

INSIDE ARTS

FALL 2017

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

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IN THE MIDWEST**

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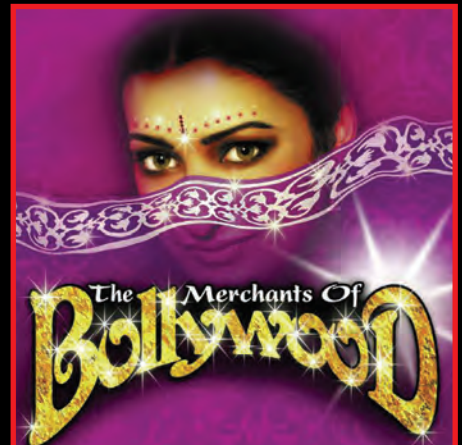
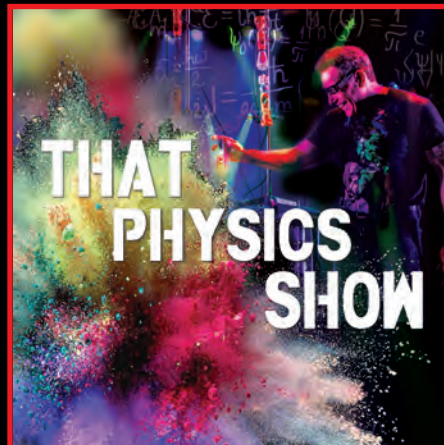
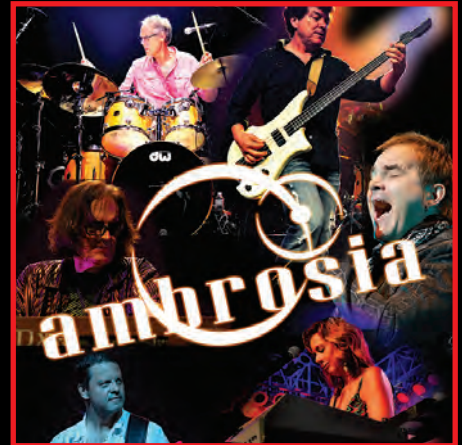
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- Julie Fowlis
- Matt Haimovitz
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- Nobuntu
- Turtle Island Quartet

DANCE

- Flamenco Vivo/Carlota Santana – Voces del Sur

THEATER

- Actors From The London Stage – *Hamlet & King Lear: Shakespeare**
- Aquila Theatre – *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare, Frankenstein: Shelley*
- Broadway's Next HIT Musical
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- Reduced Shakespeare Company – *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) [revised], The Ultimate Christmas Show (abridged), William Shakespeare's Long Lost First Play (abridged)*
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- ETHEL – *Circus – Wandering City*
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Cyrus Chestnut appears courtesy of AMI Artists.

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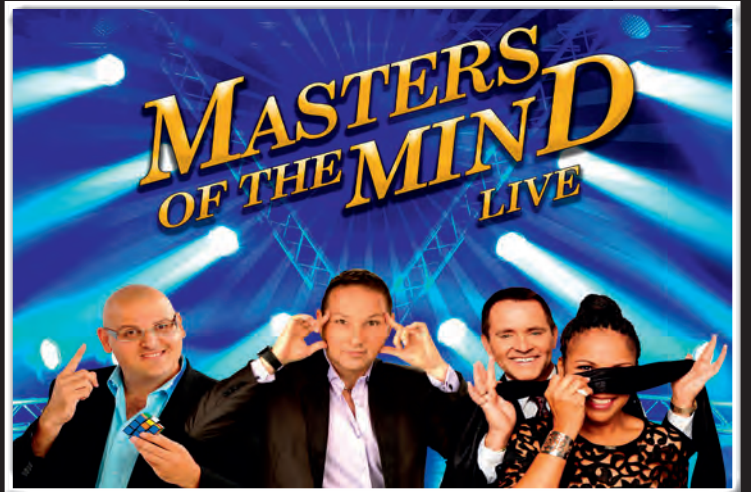
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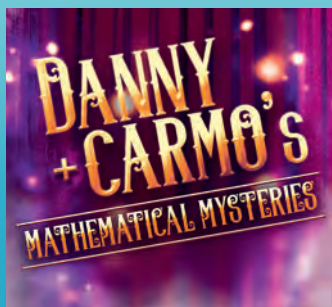
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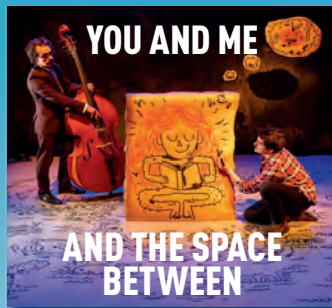
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 4
FALL 2017

“Art is always multiplicitous, and we want to be aware and take advantage of that.”

—CORE PURPOSE, PAGE 20

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APAP's inaugural Artists Institute explored personal practice and cultural radius among artists.

BY CHERIE HU

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An APAP Building Bridges grant supports Midwestern communities in finding unity and connection through Somali music.

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THIS PAGE: JJbro's *Jimmy & Jack* at the Japan Society during APAP | NYC 2017.

COVER: The Korean band SsingSsing during globalFEST during APAP | NYC 2017.

PHOTO: Adam Kissick/APAP



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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

With this issue of the magazine, we enter the powerhouse season of conferences and the annual networking, deal-making and reconnecting time of the year. From August through January, we meet as professionals to advance and program the performing arts.

That also means that we are deep into planning mode for APAP|NYC 2018. Our theme trans.ACT invites attendees and speakers to explore a plurality of ideas around the prefix “trans.” Most notably, trans is a word embraced by the transgender community, and it also is at the heart of much of the work we do as an artistic community: ever-evolving and engaging in societal transformation. Our annual conference also provides space for us to transact. And the many crossover possibilities that our field provides in terms of genre, culture and knowledge feed the growing transdisciplinary nature of our work.

But the ACT part of our work is also crucial to the APAP|NYC gathering this January. That’s the activism on behalf and in support of the arts globally and locally. It’s the NEA and the #SavetheNEA. But it’s also critical public policies that have an impact on the arts — and to which the arts can contribute. We face many social issues as a national service organization, and we face many challenges as performing arts professionals. Whether we’re talking about arts education, health-care, climate change or communities in crisis, arts organizations should be an active participant in the conversation,

ADAM KISSICK/APAP




and it’s our intention to continue to speak up and speak out with each other, to government and in communities.

A final note about transition. We would like to congratulate Scott Stoner — our erstwhile vice president of programs and resources — on his retirement, which started at the end of June. (You can read more about the next iteration of his career in the ADO section of this magazine.) We will miss Scott, whose contribution to our organization and field is incalculable. And we wish him all the best in his new ventures as a freelance arts professional.

We are also delighted to welcome Krista Bradley as the director of programs and resources at APAP. Krista comes to us directly from her work as executive director of the BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown, Maryland. Her list of professional credentials is long and impressive. Welcome, Krista!

We have important work to do in the months ahead. We look forward to seeing you at APAP|NYC.


Mario Garcia Durham, PRESIDENT & CEO

DakhaBrakha



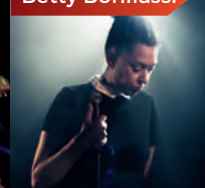
Les Amazones d’Afrique



Afro-Cuban All Stars



Betty Bonifassi



- Amjad Ali Khan
- Battle of Santiago
- Cambalache
- Dakh Daughters
- DJ Nickodemus
- East Gypsy Band featuring Tim Ries
- Hermeto Pascoal
- Huun Huur Tu
- La Bottine Souriante
- Lautari
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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Comedian Bassem Youssef is a speaker at APAP | NYC 2018.

Will Power leads a pecha-kucha-style session on collaboration.

Artists talk about activism in their work.

VOICE



Words Matter

A new framework creates shared language to evaluate arts.

What makes great art great? It can be hard to describe, especially when it comes to arts for change — projects at the intersection of artistic creation, civic engagement, community development and justice.

Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, aims to make the process a little easier — and more consistent — for funders, artists, educators and curators through the introduction of *Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change*.

This new framework defines 11 attributes of excellence to describe and evaluate community and civically engaged art across all disciplines. It was created as a tool to help those in

the field confront aesthetic bias and advance cultural equity.

“Identification of these attributes is not meant to imply that arts for change require an entirely distinct set of criteria, nor that conventional aesthetic attributes are irrelevant to an understanding of such work,” says Pam Korza, co-director of Animating Democracy. “In fact, enhancing the standard vocabulary of aesthetics with these attributes affords a deeper understanding and more equitable assessment not just of arts for change work, but a range of practices, including community engagement, experimental, and conceptual work.”

The framework grew out of Animating Democracy’s Evaluation Learning Lab, which was launched in 2014 to engage arts practitioners,

evaluators and funders to build practical knowledge and resources for measuring social impact, evaluating aesthetic dimensions and equalizing power in evaluation.

“This framework embraces and reclaims the word ‘aesthetics’ as an essential dimension of arts for change work,” Korza says. “All art-makers and cultural traditions engage aesthetic considerations and values, whether explicitly or implicitly. Audiences, witnesses and participants also bring aesthetic values to their experience of artistic work.”

