But honestly, I don't feel any of that. In fact, the new stuff we get into on the radio show, that we've done TV and we're staging musicals and I'm touring with a dance company, it's out of a much more primitive and dumber impulse. I'm out for my own amusement, and the format of the radio show exists to amuse me and those of us who work on it. For all of these I think: *Oh, that would be fun to try.* And it's not much more sophisticated than that. If I wasn't doing dance or developing films or going onstage at BAM, I would still be perfectly happy making the radio show. It's hard making the radio show, which I am continually trying to make new. In that case, I do get restless doing the same thing over and over, and I do want it to be interesting to me. All this other stuff is there for fun.

I think "fun" is very evolved. To get back to collaboration, how do you know someone is going to be a good collaborator with you, whether it's a new storyteller on the show or something nudging you toward dance?

Often it's a guess at the beginning. Some people you really don't know until you get into it with them. Some people, like the dancers, seem like a weirdly obvious match because of the sensibility of what they do seemed so similar to the sensibility of the radio show, which I know sounds like a crazy thing to say since they don't use any words and I work in a medium that is all



words. But the fact that they're completely out for fun and out to amuse – and also they are trying to document real feelings and moments. There was something in the mix of it that felt very similar. And they were really nice. When I met them, they were just smart and nice and I thought it seemed worth trying. There are other things that are less obvious and sure. Right now we're collaborating on a little musical for the radio with Stephen Merritt, the singer from The Magnetic Fields. He doesn't live in the same city. He lives upstate. To me, he's a famous person, someone I admired from afar. It's only once we got into it that I realized he's a good collaborator. You don't know until you're into it if someone is going to be fussy or not listen or not going to want to throw the ball back and forth. Some people want to work in a way that has to be their way. You're really rolling the dice. Fortunately, Merritt is responsive and a team player. He has been lovely. There have been collaborations where it hasn't gone quite as well with people who won't be named.

I think of you as a writer. I wonder about the balance you strike between telling a good story and making strategic decisions about your career.

For me, the question isn't do I work in a musical or do I write an investigative story. For me, it's so much more basic. I want something exciting. Sometimes it turns out to be a musical. Sometimes it turns out to be some investigative thing. Some of my favorite things I do come from when I sit with someone in the studio for an hour, and I can just cut the work to make it perfect in 11 minutes. It's not very hard, and it's lovely. All those things are equally enjoyable. For me, the trade-off is that I run a business, and I supervise 18 or 19 people. It's really easy to get caught up in

“The most exciting stuff we do is bring in people we've never worked with before and invent stuff together. I do notice that the people who are good at forcing collaborations are very careful curators.”

that, and then all I am doing is editing other people's stories and talking to them about what's working and what's not working – and not writing anything of my own. That's more of a struggle, more prosaic and less interesting.

I spend a lot of time shaping people's stories. Not everyone is a storyteller with words. They tell their stories in dance and music. And then they have to stand up at APAP and tell a story and talk about their lives. As much as I love telling a story myself, I think it's creative to work with a person to bring his or her story out beautifully.

Yeah. Yeah. It's like somewhere between editing and being a dramaturg.

That's right. It's rather an honor to work so closely with people's stories.

I have the same exact feeling. That's my actual better talent than being a writer. It's the thing I feel I was able to do at 19: I was always a decent editor, and only became a decent writer as I got older.

Let's talk about the distributor switch you made – breaking from the distributor model. What propelled you forward into this new model?

The context is very different from arts presenters. But here's what I can say: We're a radio show on public radio stations. Because of the technology being different now from when we started 19 years ago, we don't have to distribute over satellite. We can distribute over the Internet. We don't need a distributor. We're on over 500 stations. The things you would need a distributor for – to talk stations into picking you up and to collect money from the stations – it's all now happening over the Internet. So we don't need a distributor like we once traditionally did. Technology has made this possible, but also where we are in the life cycle of the show made it possible. It's a funny situation because we had a good relationship with our distributor. They did a great job. We liked them personally. They were pleasant to work with. We had no complaints at all. We just didn't need a distributor any more.

