



OPENING STAGES

A Quarterly Newsletter for People with Disabilities Pursuing Careers in the Performing Arts

Published by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has long been in the forefront of reaching out to and making the performing arts accessible to people with disabilities. In 1998, the Kennedy Center was proud to be a partner in the National Forum on Careers in the Arts For People with Disabilities. Since that time the Kennedy Center has made a commitment to support performing artists with disabilities, who are seriously pursuing their careers. Its initiatives include:

- The Vilar Internship Program, which is open to all college or graduate students including those with disabilities. For more information visit: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/vilarinstitute/internships/>
- Performing Artists with Disabilities On Stage series, which features performances by artists with disabilities on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center. For more information on this program e-mail: access@kennedy-center.org
- The Experiential Education Initiative (EEI) internship program for individuals with developmental disabilities. For more information on this program e-mail: mlfisher@kennedy-center.org.

In addition, The Kennedy Center has a strong commitment to creating innovative and effective educational programs, models and tools for the performing arts community. This newsletter is intended to be a useful resource for performing artists who are seriously pursuing a career in the arts. We hope you find it helpful.

Sincerely,
Betty Siegel
Manager of Accessibility
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first issue of **Opening Stages**. The goal of this new online publication is to assist persons with disabilities who are pursuing careers in the performing arts. Our focus will be on providing information and inspiration to aspiring and established professional artists and those in related fields, such as



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producers and administrators.

We define "professional" as someone who is paid for his or her work, patronized by the public and respected by others in the same field. Our focus on the professional is not meant to disparage people who express themselves creatively with other goals in mind. The arts may be used for personal therapy or recreation, and both are worthwhile endeavors.

The reason for our focus is this: the professional performing artist with a disability faces challenges not encountered by the non-professional. In addition to the rejection and financial insecurity faced by anyone trying to make his passion his living in a society that treats the arts as marginal, the disabled artist must deal with discriminatory attitudes and practical barriers, such as inaccessible venues, lack of accommodations and expensive health-care needs.

We believe in the importance of the arts, so we care about the well-being of all good artists. But, we particularly care about the success of artists with disabilities, because they are powerful agents in the ongoing struggle to end the alienation of our community from the rest of society. Their art can create windows of understanding, where before there was ignorance and fear. Its excellence can contradict the perception of us as inferior. In short, we need them. Their talent and courage inspire us, too.

We sincerely hope that you find this publication useful and enjoyable to read. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Paul Kahn

WE'RE LOOKING FOR WRITERS

Have you been blown away by the talents of a performing artist with a disability? Did a great professional training or development experience change your life? Are there competitions, grants, scholarships, residencies and the like that you want the world to know about? We'd love you to take keyboard in hand and write about these subjects -- or anything else related to people with disabilities and the performing arts -- for **Opening Stages**. Unfortunately, all we can pay you with is our gratitude and exposure to our rapidly growing list of subscribers. You can submit articles or query our editor Paul Kahn at cairokahn@aol.com. Thanks very much for your help.



PEOPLE

RICK BOGGS BLIND ACTOR, SINGER/SONGWRITER, INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER AND PAINTER FROM CALIFORNIA

About Rick (adapted from his web site)


Rick Boggs is best known for his work as an actor, singer/songwriter, and inspirational speaker. He is also an advocate for accessible web site design and a reseller of assistive technology for the visually impaired. He serves as a consultant to the Department of Rehabilitation in several states and to other organizations that provide assistive computer technology. In addition, he operates his own digital audio production facility, Sound Adventures Inc., which he founded in 1994.

Now, Rick is using his expertise in accessible computer technology to help other blind and disabled people develop successful careers in a new field called "video description." He has begun this effort by forming a company that will create descriptive narration tracks for blind television audiences. The company, WeSeeTV.com, is committed to training and employing disabled persons in technical positions.

Rick Boggs' success as a performer includes over 35 television commercial appearances, dozens of radio ads, roles in various films and television shows, years of original, innovative radio programs, and many music concerts and stage plays. Rick performs his original songs on the piano or guitar and performs live and in-studio on saxophone, and drums. In 1993, he received awards from the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Governor of California for his music production work in after-school musical theatre programs for children. In 1997, he co-authored and produced a song entitled "Listen to the Children" which was performed live for First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Despite his challenging schedule, Rick makes numerous appearances as a motivational speaker and serves on the Board of Directors for three non-profit organizations. Rick has been honored with numerous awards for his contributions to better images of people with disabilities in the media, including the prestigious Easter Seals E.D.I. award.

Rick Boggs became totally blind at age five due to detached retinas caused by Herlers-Danlos Syndrome. He and his three siblings were raised by a single

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parent in Los Angeles, where he learned to swim, play baseball, play basketball, ski, surf, golf, and even skydive! He now lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Priscilla

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A Conversation with Rick

OPENING STAGES: What are some of your most notable professional accomplishments?