However, the use of the word “aesthetics” can present its own problems — even though aesthetic elements such as color, shape, line, texture, tone, pitch and resonance are relevant to understanding a

diverse range of artistic and cultural expressions.

“The systems for valuing and interpreting them may carry a history of hierarchy, ethnocentrism, and colonial dominance,” Korza says. “Moreover, an understanding of arts for change sometimes suffers from the assumption that artistic quality is compromised by social intent.”

Artists, arts organizations and funders such as MAP Fund, Native Arts and Cultures and the Detroit artist collective Complex Movements have used the framework formally and informally in a variety of ways, and the Network of Ensemble Theaters will be sharing it at a summit as a tool for peer critique and dialogue. In 2017, OPERA America introduced the framework to the organization’s civic action group. In addition, Americans for the Arts is working with MAP Fund, Alternate ROOTS, Bonfils Stanton Foundation and the Wisconsin Arts Board on “activations” of the framework related to revising guidelines, engaging grantees in assessing their projects, and evaluation training and coaching related to social and aesthetic effects of constituents’ work. Korza and her colleagues also welcome other opportunities to discuss and implement the framework.

“We’re excited about the range of contexts and applications that these opportunities suggest, and we have others in the works,” Korza says. “Our intent is to shadow, document and learn from various applications and to share that learning with the field.”

The full framework, a shorter summary, companion guides, promotional materials and other resources can be found at animatingdemocracy.org/aesthetic-perspectives.



TOUR DE FORCE

Currently, the rhetoric surrounding race, ethnicity and identity is more urgent — and perhaps more incendiary — than ever. So too is the potential of the arts to inform social change and spark difficult, necessary dialogue. In April, Ping Pong Productions did just that with a month-long tour of Ayad Akhtar’s Pulitzer-winning drama *Disgraced* to 14 academic institutions in China. In addition to the performances, specialists in U.S.-Middle East relations, American studies, Islamic studies and other experts joined the cast for post-performance panel discussions at each stop of the tour. The cast and director led students in acting workshops and close script-reading workshops of the text of *Disgraced*. “The enthusiasm in China for this project has been overwhelming,” says Ping Pong Productions founder, and the tour’s executive producer, Alison M. Friedman. “People want to understand what has historically led America to this moment. *Disgraced* offers insight into complex and deeply fractious issues that our so-called ‘melting pot’ faces. Chinese academic institutions are profoundly interested in the discussions this play will raise. We easily could have extended the tour for three months to three times as many cities.” The tour was funded

in part by grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, the U.S. Embassy in China and other Chinese partners.

THAT’S THE SPIRIT

This fall, Houston Grand Opera will launch *Seeking the Human Spirit*, a six-year multidisciplinary initiative designed to highlight the universal spiritual themes raised in opera and to expand and deepen residents’ connection to opera and to art. The program will include three mainstage operas each season — one of which will be a new work — united by a single theme, and complementary projects by HGO and partner organizations created to enhance and enrich the community’s experience of the themes. Some of these activities will be available to the public; others will focus on groups such as hospital patients, women who are rebuilding their lives after homelessness and young people pursuing interfaith projects. HGO received one of OPERA America’s first Innovation Grants for the project, along with funding from the Getty Foundation. “With our *Seeking the Human Spirit* community partners, we are developing programs all over the city,” says HGO managing director Perryn Leech, “in museums, schools, community centers, hospitals, public spaces, and parks as well as

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in the opera house — collaborating with entirely new communities. We are thrilled to receive the Getty Foundation's support and OPERA America's recognition for this ambitious undertaking."

RISING STARS

Theatre Communications Group has announced second-round participants in its Rising Leaders of Color program. Building on insight from the inaugural program, which took place in Washington, D.C., in 2016, the second round of RLC focuses on early-career leaders from Oregon, this year adding a theater criticism/journalism track. The cohort will participate in a yearlong curriculum designed to provide professional development and networking opportunities. RLC is part of TCG's commitment to changing the face of the theater field by nurturing and supporting an intergenerational network of leaders of color at various stages in their careers. This year's class of emerging leaders includes freelance arts writer TJ Acena; Tracy Cameron Francis, a director, producer and interdisciplinary artist with a focus on international exchange and socially conscious work; Oregon Contemporary Theatre's production and facility manager Geno Franco; freelance production manager Madilynn Garcia; Jordan Schwartz, who is finishing a master's degree in arts management at the University of Oregon and will work as director of literary programs and outreach at the Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis; and

Samson Syharath, a multidisciplinary artist focusing on visibility of Asian American artists and underserved communities. "For theater to thrive, it must be relevant, and relevance includes reflecting the diverse tapestry of our audiences on and off stage," says Shelby Jiggetts-Tivony of Walt Disney Imagineering Creative Entertainment, one of the initiative's funders. "The Walt Disney Company is proud to support the Rising Leaders of Color program and its commitment to a future of inclusion, designed to help sustain theater in America for years to come."

GIRL POWER

Jazzercise has launched the GirlForce Initiative, which offers free classes to girls ages 16 to 21, encouraging them to "dance their own path." The program aims to empower teens and college-aged women by offering them a safe place to exercise, stay active and experience the healthy endorphin high that comes with a good workout. The classes blend choreography and fitness trends such as high intensity interval training and are free of charge for all of 2017. Approximately 2,000 participants have taken advantage of the program so far. "The goal of GirlForce is for young women to build better health through fitness and boost self-esteem so they have the confidence and strength to do great things," says Jazzercise CEO and founder Judi Shepherd Missett. For more information, visit jazzercise.com/GirlForce.

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November 14
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November 17-18
Victoria, BC, Canada

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Aspen, CO

January 22-27
Tulsa, OK

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March 28
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March 31
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April 5
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April 7
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Transitions



Colleen Jennings-Roggensack

Former APAP board president **COLLEEN JENNINGS-ROGGENSACK**

has been named vice president for cultural affairs at Arizona State University and will remain the

executive director of ASU Gammage, the performing arts venue. In her new role, Jennings-Roggensack, whom *Az Business* and *AZRE* magazines recently named one of the “most influential women in Arizona,” will continue her efforts to use the arts to extend and connect ASU with the communities it serves. To that end, she

will oversee the development of Sun Devil Stadium 365, a university-wide initiative to reimagine and redesign the use of the stadium as a community union used 365 days a year by faculty, staff, students and the entire Arizona community for events and activities beyond athletics.



Christopher Heacox

CHRISTOPHER HEACOX has been named executive director of the Auburn University Performing Arts Center. He will provide creative and strategic

leadership as construction begins on Auburn’s 85,000-square-foot performing arts center, scheduled to open in

2019. In addition to programmatic oversight, Heacox will manage the center’s administrative functions, including artistic programming, marketing and branding, building operations, philanthropic support and outreach and educational initiatives. He comes to Auburn from Florida State University, where he served for five years as executive director of the institution’s Opening Nights Performing Arts series. He previously served as executive director of Friday Musicale and the Riverside Fine Arts Association in Jacksonville, Florida, and as managing director of the Porter Center of the Performing Arts at Brevard College in Brevard, North Carolina. “As the vision for Auburn’s performing arts center becomes a reality, it is vital that our efforts are focused on welcoming world-class performances, presentations, artists and

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scholars to our community in an effort to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the arts,” said provost Timothy Boosinger. “With his experience building interdisciplinary performing arts programs and coordinating diverse series, I am confident Christopher Heacox will lead Auburn’s Performing Arts Center to become an internationally recognized program.”



Mari Riddle

after nearly 30 years of service to the organization and 50-plus years in the arts. Riddle brings to the role more than 25 years of executive management experience at nonprofit performing arts and social service organizations. She most recently served as program director at Community Partners in Los Angeles, and previously served as president and CEO at Centro Latino for Literacy and as executive director of Friends of the Levitt Pavilion—Macarthur Park, Telacu Community Capital and Coalition for Women’s Economic Development.

Grand Performances in Los Angeles has selected **MARI RIDDLE** as executive director. She succeeds **MICHAEL ALEXANDER**, who has retired



Damian Woetzel

former principal dancer at New York City Ballet, to serve as its seventh president beginning July 2018. He will

The Juilliard School has selected **DAMIAN WOETZEL**, director of the Aspen Institute Arts Program, artistic director of Vail Dance Festival, and

succeed Juilliard’s current and longest-serving president, Joseph W. Polisi. “Damian’s vision and optimism are second to none, and we are confident that he will advance Juilliard’s mission for the next generation while building on the foundation of artistic and academic excellence established by his distinguished predecessor,” says Juilliard board chairman Bruce Kovner, who led the search. Woetzel is also an independent director, choreographer and producer. From 2009 to 2017, Woetzel served on the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, where he helped create the Turnaround Arts Program, which brings arts education to some of the nation’s most challenged school districts. He holds a master of public administration degree from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard Law School. In 2015, he received the Harvard Arts Medal.