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It was like breaking up with somebody with whom things were going fine but there was no reason to keep living together. It was an odd sort of thing. The one motivating thing was that they sold underwriting at the end of the show. We felt – and I've talked about this publicly – that our distributor could have gotten us more money, could have gotten higher rates and sold more aggressively. They basically said they are getting as much as anyone can basically get. We wondered if that was true, so we've just now taken over and we've hired other people to do it. And it's possible they were right. I don't want to pretend like we're sure. We don't know. It's still early. It's entirely possible we're wrong. I say that with respect to my colleagues at PRI. They know a lot about underwriting. That's the biggest risk: We're doing this with our fingers crossed, hoping that we're right. If we're wrong, we'll have to raise money some other way.

Your voice is so strong – the tone, the distinctiveness. You're 55 now. How long did it take you to find your voice?

I know people who are good writers and found their voice very, very quickly. My wife works for this teenager named Tavi Gevinson, who started off as a fashion blogger when she was 11. She is an incredibly confident, funny, very smart, perceptive writer, and started the website Rookie when she was 15. That was not my situation at all. I was not a competent writer. I did not find my voice until I was 26 or 27. I started working at NPR in Washington when I was 19, so I started very young. Knowing how to write anything that sounded like myself or felt like myself took me a really long time, and much longer than the writers I know. I've said to other people that it took me seven years before I was halfway good, and the only people who say that's normal are comedians. To create a thing that is original, that's your own, the notion that it takes six or seven years apparently for comedy, that's totally normal. Everybody's path is so different. And that's a relief for all of us who don't start off so talented that's there are other ways to get there, that through hard work you can actually get somewhere.

I was thinking about all the steps you took to get where you are right now. Are those steps still available? Do young people want to work that hard?

I feel like the young people I know are super hard workers. Somehow I'm running into a very specialized group of people but people who are smart, who make stuff for a living seem to understand that if it's going to be any good, it's going to be hard to do. You have to devote a lot of time and go with it.

What will you bring to APAP this time?

The last time I spoke at APAP, it was an incredibly fun speech to give. I feel like that's one of the funnest speeches I've ever given. I felt I was addressing my people. This is a crowd of people just like the people I work with – whose jobs are different from mine but in a certain way face the same thing I face every week, which is what am I going to put out there that people might like and that I can stand myself. That's a really particular kind of mission. I feel like I really understand that. When I gave that first speech, I felt really indebted to arts presenters. That's why I do what I do. I grew up in a place where people were putting on shows, and that really shaped me – going to shows. There are smart business reasons for me to come to APAP and give a talk. But for me it's a super fun thing to do. I'm excited to come back and do it again. 🎤🎤

Alicia Anstead is the editor of *Inside Arts* magazine and a co-producer and story developer at APAP|NYC 2015.

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DAY in the LIFE

BY HILLARY CASAVANT

Arts festival leaders share daily agendas.

For these busy art professionals, an annual arts festival is a yearlong commitment. Linda Lucero, executive and artistic director for Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, says learning how to run an arts organization is “an art in itself.” Yet each festival season these pros pull it off, illuminating their communities with outstanding arts and cultural events. Amid the festival bustle, we caught up with Lucero, Ella Baff, Todd Olson and Brad Carlin for a snapshot of their day-to-day work lives.

Ella Baff

EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL



With Baff at the helm, Jacob's Pillow has become America's longest running dance festival and a National Historic Landmark, hosting more than 50 dance companies each year. Baff's hard work has received due recognition: In 2011, the festival was awarded The National Medal of Arts, which Baff personally accepted from President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama.

Location: Becket, Mass.
Current mobile device: Samsung Galaxy
Current computer: Dell 13

SOUNDS

Nothing, so I can think without distraction.

TIME-SAVING TRICK
Thinking clearly.

INDISPENSABLE GADGET
My PDA - but I'm not happy about it.

FIRST WORK MOVE
Sit up straight and focus.
FAVORITE PART OF A WORKDAY
Moving something important forward.
After work
Commune with my cat.
In a word
Energetically.

Best advice received
John Cage,
"Begin anywhere."



Linda Lucero (far right) with her staff.

Linda Lucero

EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
YERBA BUENA GARDENS FESTIVAL

Each year, the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival hosts a plethora of cultural programs, including concerts, plays, performances and poetry readings. Lucero may be the face of the festival, but she credits her team for its success. "I'm blessed to be doing what I'm doing, surrounded by the best audiences, the best artists, the best staff and board and the best consultants ever," she says.