BOGGS: In acting, I was the National Spokesperson for AirTouch Cellular from 1996 to 1998. I've done 34 TV commercials, 25 radio ads, and over 100 media interviews! I've appeared on several TV shows, including "Ally McBeal" and "Veronica's Closet." As a musician, I composed a song, which was commissioned by former First Lady Hillary Clinton. It was performed by a youth musical theater group at the Democratic Governor's Conference in 1997. In the visual arts, one of my watercolor pieces took second place at a Southern California Art Competition in 1999.

OS: How did you get interested in a career in the performing arts?

BOGGS: I began writing music at age 4 and more seriously at age 12. I accidentally landed an opportunity to speak on a TV show in 1987, and that started my study of acting. I began producing digital music in my studio as a means of demonstrating my writing ability. I began painting at age 5, while I could still see, and was challenged to resume my painting endeavors in 1997 by a radio show host.

OS: What have been the greatest rewards of doing your work? What, if any, have been the disappointments?

BOGGS: The greatest rewards of my work have been the impact on society. My commercial campaign for AirTouch taught hundreds of blind children that they too could be on TV or radio and are just the same as anyone. This became obvious to me when I opened the Blind Track and Field Games for blind youth in Los Angeles and heard the kids' comments. Furthermore, my audio production skills have enabled me to hire blind individuals. As high unemployment is the greatest problem facing blind people today, this matters to me a great deal.

My disappointments have been realizing just how far our society still has to go toward equal acceptance and equal opportunity for blind and disabled citizens.



OS: Where did you get your professional training?

BOGGS: I studied acting at Los Angeles Valley College and privately with Jim Eskilsen. I studied music at Sounds of Music for the Blind, earned a music degree at Los Angeles Valley College, and studied ethnomusicology at UCLA. I studied voice over under Ginny Tylor. I never studied painting. There aren't really places that teach painting to the blind.

OS: What was your training experience like? Did you get the same training and opportunities as other students? Would you recommend this training program to other artists with disabilities?

BOGGS: I would highly recommend Jim Eskilson as an acting coach for blind individuals. He was fair and treated me like anyone. He encouraged me to play sighted roles as well as blind roles. I endorse the music program at Los Angeles Valley College as being quite fair as well. I faced virtually no discrimination there. The UCLA Ethnomusicology Department was hesitant at first, but I helped them become more accepting.

OS: Do you know of other training programs in your field that are receptive and accessible to people with your disability?

BOGGS: I do not know any in particular. But, I can say that as far as digital audio recording and audio production goes, no school yet has ever allowed a blind student to attend, and I intend to change this.

OS: How did you break in professionally?

BOGGS: For acting: I live in Los Angeles and got a lucky break. Since then I make a point to circulate in the proper social groups to increase opportunities. For music: I have friends who taught me everything about the business of music, the technology of music, and how to find work. The entertainment industry is a relationship business, unlike others. I learned from a young age how to make friends and be personable and take an interest in other people. These skills are underrated in the arts community and in particular by blind and disabled artists.

OS: What have been the most serious impediments to the advancement of your career? How have you overcome them?

BOGGS: The most serious barriers are, of course, other people's attitudes. In acting, producers, directors, and casting directors make assumptions about what a blind person is able or unable to do. They, therefore, unnecessarily disqualify me from playing roles I would otherwise be perfectly suited for. I have never yet played a non-traditionally cast role, meaning a role that does not call for a blind person. I hope to do that one day. I get acting roles by working on my craft, showing up for auditions, and being friendly, respectable and easy to work with.



Staying employed is always tough for any artist. I have learned to diversify to survive. When I have no acting work, maybe I have music recording work, or maybe I have a public speaking job, or maybe I have a voice over job or a music performance. I used to teach to survive. I learned that any skill one acquires as an artist can be the staple of a teaching career when work is slow. Also, learning the behind the scenes crafts is wise. I learned digital audio production and sound editing, because it is still in the field of the arts but offers more frequent employment.

OS: To what do you attribute your success? What generally does it take to succeed in your field?

BOGGS: It takes the right attitude. Courage, perseverance, and the ability to get along with people of many different personality styles. Some say my greatest characteristic is being "relentless." I say it takes discovering what one has to offer the world and willingly offering it.

OS: What advice would you give to other artists with disabilities who want to pursue a career in the same field?

BOGGS: You can do it. Be sure you know what you are asking for. The entertainment business is not pretty, not friendly, not fair, often corrupt and worse. If you can't stand that heat, don't go into that kitchen. Remain grateful for every good experience. Do not become a regular "basher" of the industry and its nature. Use your artistic creativity to solve your business problems. Remember that a CAREER in the arts means accepting ART as BUSINESS! Don't try to stick up for the purist "art for art's sake" and then complain that you don't make money. Learn business principles and apply them to your art.

MIKE LODER WHEELCHAIR USING COMEDIAN FROM NEW ZEALAND

About Mike (adapted from his web site)

Mike Loder is a comedian based in Auckland, New Zealand and is a regular on the stand-up scene. He is experienced in venues of all sizes and gatherings of all types from theatres to ships and prides himself on being a "journeyman comedian."

Mike has worked with the top names in stand-up comedy and written material for many of them. He has also written and performed comedy material for radio and television. Most recently he has been commissioned to develop a new sitcom.