JACOB YARROW has been named executive director of Sonoma State University’s Green Music Center. He



Jacob Yarrow

comes to Sonoma from Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa, where he has served as programming director for the last eight years. Yarrow succeeds Zarin Mehta, the former president and executive director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra who has been at Sonoma State since 2013, and Stan Nosek, the university’s interim vice president for administration and finance who has served as the center’s co-executive director since last summer. “The opportunity to play a leadership role at SSU represents an exciting chance to make an impact on the lives of students and faculty while contributing to the vibrant arts community in the North Bay,” Yarrow said. “I am particularly impressed by Weill Hall and the current programming as well as ambitious plans to deepen academic connections and to



Krista R. Bradley

programs to support our growth as professionals and advance our important work connecting artists, audiences and community.” To that end, Bradley brings with her more than 20 years of experience working in the nonprofit, performing arts and philanthropy sectors as a funder, curator, arts administrator and consultant. She has worked with such organizations as the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Walker Arts Center, Washington Performing Arts, Houston Grand Opera, OPERA America and the Wallace Funds. She has also served on the boards of APAP and Maryland Citizens for the Arts. Bradley, who lives in the DC. area with her husband Larry, has an undergraduate degree in literature and society from Brown University, and is an alto with The Thomas Circle Singers, a DC.-based chamber choral ensemble.

KRISTA R. BRADLEY joined the APAP family in July as director of programs and resources, replacing Scott Stoner who retired in June. Bradley was previously executive and artistic director at BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown, Maryland, where she expanded programming, increased and diversified audiences, and secured the organization’s first NEA grants. Prior to BlackRock, Bradley was program officer of performing arts for Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. “I can’t think of a better way to serve the field,” said Bradley about her appointment at APAP, “than to work on behalf of our wonderfully diverse membership and develop timely, relevant resources and

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make the GMC that much more central to campus and community life." As Hancher's programming director, Yarrow led development of all programming and education efforts in a multi-disciplinary season of up to 40 artists a year and more than 100 educational activities for all ages. He also has overseen marketing and played a key role in managing the organization, advancing a number of strategies that helped position Hancher at the center of both academic life and the Midwest arts community.



Laura Zucker

LAURA ZUCKER will leave her position as executive director of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission after 25 years. Her leadership has led to a

number of policy changes, programs and initiatives that influence the region and the field nationally. Under Zucker's guidance, the county's organizational grant program grew eight-fold and now funds almost 400 nonprofit arts organizations through a two-year \$9 million grant program. She was instrumental in the adoption of Los Angeles County's civic art policy in 2005, and since then, more than 40 civic art projects have been completed and another 40 commissions ranging in size from \$10,000 to \$1 million are underway. She led the creation of Arts for All, the region's initiative dedicated to restoring arts education for all public school students, which is now working with 65 of the county's 81 school districts. She also spearheaded the creation of the largest paid summer arts internship program in the country, which employs 132 undergraduates each summer to work in performing arts organizations. The county will announce plans to find Zucker's replacement. //



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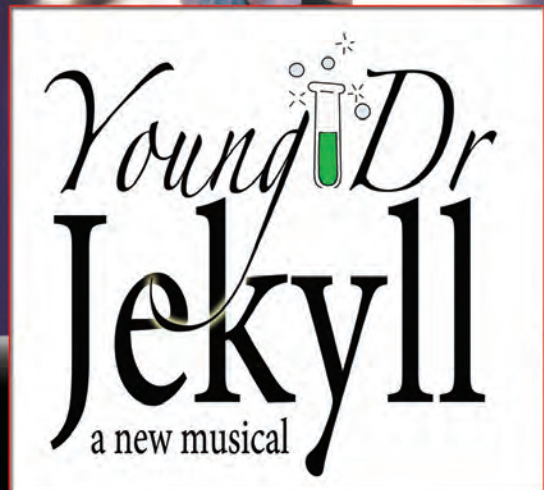
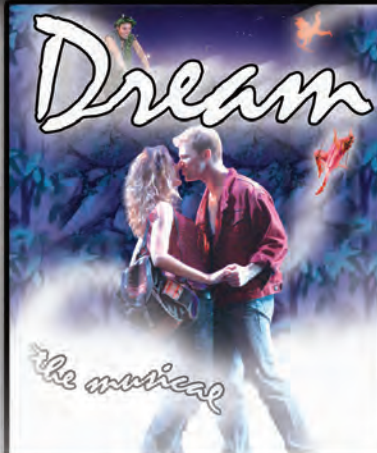
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Follow Spot: VALUE PROP

An initiative focused on valuing the arts locally offers strategies for demonstrating the power of the arts and creative expression in communities.

BY KRISTEN ANDRESEN

Have you ever been moved to tears by a pie chart? Has a bar graph ever given you goosebumps? Has a discussion about government revenue ever transformed your life?

Economic impact studies are invaluable when you're trying to shape policy or spur investment in the arts, but when you're encouraging potential audiences to attend a performance? Not so much.

People don't engage with the arts because they know it will drive

the economy. They do it to discover more about themselves and to feel connected to each other and to their community. That's the premise behind Creating Connection, an initiative led by Arts Midwest and Metropolitan Group to make arts and culture a recognized, valued and expected part of everyday life. Backed by research, the project offers strategies and messages to help performing arts professionals demonstrate the relevance and power of the arts and culture in a way that meets audience members where they are.

"We have done the research and crafted the language, but

we acknowledge that many organizations have been doing this kind of work very successfully for a number of years," says Anne Romens, program director at Arts Midwest. "Our hope is that this initiative serves to elevate the good work that's already happening and bring everyone else along so we can all start to think in a relational and values-based context."

The initiative is informed by the public will-building theory of social change, which starts with understanding what the public values and using those values to address the issue at hand. In this

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What makes a creative connection?

- **Connection is the key reason** many people express themselves creatively or engage in creative experiences. For creatives, connection occurs in three ways: with themselves, with people closest to them and with others around them.
- **“Creative expression”** is a more welcoming entry point for a conversation with the public than “arts and culture,” which has less relevance and value for most people.

- People identify **four primary benefits** of expressing themselves creatively or experiencing something creative: personal growth; health and well-being; sharing and experiencing diverse voices; and happiness.
- People of color, women, parents of children under 18, and millennials are **key groups** that value creative expression and experiences.
- The “costs” associated with engaging in creative activities (including **time and money**) are very real for people and need to be addressed to successfully motivate them to seek out such opportunities.

case, the issue is a combination of decreasing participation, audience distraction by other activities and declines in public funding.

“The onus is on us to find the link between what the public values and what our sector has to offer,” Romens says. “It’s a starting place for arts institutions to inform their marketing and ensure that they offer programs that align with these values.”

Arts Midwest and the Metropolitan Group have taken the initiative on the road, presenting their findings and tools at conferences and workshops nationwide.

“People tend to be excited and in some ways reassured by it,” Romens says. “There’s something instinctual about the data that makes people feel that their engagement efforts are on the right path.”


Through their research, Romens and her colleagues found that the driving reason why many people choose to engage with the arts is connection with themselves, their loved ones and others. They associate key benefits — personal growth, health and well-being, sharing and experiencing diverse voices,

and happiness — with creative activity. Four core demographic groups particularly value the arts: millennials, parents of young children, women and people of color.

“We also observed that these groups are not the focus when it comes to traditional arts organizations and the way they benchmark the arts experience,” Romens says. “They think that the people who value arts and culture most are the ones buying the tickets.”

But that’s not always the case. Creating Connection provides resources that help arts organizations tap into those audiences and align their messaging and programming with those shared public values. Over the long term, Romens and her colleagues hope this movement shifts social norms, so that it’s second nature for people to experience the arts and culture in their daily lives.

“I’d love to see a groundswell of people seeing more opportunities for creativity in their lives, accessing those opportunities and acting on them,” she says.

For more information on Creating Connection, visit creatingconnection.org. 

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CORE PURPOSE

APAP's inaugural Artists Institute raised awareness of personal practice and cultural radius in the lives of working artists.

BY CHERIE HU

A APAP's decision to change its official name from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters to the Association of Performing Arts Professionals marked a crucial transformation for the organization in many ways. In one swift move, APAP acknowledged its ongoing responsibility to serve as a forum across an increasingly diverse range of performing arts sectors, keeping the perspective of artists central to the process. It also opened the door in a new way for performing artists at the heart of its mission.

To that end — and with support from the National Endowment for the Arts — the organization launched the inaugural Artists Institute at the 2017 APAP|NYC conference, creating a dedicated space for artist-centric conversation and professional development. Co-designed and co-directed by Arizona State University professor Liz Lerman and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Chief of Program and Pedagogy Marc Bamuthi Joseph, the institute invited 20 artists in a variety of disciplines — comedy, burlesque, dance and experimental theater — to participate in a

series of intimate workshops and roundtable discussions on issues such as leadership and audience engagement, led exclusively by and for artist practitioners.

“We wanted to guide artists to a place where they could affirm their aspirations and draw clearer connections among practice, revenue, audience and social impact,” said Joseph. “The institute equipped them with a different kind of vocabulary not only for understanding their own work, but also for navigating the business and politics of the wider APAP conference with greater confidence.”



Key concepts from this vocabulary included that of cultural radius, which encompasses one's place in both local and extended communities and the audiences one hopes to engage. The institute strived to challenge and expand the participants' understanding of cultural radius not only geographically, but also temporally. "If you think about a project that has a beginning and end, it actually has a lot of time before it begins, and a lot of time after it's over, when it's still living," said Lerman. "You can engage with the public in your earliest stages of research or in the context of the longer-term emotional and cultural impact of your work. Art is always



multiplicitous, and we want to be aware and take advantage of that."