Location: San Francisco, Calif.
Current mobile device: iPhone 5 - I live in the tech capital of the world.
Current computer: iMac

SOUNDS

Listening to music while working is too distracting. Unless listening to music is the work.

TIME-SAVING TRICK
After putting off a task for a week, I move it up to number one on my to-do list the following week.

INDISPENSABLE TOOLS
iPhone, LastPass for corralling a million usernames and

passwords, APAP programming calendar

FIRST WORK MOVE
Take a deep breath and turn on the computer.

Biggest challenge in a workday: LOL. The unexpected email or phone call.

FAVORITE PART OF A WORKDAY

When the show starts.

AFTER WORK
Twice-a-week yoga at Crunch along with production director Steve Cho.

IN A WORD
Focused.


Best advice received
INAY - it's not about you. Advice that I've learned? Take the high road.



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26 INSIDE ARTS PRECONFERENCE 2014



Best advice received
Satisfy an appetite, but whet a new one.

Todd Olson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE COLUMBIA FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Olson is diving headfirst into his new role as executive director for The Columbia Festival of the Arts, a position he started in August. Armed with 11 years experience as artistic director for American Stage Theatre Company in St. Petersburg, Florida, Olson says his proudest accomplishment is raising a family while working in a creative industry.

Location: Columbia, Md.

Current mobile device: iPhone

Current computer: Ancient PC

TUNES

Fallbacks are Beck and Frampton.

TIME-SAVING TRICK

Consent agendas and Friday updates. The consent agenda consists of monthly financials, our "dashboard" (which focuses board attention on the important measures of the organization), and minutes from the previous board meeting. We start each board meeting by passing the consent agenda, which gets so much detail behind us, allowing us to concentrate the board's time/bandwidth on other, higher order matters. The Friday update is just that a quick email every Friday informing the board of what went on in the organization that

past week, status of current goals, bullet point lists of what's happening in all departments and other miscellany. This saves time during that precious hour in the board meeting, which is usually devoted to ENDLESS updates and reports.

INDISPENSABLE TOOLS

iPhone, Yelp, Siri

FIRST WORK MOVE

Saying good morning to all staff, and music.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN A WORKDAY

Being OK with what I cannot get done.

FAVORITE PART OF A WORKDAY

The new idea that I didn't see coming.

AFTER WORK

I watch my children, who constantly surprise me.

IN A WORD

Collaboratively.



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Brad Carlin

MANAGING DIRECTOR
FUSEBOX

Each April, Carlin and the Fusebox team host a hybrid art festival with innovative performances, films, music, installations and visual art throughout the city. The groundbreaking lineup represents all corners of the world, from New York to Israel. Carlin is proud to have carved out a rewarding career in the arts, and uses his work to spark the “fuse” of artistic conversation in his city.



Location: Austin, Texas
Current mobile device: iPhone 5s
Current computer: iMac

WORKSPACE

Open-format office in the attic of a restored early 20th century home. The bar cart and snack station are well stocked, and the sofa can fold out into a bed. Both amenities have come in very handy when producing an annual 12-day festival.

TUNES

Pandora or KUTX (local college radio station)

TIME-SAVING TRICK

Training myself to be a morning person and getting the most out of the first few hours of the day.

INDISPENSABLE SOFTWARE

Google Drive (as well as all the Google Docs). My calendar and to-do list software, Todoist, are also pretty essential.

FIRST WORK MOVE

Email and update my list of action items.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN A WORKDAY

Keeping enough time in the schedule to sit at my desk. So much of my days are spent in meetings (which I love) but there are always emails, filing or research that falls through the cracks.

FAVORITE PART OF A WORKDAY

Early morning hours. I am usually the first one in the office and enjoy the calm and quiet.

AFTER WORK

Playing with my daughter.

IN A WORD

Collaborative. **IAA**

Hillary Casavant is a freelance writer in Boston.

“Illuminating” ~ Washington Post
 “Never fails to amaze” ~ Chicago Tribune
 “Captivating, universally appealing” ~ BroadwayWorld.com
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FAIR GROUND

SHINE BRIGHTLY

A jewel at APAP|NYC, 5 Minutes to Shine allows members to give their best and brightest.