Another key tenet of the institute was personal practice, which is distinct from the conventional (and repetitive) definition of practice in its connection to a wider vision. "Many artists starting out might not even know what their personal practice is," said Lerman. "There's a difference between practice in the sense of achieving a certain level of excellence, which is in many cases defined very narrowly by somebody else, and practice in the sense of a core purpose that comes from a personal place."

Lerman and Joseph featured several experts from the worlds of arts administration and funding who represented organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Leadership Program at USC, Helicon and Pomegranate Arts to help the participants flesh out concepts and clarify their visions both as individual artists and as actors in the context of the wider APAP conference and ecosystem.

"One of the biggest takeaways for me was how eager the participating

artists were to pay it forward as mentors to each other and to other artists at APAP," said Joseph. "The conference can sometimes feel like a much more competitive platform, where everyone is out to get a gig, which can be difficult to navigate without a sense of camaraderie."

Through its success, the institute is positioned to become a regular component of the annual conference.

"We were so pleased with the program design and response from all who participated, and with renewed support from the NEA, we will welcome new and returning artists for the second institute at the 2018 APAP|NYC conference," said Scott Stoner, former vice president for programs and resources at APAP and creator of the concept for the institute.

I spoke with several of the artist participants via email and phone, to learn about their experiences participating in the institute and the insights they gained into their own cultural radius, personal practice and the APAP community at large. Their responses, which have been edited and condensed, follow.

Cristobal Martinez

I think about my personal practice as proliferating, breaking into and transforming systems even at least momentarily, so that we can see alternative possibilities for how to live our lives or define our values and beliefs. I do this through building responsive environments and installations that privilege embodied, immersive experience, so that audience members become participants and realize their positionality in the world in a way that is safe, yet implicating.

I think making art is both in service of and problematized by personal practice. My art in particular is intrinsically tied to markets; it always requires funding and uses forms of digital, visual and physical media that are



fundamentally problematic. So many major sociopolitical issues in the world, including violence and inequality, can be traced back to faults in human communication using such media. This is why these different notions of practice are so important: there's the overarching personal practice, but then there's the actual doing, or practicing, which often has unexpected outcomes.

I don't see my cultural radius as necessarily being captured or defined by any specific culture, but it does radiate outwards from the place where I grew up, namely from northern New Mexican indigenous traditions. That worldview is very important in informing the choices and behaviors I take on in my art.

The institute helped me put a more cogent language on this idea of culture in my work in a way that allows me to articulate quickly to someone else what exactly it is that I do. While it's essential for artists to equip themselves with these tools to be successful in an environment such as APAP, at some point, leaning on an elevator pitch to describe your work can sometimes come across as cold or inhuman. Many artworks take years to complete, and there's no elevator pitch in the world that would ever do them justice. Nonetheless, these tools and vocabularies are important because these institutional gatekeepers won't be going away.

My current work is steeped in experimental, conceptual, socially engaged intermedial art, which has a fundamental tension with the way performance is traditionally framed by theaters, museums and the academy. What I saw at APAP was a marketplace that looked unlike what I'm accustomed to seeing in the contemporary art world, which is more institution-based. That was one of my biggest takeaways in terms of

thinking about the tension between conceptual, socially engaged work and commercial entertainment and the role that capitalism plays in that intersectionality. We addressed this during the institute: How do market systems get in the way of our work? At the same time, how do we leverage them so that we don't starve in the process of trying to do this work? Where do we situate ourselves so that we can continue to be creative and innovative, as opposed to being controlled by the market?

In this vein, I think the institute is incredibly valuable. It constitutes transformation, which is in itself the whole nature of performance. There's still a lot of work to be done, but I felt very honored to have had a role in this first step.

Christina Knight

I am the director and writer for knightworks, a dance theater company that I co-founded with my sister. I work in a collage process, piecing together my poetry, my sister's beautiful choreography, and lush sound and visuals to create performances that are part installation art, part living altar. I am currently working on the third piece of a trilogy centered on the idea of "the end of the world"; this work is called *doomsday*, and it engages with how people of color experience and pass down sadness generationally. For this kind of work, I try to use residencies to support being in dialogue with other people of varied life experiences. I consider the work to be social practice, which means that the performances we develop are in some ways a document of those many conversations. However, I also really believe in abstraction as a way to make the familiar strange — after all, so much of political conversation these days is oversimplified and polarized. Complex art can teach

us new ways to think as well as how to imagine the world otherwise. I should say that I'm also a professor — I'm on the faculty at Haverford College — so I'm always thinking about performance as a pedagogical tool and as its own way of knowing.

I really loved the question of cultural radius during the institute because it helped me to see the gap between to whom I have access and who the gatekeepers are in the world of presenters. For instance, as an academic, I have a relatively easy time accessing other academic spaces and audiences. I also have a group of collaborators and close friends with whom I have been in dialogue for a long time. These folks and their communities are always already the audience for the work that knightworks makes, but neither of these communities has easy access to the types of funding opportunities and presenters that would make our work more visible to a broader audience. The question for me moving forward is how to make inroads with people who do have access to greater resources without losing the integrity of our work. In other words, because we make work that takes time and requires a sustained engagement with communities, how do we make the case for ourselves to potential partners whom we don't yet know?

Participating in the institute really shifted my perception of APAP. I had been to the conference once before and felt very overwhelmed by the experience: This was not only because I was an individual artist in what felt like a sea of presenters, but also because I had a hard time navigating the schedule. As a participant in the institute, I had other people (both fellow artists and the mentors who were brought in) to talk to about how best to navigate the conference and showcases. I also got a sense



of how APAP itself is shifting to help welcome artists — the name change alone is such an important, symbolic gesture. Perhaps most importantly, I got a sense of how APAP is in dialogue with its members to try to adapt to the ways that the performing arts profession is changing.

Yvonne Montoya

I am a process-based artist committed to using art as a catalyst for building relationships and engaging in dialogue. My work is site-adaptive and brings to life the aesthetics and oral traditions of the Southwest through movement.

I would describe my cultural radius as regionally based. I envision my cultural radius as concentric circles that include Tucson and southern Arizona, Arizona and the Southwest. Going forward, I am inspired to reach out and build meaningful relationships with colleagues in other regions while staying grounded in the Southwest.

At APAP, I was encouraged to hear about the performing arts moving towards process-based

work. I think the best way APAP can support my professional growth would be to provide support, networking and professional development for process-based artists as the field begins to move in that direction.

Roman Baca

I am a former ballet dancer who joined the United States Marine Corps and served in the Iraq War. I am now an artist and choreographer whose work is committed to telling veterans' stories, beyond dance, to heal the world. In the beginning of my journey as an artist, I remember looking for the perfect movement, to the perfect music, to depict the perfect vision. Now, I am more deeply interested in human experience, and my choreographic process has matured in response to this shift. Much of my day-to-day work centers on research, conversations and human interaction. I was just awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue my MA/MFA at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London and am
(Continued on page 26)



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Participants in the APAP Artists Institute at APAP | NYC 2017 (with Marc Bamuthi Joseph — far left — and Liz Lerman — far left on floor — and Mario Garcia Durham — center standing in orange tie).



(Continued from page 23)

excited to further explore how I can further shape my personal practice.

At APAP, the opportunity to look at my cultural radius meant that I had to look at the people who are connected to my work from every angle. I was also inspired to look more into the concept of “brand democracy,” or the inclusion of constituent voices in the conversations, collaborations and development that furthers an organization’s brand personality. I think looking at these two concepts helped me to better understand how my work impacts and can be of service to my audience and how I can better have conversations with my audience members. It also made me feel more comfortable in segmenting my audience and identifying the peripheral but nonetheless powerful circles that, when activated, could be integral to our growth and reach.

I learned that APAP is not as insular a group as I had assumed. Everyone was so helpful and easy to talk to, and I felt like I was forging meaningful, long-term relationships. The institute in particular gave

me incredible opportunities and mentorship and allowed me to talk about and process my work in a way that was accessible. Without opportunities to return to APAP and develop those relationships over time, however, I feel it will be difficult to nurture such opportunities to full fruition.

Sean McElroy

While my personal practice is still difficult to describe in words, the institute gave me valuable insight into the difference between my true self and the image I give off as a performer. As an artist, when you’re filling out a grant application, you’re giving your viewers a carefully crafted image. It’s all a performance. The way the institute was structured suggested that this doesn’t have to be, and maybe shouldn’t be, the case. As artists, we exist not just to put on performances, but to connect with other human beings. The institute helped create a vocabulary for thinking about artistic personal practice as coming from the heart, rather than from the surface — a mission to connect, rather than simply to represent.

There were a lot of questions in the institute about “why.” You didn’t talk about your work until the end. It was focused on who you are and why you make stuff rather than what you make. To basically remove all micro-hustle. It was a different way of talking to people about art. “Oh, what do you do? Where do you show? What’s your elevator speech?” When those questions were put off until the end, it opened up the air for all these other conversations that you never get to have.

My work lies at the nexus of theater and performance art, which immediately leads to a challenge of balancing ideology with audience and logistics. Bigger theaters have more funding and are better stocked with sound and lighting equipment, but also come with a certain set of expectations about what “performance” looks like. In contrast, if you’re putting on a show in galleries or other contemporary-art contexts, you have to self-fund and provide your own equipment, but the expectations are much different as a result. With my company, we

find ourselves ideologically on the side of performance art, but we use so much technology that we have to perform our works in theaters. Most of the audience members within our cultural radius come from either the world of experimental theater or that of contemporary art, but theaters are our necessary distribution network, and we apply for grants as a theater company. We're one of a growing number of companies like P.S. 122 and the Under the Radar festival that are trying to push boundaries in terms of presenting more crossover, experimental performance works, but who are running into infrastructural and funding boundaries along the way.

Our work with the notion of cultural radius in the institute also highlighted how performers not only are embedded in their audiences, but also have the power to change and



shape them. How can we be creative about who we involve in our work? Is there a way to dream outside of our normal audience, to imagine who else we can involve in more rigorous art?

For most artists, APAP is a time to hustle. Part of hustling is orienting yourself around other people. When you hustle too hard and focus too much just on closing transactions, it's easy to lose track of what you're doing

and why you're really doing it. I thought the institute was really valuable in that it brought our awareness back to ourselves and created an intimate, open space for exploration and discussion separate from a performance world normally crowded with self-promotion. **IFA**

Cherie Hu is a music journalist with bylines in *Forbes*, *Billboard*, *Music Ally*, the *Harvard Political Review* and the *Harvard Arts Blog*.

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Bringing back the song

An APAP Building Bridges grant allows Midwestern communities to find unity and connection through the music of Somali culture.

Waayaha Cusub performs at Kato Ballroom in Minneapolis.



A percussionist at Southside Boys and Girls Club during Waayaha Cusub visit.



BY JAKE STEPANSKY

In 1991, anticipating a seismic governmental collapse in the midst of a tumultuous civil war, Somali musician Harbi packed up his belongings and traveled across an ocean. His journey flung him from his native Somalia to the U.S., where he passed through a slew of Minnesota cities before landing in Minneapolis. Even though that metropolis was and is home to a sizeable Somali population, the destruction of civil war had devastated the community's access to resources, including artistic

ones. In Somali culture, music is a foundationally important part of daily life, and so for Harbi, the loss was powerful.

"I thought it was all dead," Harbi explains when we chat over the phone. "I thought the only place you could hear Somali music was on YouTube or on a CD." And indeed, until the Cedar Cultural Center inaugurated the Midnimo program through an APAP Building Bridges grant, Harbi had not seen a live performance by a Somalian artist since leaving Somalia.

But then came that first performance. "It made me realize that I and the songs are still alive," Harbi says.

A longtime APAP member, Cedar Cultural Center in Minneapolis, informally referred to as the Cedar, first received a Building Bridges grant to launch the Midnimo program in 2014. More recently, the Cedar re-applied for grant funding from the APAP Building Bridges: Arts, Culture, & Identity program as the leader of a three-site, five-member consortium to further the success



"It really becomes a platform where art is a creative catalyst in connecting people."

Somali singer Nimco Yasin during a concert in Minneapolis.

of the program and address what had emerged as a clear need across the state. The Cedar and Augsburg College in Minneapolis joined with Paramount Center for the Arts and St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, and Minnesota State University, Mankato (which has its own year-round arts programming) to expand the Midnimo program around Minnesota.

Midnimo is the Somali word for “unity” — and, indeed, it’s clear that the program, which provides month-long artistic residencies for Somali musicians in Minnesota, has

done a great deal to unify the Somali and non-Somali communities in the area. For Adrienne Dorn, the executive director of the Cedar, this work is at the core of what she does every day. She leads a 12-person team that works tirelessly to promote intercultural appreciation through music.

The impact of the Midnimo program is rooted in its power to bring Somalis and non-Somalis into the same physical room.

“Through our research and our experience, something we understand is that the

biggest impact in somebody’s understanding or attitudes about somebody different from them is knowing somebody who is of that culture,” says Dorn. “The program is really multifaceted; there are all these different folks who are engaging with it: Somali youth, Somali elders, non-Somali millennials, artists, K-12 youth. It really becomes a platform where art is a creative catalyst in connecting people.” In one poignant example, the staff at the Cedar assembled an entirely African American jazz band to accompany Somali singer Nimco



Waayaha Cusub performs at Kato Ballroom in Minneapolis.

Yasin in part to address tensions between the black American and Somali American communities.

The work funded by the Building Bridges program grant at the Cedar is only a part of the work done there. Year-round, the center has a packed line-up that includes approximately 200 live music concerts featuring artists from all over the world — and about half of these are “mission-driven,” featuring artists whose music is rooted in the cultural tradition from which they originate. These mainstage performances operate alongside additional programming that includes commissions for new work from local artists, K-12 educational programs and an annual global roots festival with artists who haven’t been to Minnesota or the U.S.

Fadumo Ibrahim, the program manager at the Cedar who oversees the A-to-Z implementation of the Midnimo program, identifies one of its key impacts as increasing the Cedar’s capacity to serve the Somali community through *all* programming.

“Now, whenever there is a Somali artist, the line starts from half a mile away to get into the show,” Ibrahim says. “The Cedar has never had that

experience before. We’re able to engage the Somali community in a way that makes them feel excited and like they want to be here. Instead of us having to say ‘Hey, come here!’ they’re saying, ‘We want to be here!’”

There is a seemingly endless collection of stories illustrating this impact on the Somali community. In many instances, Somali elders in Minneapolis had become isolated in their apartments without culturally relevant activities to bring them out of the house. By bringing artists whom these elders know and with whom they identify, the Building Bridges program draws these elders into public life.

On the other end of the spectrum in Minneapolis, Somali youth (who are often of the first generation in their family to grow up in the U.S.) are given a chance to see their cultural heritage onstage. Dorn recalls that the Midnimo residency of London-based musician Aar Manta in 2015 brought families together: “Three women — a daughter, a mother and a grandmother — attended his performance together. It was the first time that these three women from three different generations

had gone out to experience something like this together.”

Above all, the Midnimo program has succeeded in building community through music — and this mission of social change resonates strongly with inherent underpinnings of Somali music. Historically, Somali artists and musicians have been instrumental in exposing government corruption and advocating for the underdog.

It’s fitting that throughout the program and across three distinct cities, the key unifying factor has been Somali music. Harbi’s story — that of a refugee from a war-torn nation finding new life in a new land — is at once unique and universal. After being specially selected at a young age for grooming to be a musician in Somalia, he received his first-ever paycheck as a member of Haljan, an instrumental group commissioned by the former Somali government. “Back then, music was taught through practice,” he says. “Teachers would stand in front of the classroom and demonstrate the music and students would follow. It wasn’t written down.”

This type of teaching makes sense when you understand the underpinnings of Somali music. At its core, Somali music is about message: The strongest emphasis is on the lyrics, while the instruments serve as vehicle and entertainment. This words-driven focus comes from a rich cultural and political tradition.

“Somalia is a nation of poets,” says Ibrahim. “The Somalian language is actually very young, first written down in 1953. Before that time, the nation of Somalia used to communicate through poetry. Poetry was a way of life, a way of communicating information, a way of spreading awareness and educating people. Now, generations in, the music

I asked each of the program directors at the three locations to share stories that illustrate the impact of the Midnimo program. Their responses follow.

JANE OXTON

**Paramount Center for the Arts
St. Cloud**

The first concert with Waayaha Cusub was the first time that the Paramount had hosted an event on our stage that was expected to draw a large Somali presence. To address uncertainties about language, expectations and experience, we decided to invite students from the St. Cloud State University Somali Student Association to assist us. Seven students agreed to come, and we were most appreciative. However, we did not anticipate the power of their presence. Paramount ushers are predominantly a wonderful group of retired white folks, and this concert presented many new experiences for them. Each usher

was paired with an SSA student, and the magic happened. They both had a real need for each other's assistance, and watching the pairs converse, laugh, welcome, manage and interact was beyond delightful.

DALE HAEFNER

**Minnesota State University
Mankato**

According to one Somali Student Association student, there is a perception in the Mankato area that the Somali community, as immigrants and outsiders, present a danger to the larger community. The student feels that Midnimo presents the opportunity to showcase Somali culture and customs, which presents a different perception than what is presently out there. Another SSA student learned some Somali history firsthand from Nimco Yasin. Yasin explained how the civil war devastated the arts in Somalia. Rebels destroyed musical instruments and artifacts and prohibited some forms of expression. Some musicians were threatened, while others were

murdered for speaking out against the rebel government. Before the civil war, the government valued the arts. The government-sponsored Waaberi troupe was a troupe of musicians and dancers that toured countries in Africa and the Republic of China.

FADUMO IBRAHIM

**Cedar Cultural Center
Minneapolis**

Once, we had a young woman called Alex (goes by Lex) who was dealing with problems with family and school — and she just couldn't move on with her semester. When we announced the workshop, she was the first person to sign up, and she participated in a full workshop, which meant that she had an opportunity to perform onstage with the artist. At the end of the residency, Lex gave the artist a thank-you card, which said: "You make me feel like a family. You remind me of my family back home, because I was part of the band — and I don't think I could have moved on with this semester without you. You kept me dancing."