WHEN SCOTT STONER AND I DEVELOPED THE 5 MINUTES TO SHINE FORMAT FOR APAP|NYC, we had two goals in mind: to have members share the evolution of a big idea and tell compelling stories. Key to our process was that the presentations would not be pitches; they would be stories. Members, who applied six months before the conference, were chosen because we believed in their ideas and the stories they had to tell. We worked with each speaker to be concise and evocative, to get to the heart of the story and to offer audience members a take-away. It was a gift to the speakers as well as to the audience members. Of the eight presenters in 2014 (the first year we offered 5MTS), Lehua Simon, assistant manager of the Leeward Theatre in Pearl City, Hawaii, had to be the most nervous. She had never spoken in front of a large group of people, and she figured her story – about the spiritual and spirit-rich side of arts presenting – might not have traction with the APAP crowd. But it did. She added another element to her storytelling: authenticity. It struck a nerve with the audience. All the presenters told stories through their various arts – for instance, Kevin Spencer did a magic trick, Vox Lumiere wrote a theatrical presentation, Dmitri Vietze played a concert. Lehua compiled a vibrant slide show to accompany her story, but it was her winning style, her ability to reveal herself without promoting herself and her willingness to be real that won the hearts of

the voters. She spoke about the origins of her organization, that its land had been the site of an ancient temple and then a Christian church and now the Leeward. “I can feel the *mana*,” she said, referring to the Hawaiian concept of spiritual energy. When she stepped onstage to give her presentation a second time – that same day! – in front of the large gathering for the awards ceremony in the ballroom, her heart was beating fast. I looked into her eyes. “Go shine,” I said. We tell storytellers not to lean on clichés in their stories, but I can’t help plugging one in here: Lehua brought down the house, almost like a preacher delivering the good word. Veteran and emerging arts leaders both cheered her on; both were affected by her genuineness and story about the spirituality that led her to her work, about the prayerfulness of her work and the personal history that intersected her work and beliefs. She did shine. And that shine spread across the room, just as we hoped it would. We asked Lehua to tell the story of her 5MTS experience here, and you can watch her presentation at the Award Ceremony at the APAP channel on YouTube. Scott and I also hope you will join us for the next 5MTS, 10 a.m. Monday, January 12 at APAP|NYC 2015. Come watch your colleagues shine.

–Alicia Anstead
Editor *Inside Arts*
Co-producer 5MTS



In her 5MTS presentation, Lehua Simon talked about the spirituality of arts presenting.

LEHUA SIMON: HOW TO SHINE

I AM THE ASSISTANT THEATER MANAGER of a small college theater in Hawaii. I am fairly new to the field of theater management, and it was my dream to go to APAP|NYC in 2014. There was, however, a small obstacle to attending APAP: funding.

The college offers travel grants for professional development, but the grants are limited and competitive. Higher priority is given to applicants who are presenting at the conference they wish to attend. I didn't have the experience or credentials to present a professional development session at APAP, but by the grace of what I like to call God, APAP had initiated 5 Minutes to Shine, an opportunity for members to present in a public forum at the conference. I didn't need to be an expert; I needed something about me to shine.

I decided to propose a presentation on a topic I am most passionate about: the spiritual experience of presenting the arts. It was difficult to write my proposal. I was insecure about bringing up the subject of spirituality in a generally secular industry. But I knew that if they would take a chance on this risky subject, it could shine brightly. I took the risk and submitted my proposal on spirituality and art. APAP accepted my proposal, gave me feedback and advice, and then, as a presenter at the conference, I was able to buy my ticket to my very first APAP conference.

Attending APAP|NYC was a blessing in and of itself. I had the time of my life exploring the conference offerings and developing relationships with artists and

professionals. Then, at the end of the week, it was time to shine. I showed up at one of the Hilton's compact conference rooms praying I would remember my lines. When you have only have five minutes, every word must be precise and on schedule. I was so nervous about being in front of an audience and delivering my speech correctly that someone watching my practice round had to remind me to hold my head up and look out at the audience. All the other presenters were kind companions, some just as nervous as I was, and we all supported each other even though we were technically in a competition.

I gave my presentation to the voting audience, and it went over perfectly. I had shared a piece of my soul, and it had touched the audience. Again, just doing that was a blessing. But it got better: APAP colleagues Scott Stoner and Alicia Anstead, who had developed the session, told me I would be giving my presentation one more time at the APAP Awards Ceremony. I had won the vote!