Members of the Minneapolis community enjoyed various music events from the Building Bridges programming.

keeps people entertained, but at the same time communicates a message.”

As beautiful as that sounds (and is), Ibrahim has also faced challenges in the implementation of the program. One unexpected obstacle that has dominated her time is communication with artists as they travel on world tours and following them digitally as they travel from country to country. Often, Ibrahim finds herself playing phone tag, since Somali musicians rarely have access to artistic representation; this gap is one of the crucial issues that the Midnimo project seeks to solve. The first step, however, is supporting the artists as needed.

Jane Oxtan, a resident of St. Cloud for almost 50 years, serves as the education outreach director for the Paramount Center. For Oxtan, the process has been one

of constant learning and growth alongside the Somali community.

“This program requires trust, and that is something that is built over time,” she says. “Identifying honestly what’s in it for the Paramount, for the community and for the college has taken courage, energy and imagination. Finding the ‘right’ people who can open doors, teach us with patience and authenticity and help us make course corrections without harming that trust has been critical. We are all going to make mistakes as we allow ourselves to be stretched and as we leave our comfort zone. Getting our ego out of the way and appreciating that we don’t have all the answers have been both humbling and engaging.”

The Building Bridges program is in part rooted in the understanding that artists and the arts are

underused resources for addressing community challenges. For Dorn, the timing is uniquely compelling.

“The program has centered artists as change-makers and community organizers,” says Dorn. “What’s more, if there’s ever a time that we’ve needed something like this, it’s now. There’s a lot of tension and division in our country due to lack of understanding, but we’ve really seen our communities become more connected through this program. It’s a process that’s building toward a larger change. We’ve really tried [through the Midnimo program] to provide a foundation for the house — and now we’re getting ready to build the walls.” **IAA**

Jake Stepansky is a theater-maker and arts advocate based in the New York City area. He graduated from Harvard University in 2017 and spent the summer working with Forklift Danceworks in Austin, Texas.

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SPACE SAVER

Conference sites can make or break a conference. We tapped the wisdom of regional and national conference organizers to explain why setting is a powerful part of attendee experience.

BY ALICIA ANSTEAD





Creative Outlet Dance Theater of Brooklyn at Jazz at Lincoln Center during APAP | NYC 2015.

If summer is winding down,

then it must be conference time for the performing arts around the country — if not the world. Whether you're programming a season, watching a showcase or networking with collaborators, you want to know that the space you're inhabiting is the right one in every way for the arts you see and the deals you make. Each year, conference organizers across the country take those needs — and so many others — into consideration. Our guess is that their decisions and labors are not too different from the steps you take in your own work to make sure that patrons — or attendees — have the best experience possible. To that end, we asked the conference organizers to tell us about the locations they choose to assure that participants can have fun, be comfortable and find inspiration while getting their work done. Read on. And have a great conference season.



Columbus, Ohio

Brian Halaas

Program Manager

Arts Midwest

August 28-31

Packing everything our conference has to offer into four days is an enormous undertaking, and going to a new city each year certainly does complicate things even further. At the same time, it also provides seemingly endless opportunities to take advantage of what the host city has to offer. This year we bring the Arts Midwest Conference to Columbus, Ohio.

We continually hear from our attendees that they value our conference because everyone moves through the schedule together. This makes for a very productive four days, but it also requires us to be especially careful to select venues based on their proximity to each other. We prioritize the overall ease of access so that attendees can focus on getting their work done rather than schlepping from one end of town to the other. And we make sure that when the day's work is complete, it's easy to continue socializing and networking at nearby restaurants.

A lot of our attendees come to the conference regardless of its location, but many others are more likely to join us when we're in their city or state. This allows us to connect with colleagues and organizations from all corners of our region and results in a more diverse attendance overall.

We believe that interesting work is happening in all corners of our region, and it's important to Arts Midwest to feature our regional identity whenever possible. We're committed to finding new solutions to our challenges,

APAP



In 2015, WAA held an Indigenous Performance Symposium at its conference in Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada.



Our opening and closing parties are also opportunities to share other areas of the host city, and in Columbus, we'll kick things off at the newly expanded and widely acclaimed Columbus Museum of Art. We'll wrap up our four days together at Huntington Park, home to Columbus' minor league team, the Clippers, where one lucky attendee will throw the first pitch.

whether that's addressing the realities of our rural-urban divide or addressing systematic bias, and that starts with making sure everyone is welcome at the table so voices from all types of communities can be heard.

As we plan the conference each year, one of our very first steps is to reach out to colleagues from the local area. We listen to their suggestions about artists, administrators, and organizations who are doing interesting work, and these often end up being featured as panelists, workshop leaders or even keynote speakers.

Columbus is an excellent location for us, and the last time we were there was in 2007. Columbus has an active and engaged arts community, and the conference will benefit immensely from our strong partnerships with the Greater Columbus Arts Council, Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Art Presenters Network.

We're excited to feature several local individuals and organizations as a part of our professional development programming. VSA Ohio, for example, is leading a workshop about creating a culture of access for audiences and artists with disabilities, and OhioDance will lead an information session. This year, there will also be a special presentation from the Harmony Project, an enormously impactful organization in Columbus that uses music and singing to bring neighborhoods together.



Seattle, Washington
Tim Wilson
Executive Director
Western Arts Alliance
September 5-8

When it comes to deciding on location, we first want to make sure the site has the appropriate infrastructure to support the conference (exhibits, meetings, showcasing and networking). Since Western Arts Alliance prefers to avoid convention centers, this puts a lot of emphasis on the hotel, but the juried showcasing venue is the next most important element (size, proximity to hotel, quality).

WAA also seeks sites with a cultural vibrancy that can serve as a backdrop for the conference and an urban vitality that appeals to our attendees. After selecting a site, we always begin our planning by asking, what can we do here that we can't do anywhere else? This allows us to leverage local resources or opportunities to strengthen local participation, professional development, showcasing, networking and/or hospitality.

We like to think of the site as the "spice" in the conference dish. The basic ingredients are similar each year, but the city and its cultural scene are the seasonings that distinguish one conference "dish" from another.

A few years ago, we started inviting non-members to serve on the host committee, so we could take full advantage of the site. There are only so many hours in the day, but we really try to maximize the attendee experience in the host city. It might be drawing on local speakers, the setting of the closing night event, a tweak in the catering, the selection of showcase venue or adding a local tour — anything to add local flavor.

Seattle, this year's host city, is one of WAA's most popular sites, with excellent infrastructure to support the conference. Within a few blocks of the hotel are great restaurants (and shopping), the Pike Place Market and fantastic showcase venues. These venues, together with WAA's Juried and Independent Showcase programs, really foster a festival feeling around our Seattle conferences.

In 2015, WAA held its first conference outside of the U.S. Vancouver was a fantastic site, but it presented special challenges with crossing the border both for WAA staff and our members. WAA worked closely with Canadian Border Services and a customs broker to educate our members, especially exhibitors, on what to expect and how to prepare for crossing the border. However, all the time spent and up-front efforts made for smooth sailing as attendees entered Canada.

At that conference in Vancouver, a special one-day Indigenous Performance Symposium explored the range of issues confronting practitioners, facilitators and presenters of Indigenous performance. The Indigenous Performance Symposium, hosted at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, sold out and included 90 participants from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S. Approximately 45 percent of the participants were from indigenous communities. It was an amazing success and a game-changer for the attendees and WAA both.



Atlanta, Georgia

Ivan Schustak

Director of
Communications
and Marketing
Performing Arts
Exchange
September 25-28

Over the past few years, South Arts has developed a matrix of necessities for a city to host the Performing Arts Exchange. We need to make sure that our chosen locations have a hotel with the proper amount of space for our Marketplace, opportunities for artists to showcase in and around the hotel, an airport that will serve our attendees and more standard-fare logistical items

necessary for a conference without being prohibitively expensive. But what we really love is getting to embrace the cultural assets of PAE host cities. Atlanta has a fabulous blend of green spaces and parks mixed with urban city life. Orlando is home to everyone's favorite mouse-themed amusement park as well as rich cultural amenities and a vibrant dance scene. Nashville has great country music and some of the most eclectic performers and artists we've ever seen.

Clearly, site and location have a deep impact on PAE, and we embrace our host cities as much as possible. Whether it's the simple joy of seeing our staff members and volunteers wearing mouse ears in Orlando or having

PAE included a public art tour when the conference was in Atlanta, Georgia.



a profound experience on a public art tour, we receive a lot of feedback from attendees regarding our sites.

We are returning to Atlanta for PAE 2017. Our staff is intimately familiar with how the city operates, what to do, where to go, and all of the special joys. If you want to know where to find the city's best salsa dancing, ask PAE director Leland McKeithan. If you want to hear amazing local music, touch base with our assistant director of presenting and touring Ethan Messere. If you want the city's best donuts, I am the expert (and will be glad to join you). We are also fortunate to connect with a major local initiative, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation's *Audience Building Roundtable*, for this year's keynote presentation. The roundtable connects more than 50 Atlanta-area arts organizations for rich and deep explorations on developing audiences.

For all the glory, one of our biggest challenges is that we want to bring PAE to more places, but some of the cities we love just don't have all of the boxes we need checked. New Orleans, Charlotte, Asheville, we love these cities! We want you to go there and enjoy everything they have to offer. Our team regularly checks back in with a large roster of cities to find out about new construction and hotels that may open opportunities.

Speaking of construction, our 2016 conference in Orlando hit some amazing notes. For the first time in our known history, we built a stage in the hotel for our juried showcases rather than partner with a local venue. We were a little worried that this might minimize everyone's ability to interact with the city, since the entire conference was onsite at the hotel. But then we started hearing stories and getting feedback: Not only did most people really appreciate keeping everything nearby, but a lot of our attendees came early or stayed late with families in tow. We broke our previous records for the amount of extra days our attendees spent in town, and we were so glad that people found a good chance to explore.



Victoria Abrash

Acting Conference

Program Director

APAP | NYC

January 12-16, 2018

While I have worked on many conferences that move each year, it is a special attraction of APAP|NYC that it is always in the heart of New York City. In fact, it has been based at the Hilton Midtown Hotel every year since the 1970s. That may well be a record for faithfulness for performing arts conferences. For many years, the Sheraton Times Square, which is just across the street from the Hilton, has also been a base for APAP|NYC. While consideration has been given from time to time to moving the conference to another venue or even another city, our members have cried out, "No," and we have found that we are where we need to be.

The Manhattan location allows our attendees from all over the country and around the world to meet up in one of the greatest performing arts cities in the world — maybe the greatest. Would attendees be able to choose from more than 1,000 showcase performances in any other city? Would they be able to meet with as many artists and managers, see as many venues, experience as many world-class options anywhere else?

The Hilton is one of very few venues in New York that can accommodate our more than 3,600 attendees and 370 EXPO Hall booths, and the only one within walking distance of Broadway theaters, Town Hall, City Center, Lincoln Center, the Museum of Modern Art and so much more. It is also well located for public transportation. Together, the Hilton and the Sheraton can accommodate our hive of activity: five days of programming, plenary sessions, multiple professional development sessions,



APAP INTRODUCES ARTIST ACCESS

Are you an artist who has always wanted to join APAP and attend the APAP|NYC conference? APAP invites you to do just that through Artist Access, an introductory membership program for self-represented, individual artists who are new to APAP.

“With APAP’s recent name change to the more expansive Association of Performing Arts Professionals, we are continually looking for ways to widen the tent,” says president and CEO Mario Garcia Durham. “This pilot program is part of that vision.”

Qualifying artists receive a \$100 membership rate, discounted conference registration, a guided experience, mentoring and more. Are you attending a regional conference? Stop by the APAP booth to learn more. For more information, including qualifications, visit ArtistAccess.APAP365.org.

forums, consortium meetings, networking events, along with the EXPO Hall and hotel accommodations for all. One of the special benefits of being in New York’s theater district is that special guests can drop by on a day off or even between shows. At the 2017 conference, Brandon Victor Dixon — Aaron Burr in *Hamilton* on Broadway — made a surprise appearance and gave a fantastic, inspiring speech.

Another crucial benefit is that New York City is an active partner in our conference. Our attendees come ready to travel the city to see performances and take meetings. The conference programming, EXPO Hall and even some showcases stay nestled in our venues to encourage focus, facilitate networking and build community, but the excitement and performing arts energy of the city are both a draw and a part of the conference. Of course, there is no place like New York City, but it’s also an expensive place to visit and to put on a conference. That can be a challenge for both the conference organizers and attendees.

But APAP|NYC is a members conference, and we are always focused on making it as useful and meaningful to our members as possible. Our New York, New York location, the programming, the EXPO Hall, the networking, the showcase listings, the mentoring, communications, all our staff and volunteers, every part of the experience is geared to making this gathering, the world’s largest performing arts marketplace, serve the national presenting, touring and performing arts community as richly as possible. //

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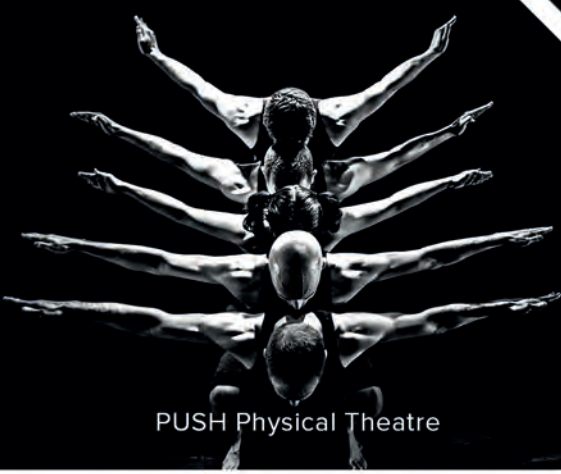


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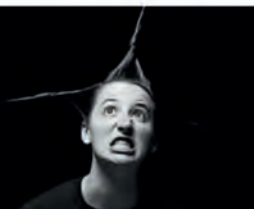
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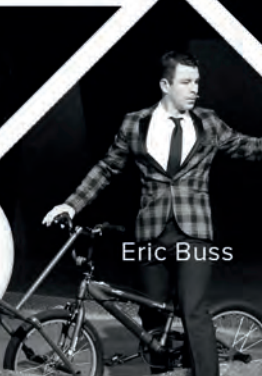
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Harnessing the glories

The APAP | NYC 2018 conference theme is trans.ACT. It resonates in many directions.

We often use the phrase “transformative power of the arts” to talk about our work and passion as performing arts professionals. The APAP | NYC 2018 Conference Committee engaged in many discussions in the last year to craft a theme inspired by a variation of that phrase: trans.ACT. In Latin, “trans” means “across,” “beyond” and “through.” Indeed, “trans” has many applications and variations in the performing arts and in our communities. Transcend. Transdisciplinary. Transform. Transition. Transgender. Transaction. Time and time again, committee members noted the presence of action — literal and figurative — in the definitions. To that end, they nudged the idea “trans” one more step to grab hold of that motion with “ACT.” All capitals because no work gets done without agency, without action.

Trans.ACT ultimately highlights our commitment as a field to bring the full experience and impact of the performing arts to communities across the country and around the world. As conference committee co-chair Liz Lerman noted: “We’re harnessing the glories of the word ‘trans.’” We asked members of the conference committee to share their understanding and hope for trans.ACT. Their responses are included here. We look forward to seeing you January 12-16 at APAP | NYC in New York City. For more information, visit: apapnyc.org.

“Among the many goals we set for this conference is finding ways we can bring to light the work created and issues faced by transgender artists. We believe we have the opportunity to bring this discussion into the global presenting world to enhance conversations about inclusion, equity and excellence in the arts.”

MARIO GARCIA DURHAM
President and CEO, APAP

“Trans.ACT means using intersectionality as a catalyst for collective action to foster holistic change.”

SIMONE ECCLESTON
Director of Hip Hop Culture and Contemporary Music
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

“To me, in the context of the arts, the prefix ‘trans-’ means curatorial change-making; therefore, to trans.ACT means to take action upon or to be an advocate or activist for this common goal. People in the arts trans.ACT in all sorts of ways, some of which involve money and some of which do not, and it is crucial to understand the variety of other tools at our disposal.”

KRISTOPHER MCDOWELL
Founder and CEO
KMP Artists



The theme trans.ACT is important to me as an artist because it gives us a platform to explore the transdisciplinary aspects of what we do and examine the connections we can forge with one another as arts professionals and the communities in which we live and work.”

KEVIN SPENCER
Teaching Artist and Performer
Hocus Focus, Inc.

“The biggest transaction that happens in a theater is the exchange of ideas. Now, more than ever, we must be present for each other, to hear each point of view as we move forward into the next generation.”

DANI FEČKO
Founder
Fascinator Management

“There is a West African proverb that says, ‘If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’ The APAP conference is an annual affirmation that the work that we do cannot happen in isolation, and coming together each year offers us the opportunity to think critically about how the arts can manifest change in the world.”

KAISHA S. JOHNSON, Founding Director, Women of Color in the Arts

TRANS.ACT MEANS TRANSITIONAL ACTIVISM TO ME. WHILE CAUSES CAN SHIFT WITH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PRESSURE, OUR POWER TO ADVOCATE REMAINS STRONG: TO SUPPORT WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE NEED AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US. COMING TOGETHER AS A FIELD EVERY YEAR RENEWS OUR RESOLVE TO ACT. ”

GWETHALYN J. BRONNER
Executive Director
James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts

“TRANS.ACT ENCOURAGES US TO EXPAND OUR ACTIONS OUTSIDE OF OUR NORMAL SPHERE OF OPERATION DURING THIS TRANSITORY TIME.”

LYNN NEUMAN
Artistic and Executive Director
Artichoke Dance Company

“As performing arts professionals, we are building the future of the performing arts in our communities and transforming what is possible for us to imagine.”

MARTIN WOLLESEN
Executive Director
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

“The unexpected random meeting of new voices at gatherings such as APAP creates space for us to ask questions, explore new paths on how we use art and culture to embody truth, build partnerships, and perhaps be bold. ”

LINDA BRUMBACH
Founder and Director
Pomegranate Arts

“TRANS.ACT: MOVING ACROSS; MAKING CHANGE; EXPLORING; DOING DIFFERENT.”