After my presentation at the luncheon on the big stage in the ballroom at the Hilton, I was greeted by people from all over the industry and commended for sharing this message that I feared would not be well received. Some of the award winners even introduced themselves to me and offered me their contact information, their encouragement and their support. This opportunity allowed me to shine in front of my peers, to be more fully a part of the global community in which I work and to be true to my own message. [7]

INSIDE ARTS

APAP Survey 31
 Berkeley Agency 9
 Chris MacDonald Enterprises Inc..... 6
 Eye for Talent 7
 Hotel California Back Cover
 Idyllwild Arts Academy 1
 Luma LLC 28

PRECONFERENCE 2014
AD INDEX

Pasifika Artists Network, LLC..... 22
 RJ Productions Inside Front Cover,
 2-3, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 27, 29,
 Inside Back Cover
 Rockhouse 21
 Rondi Charleston..... 26
 SRO Artists, Inc. 41

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ADO

COREY ROSS

MEET COREY ROSS, president of Starvox Entertainment and CEO of Starvox Booking and one of the esteemed (and regular) sponsors of APAP|NYC. Starvox Entertainment produces, manages, represents and promotes crossover performing arts shows that tour the world. Starvox runs the gamut: musicals, dance groups, concerts, family programming, circuses, lectures and theater. As Ross says, it's a combination of hard work, talent, understanding audiences and trusting your gut. We asked him to tell us more about what he does and his relationship to arts presenters.

What drew you to your work?

I have been producing theatre and concerts since I was a teenager and launched myself using my bar mitzvah money and savings from part time jobs. My favorite moment is the buzz of anticipation as the audience enters the building and the performers are warming up backstage. It's just a magical energy that always draws me in and somehow rewards me for all the hard work.

What makes you most proud of your organization?

We have built an international organization with offices in Canada the USA and Mexico - Paul Bongiorno is president of Starvox Booking in the U.S., and Vicente Fusco heads our Mexico City division. For the last two years we have been featured in Profit Magazine's Profit500 list of Canada's fastest growing companies. We are the only live entertainment company to ever place on this list. Our structure allows us to work with global talent in a unique way - and because of this we can provide a degree of service to each of our clients on a very high level. We shape a project from the early stages and often times work with artists and shows that might otherwise not be able to tour.

What excites you most about the performing arts?

I love working with artists to take projects from inception or early stage to the next level. Amazing recent examples of this are our work with Potted Potter the Harry Potter parody that went from an Edinburgh Fringe show to running in major markets across North America including two record-breaking runs in New York, and most recently a Spanish language run in Mexico City. Our upcoming productions of *Sherlock Holmes* and *Trey Parker's Cannibal! The Musical* will go through similar arcs.

The fact that we act as producers, presenters, venue management, agency, tour management and even Spanish translation and international production for our shows allows us to really roll up our sleeves and get involved so closely with our artists. It's also a major advantage when dealing with presenters: We can tell presenters exactly how we

made our shows work in our market where we were in the exact same position they are, launching something new and needing to find a way to get audiences to pay attention.

Who qualities do you look for in the artists you represent?

We are a commercial organization, so we are definitely looking for shows that we, and the presenters we are working with, can present profitably. We are also looking for artists and shows to which we can make a significant contribution to their success and organizational mission. Beyond that I work primarily on gut instinct. When I see something I think we can connect with presenters and audiences, I usually know right away.

What single event/person/experience in your career changed the way you do business?

So many people have been so kind and helped me along the way. My experience in programming at Massey and Roy Thomson Hall were important for giving me a strong understanding of presenting organizations.

What advice do you have for presenters?

It's time to look very carefully at the new generation of audiences. How do we draw them to performing arts?

What types of shows will they be interested in, what type of marketing will attract them and how can we retain them? Our producing is primarily focused on emerging markets and this is where we want to work most closely with presenters.

How do you spend your time at APAP|NYC?

Meetings, meetings, meetings. And more meetings.

Our conference theme is "together" - a riff on collaboration. What comes to mind professionally when you hear the word "together."

What we love about APAP is that it is the one time each year that brings the entire community of presenters together in one room. We are looking forward to seeing you. **IT!**



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