ALICIA ADAMS
VP International Programming and Dance
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

“We are harnessing the glories of the word ‘trans’ in all its contexts and linking it to the urgency of the word ‘act’ to bring light, discoveries and useful ways of moving forward to everyone at the conference. ”

LIZ LERMAN
Choreographer and Institute Professor
Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
Arizona State University



From the Mind of Marlin



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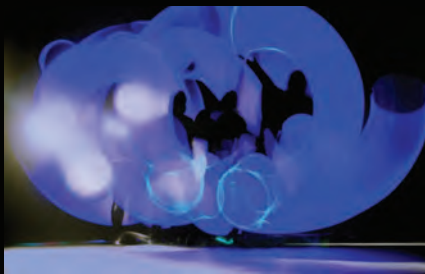
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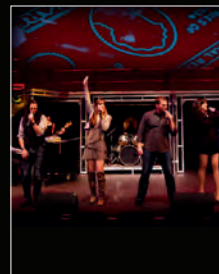
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UNITED voices

Bob Lynch, who has advocated for the arts since Reagan's administration, has been called the last optimist in Washington. Here's why.

BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

When I spoke with Bob Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, only a few days had passed since the White House announced its budget proposal for 2018 — with a call for eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts. Lynch had been on my mind since the 2017 budget was released; it, too, had looked bleak for the NEA but ended up, surprisingly, with a small increase for the agency. Now the stakes seemed higher, and it was time to check in with Lynch to find out how advocacy, action and the #SavetheNEA efforts are going. As always, Lynch had persuasive arguments and sound advice. The takeaway? Be vocal. Take action. Look to the arts for inspiration and comfort. An edited and condensed version of our phone conversation follows.

What's on the near horizon for the arts right now?

There's never been a time as necessary for actual concerted actions on the part of the arts community as right now. That's because there are so many moving pieces that can be influenced that actions can have a really big effect. We always need to be vigilant and

voicing our point of view in the arts, because there have always been, for well over half a century, voices against the arts. But right now, with the very, very strong negatives from groups like the Heritage Foundation and others vying for the attention of all the people who have a stake in this — the House, the Senate, the president — we have the need to keep our issue in front of everybody. We can have and will have and already have had an effect. Advocacy and the united voices of everyone can make a difference.

What are small actions people can take to make a difference?

The very simplest thing is the Americans for the Arts Action Fund — and there are others, but this is the one I know best. You join the Action Fund for free. When an issue comes up, the work is largely done for you; you get an email from us that says: Here's the issue. Here's a letter. You have the option to customize it and then push a key to send it to your congressperson, senator or president. It is targeted to the person who represents your ZIP code. It takes two minutes. Everybody has two minutes. I'm talking to congressional aides and congresspeople weekly, and my staff talks to them daily, and we're told constantly that they pay attention to what is said and how many people are saying it.

What is the support for the arts right now in the House and Senate?

I'm hearing we have a lot of friends for the arts. But those friends are also being challenged to support a lot of things. That's why being vocal and lots of people being vocal makes a difference. Over the years, the arts community

has talked to both Democrats and Republicans, and they see the value back in their home districts. We have both Democrat and Republican friends. If those friends all vote for the arts, including increasing funding for the arts — which just happened, to everybody's shock — we will prevail.

How do you navigate bipartisan support?

I navigate it by working on different structures we work closely with like the Congressional Arts Caucus. That allows members to get more information and be part of an information pool we can communicate with. Also, we go to places during the elections, like the Republican National Convention. There are other opportunities like that to have dialogue where you're not even asking for anything. You're just getting to know people and making sure that they know there's a larger body of interest.

Why do you think anybody would vote against the arts?

It's an ideological thing that goes back hundreds of years. A lot of people would disagree with me about this, but it's not about the arts at all. It's about government spending on things other than the military and some very basic services. It's part of the frontier, do-it-yourself mentality. If we see some of the folks who are against funding for the arts, and we see them holistically, they're against funding everything. In their minds, the arts are the most expendable or discretionary item of all. They are always surprised at the strength of the opposition or how many people disagree with them and feel, as I do, that the arts are an essential key to happiness for our

nation. There's another thought in America that the money for the arts is so small that we don't need it, that the private sector or market will pick up that. But that actually displays a non-knowledge of what the federal money does. On the practical side, it's a huge incentive for giving, and on the implementation side, it's the biggest funding level of creating equity and diversity of audiences. These are things that don't necessarily happen automatically without the funding.

What will happen now in the next year? Are you hopeful?

People have accused me of being the last optimist in Washington. And I am optimistic, but I'm not naïve. I'm optimistic that we will prevail in keeping the federal arts and culture funding sources in place. I'm optimistic if we do the job necessary to get there — which is to have people make their voices heard. The really big battle is how much money will we be able to keep in those budgets. But everybody needs to be part of the advocacy. It's not just about your arts organization; it's about the future. In the aggregate over time, it's billions of dollars.

You've watched a lot of administrations make decisions about arts funding. Is this time unusual?

I've watched administrations since the Reagan administration. There have been proposals to cut the NEA in every one. It's the same in that we are under attack. But the difference is we are in a time of constant change. We don't know what the next argument is going to be because the White House is in a time of

"I am optimistic, but I'm not naïve."



such change. There are some of the same old negative forces like the Heritage Foundation and some of the conservative think tanks that are using the same arguments they used 25 years ago. In this latest round of advocacy, I was asked to go on C-SPAN because of the possible elimination of the NEA. The very first questions were the same ones I was asked when I went on TV 25 years ago — about [Robert] Mapplethorpe and [Andres] Serrano. Those old arguments are still out there, and we have to fight those.

Does that give you concern that the same argument comes up 25 years later?

Absolutely. We all know that arts education has greatly suffered, particularly in poor areas of America. How can we expect there to be arts knowledge, arts understanding if people haven't had exposure to the arts? We can't.

So we have a job to do in arts education.

Everything feels so uncertain and, as you say, constantly changing. What advice do you have for people to pull through? That's a hard question to answer. Everybody has a different way. For me, I use the arts themselves to psychologically bolster me. I do it by playing a guitar song or piano song for myself. Everybody has something like that that is important. If you just sit and listen to the avalanche of negativity, it's going to be depressing. If you take action — like with the Action Fund — you will feel good you did something, and you will get something back from your congressperson. That's positive reinforcement — feeling part of a group reaching for a positive result in the arts. Take action. Move forward. **IA**

Alicia Anstead is the editor of *Inside Arts* magazine.

NEXT! A key player in the APAP office transitions to a freelance life in the visual and performing arts.

Scott Stoner, longtime vice president of programs and resources at APAP, retired in July. He has left APAP, but he certainly has not left the field. He will be working on freelance projects that continue his life-long commitment to advancing the arts as catalysts for social change and community well-being. We caught up with him in June to ask about his work, the future and his insights based on an extensive career of working with world-class artists and a multi-disciplinary range of colleagues to create and manage dynamic new programs for APAP and other organizations. —*Alicia Anstead*

What have you valued most about your job?

The opportunity to be creative — thank you, Mario and others I have worked for over the years — and to create new initiatives that I hope have made our field stronger. With the APAP|NYC conference, I’ve also had the opportunity to work alongside artists and creative thinkers to curate and produce sessions that remind us why we do this work.

Is there a saying, bit of wisdom or philosophy that most deeply informed your work?

“Carpe diem” and “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

Did anyone leave you with an indelible gift of wisdom and grace?

I worked as backstage talent coordinator for the Kennedy

Center Honors for 15 years, on live televised Inaugural Galas, events at the White House and elsewhere in addition to APAP|NYC. But in short, my response is: Walter Cronkite, who, as many will remember, hosted the Honors for many years. Walter was simply charming, charismatic, generous and, most important, caring. He exemplified the values and wisdom that are so lacking in many in top leadership positions today.

Did your career go the way you thought it would?

Having spent most of my youth in south central Pennsylvania farm country, I never aspired to be working with national arts organizations based in Washington, DC. I discovered early on that the arts are indeed a leveler of experience. They have the power to heal, to bring people together and to remind us that we should respect one another regardless of color, creed, or physical or mental capacities. I am so fortunate to know and have worked with many terrific people — nationally and internationally — who nurture and support the arts for everyone.

What will you seek out now?

Projects that have a beginning and an end. Particularly, I remain interested in arts and healing projects and the role of the arts in building knowledge and changing perceptions about marginalized populations in any given community.



What would you like to see happen in our field next?

APAP’s new name [Association of Performing Arts Professionals] will hopefully be a catalyst for change. I hope every APAP member will reflect personally on the role and status each of them has in the industry and work with new generations of leaders to re-imagine how we can improve our work together. **///**

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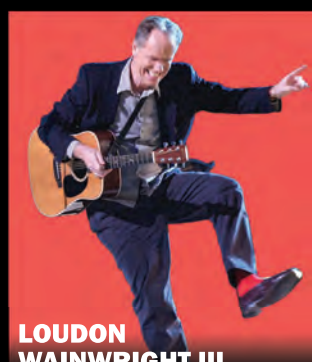
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