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Mike is the director of Punchline Entertainment. He tours regularly across New Zealand and overseas. He also promotes several comedy nights around Auckland that showcase top kiwi stand-up talent. Mike is a regular featured performer at Auckland's full-time comedy club "The Classic."

Mike is also a festival veteran. In 1996 he performed to sold out houses at the Auckland/Wellington International Comedy Festival. For the 1997 Laugh Festival he produced, publicized and performed in the "No Future in Comedy" show. In the 1998 Laugh Festival he toured the "Driving Mr. Daisy" show. During the 1999 Laugh Festival he performed "Poor, White & Trashed." Mike brought his blend of kiwi comedy to North America in 1999. Performing for three months in clubs and festivals across Canada, Mike was accepted for inclusion in the Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria Fringe Festivals. In 2000 he performed at 20 festivals in half a dozen countries. In addition to collecting rave reviews, he also won the "Billy T" comedy award.

In 2001 Mike recorded his first comedy release "Dancing with Monkeys," and he is now working on his second CD. In 2002 he will be producing the "Outspoken" Spoken Word Performance Festival in Auckland.

Mike has written about comedy for the New Zealand Herald, Auckland Magazine, Lava, City Voice and other publications. But, stand-up is Mike's first love and absolute focus.

Contact information

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mobile: (+ 25) 677 0753

address: Punchline Entertainment, P.O. Box 56263, Dominion Road, Auckland, New Zealand

A Conversation with Mike

OPENING STAGES: What are some of your most notable professional accomplishments?

LODER: I toured twenty festivals last year. My first CD just came out. I won the "Billy T" comedy award here. I'm a TV star no less, blah blah. My website www.mikeloder.com has more shameless PR wank.

OS: How did you get interested in a career in comedy?

LODER: I stumbled into it, tried it and did well from the get-go.



OS: What have been the greatest rewards of doing your work?

LODER: The crowd response and respect of peers

OS: What, if any, have been the disappointments?

LODER: Wheelchairs make touring hell and can really take the pleasure out of much of it. Nothing is simple.

OS: Where did you get your professional training?

LODER: On stage.

OS: What was your training experience like?

LODER: Fast. I don't like to look bad.

OS: How did you break in professionally?

LODER: By being too good to ignore. That sounds arrogant, but it's true. It is a hassle to book a wheelchair artist, so you just have to be that much better.

OS: What have been the most serious impediments to the advancement of your career?

LODER: How many comedy clubs are not upstairs? It plays hell with plans.

OS: If you need any accommodations to practice your profession, who provides and pays for them?

LODER: Me and me.

OS: To what do you attribute your success?

LODER: Hard work and rabid drive. Like in anything else.

OS: What generally does it take to succeed in your field?

LODER: If you don't have the burning desire, fuck off. There is too much "average" in the world. Be special, the best you can.

OS: What advice would you give to other artists with disabilities who want to pursue a career in the same field?

LODER: Don't. Unless you have the drive, then there is no other option than to pursue your calling.

ORGANIZATIONS

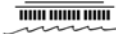
THE MEDIA ACCESS OFFICE by Gail Williamson

When you're watching television or a movie and you see a character with a disability, do you wonder if that actor really is disabled? On the CBS drama *CSI*, seasoned actor Robert David Hall plays the quirky coroner Dr. Robbins. Hall is the National Chairman of the Screen Actors Guild's Performers with Disabilities Committee; he is also a double leg amputee and walks with an arm crutch. Another CBS drama *Family Law* added young attorney Emily Resnick this season. The lovely actress Meredith Eaton who is short in stature plays the insightful and powerful Resnick. The NBC daytime drama *Passions* features actor Josh Ryan Evans as the bewitched doll Timmy. Evans is 20 years old and stands 3'2" tall. The science fiction show *Special Unit II* airs on UPN. Carl the Gnome is played by the talented Danny Woodburn. Out of make-up you would recognize Woodburn as Kramer's sidekick for five seasons on the award winning sitcom *Seinfeld*.

So the answer to "Is the actor really disabled?" is, some are. There is an organization in North Hollywood, California, The Media Access Office (M.A.O.) that is trying its best to see that performers with disabilities (PWDs) are always auditioned for characters written to have a disability. The M.A.O. also lobbies the media and entertainment industry to include people with disabilities as a part of diversity in any cast. There is often no reason why characters couldn't have a disability -- industry people just need to have their minds opened to the possibility.

The M.A.O. is located within a mile of the television and film studios of Universal, Warner Brothers, ABC/Disney, CBS and NBC. The location is vital to its work. For more than two decades it has been encouraging and assisting the media and entertainment industry with casting and relating disability stories. Originally the idea for the office came from industry professionals who saw the need to have a casting liaison service for people with disabilities. They also recognized the need to honor individuals and productions that were promoting characters with disabilities. The result has been the Media Access Awards, which will hold its 20th annual event in Fall 2002. Today the M.A.O. is a private and public partnership supported by the California State Employment Development Department and the California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons.

The M.A.O. boasts a membership of over 600 people with disabilities from all over the United States. Membership is free and open to all individuals with disabilities pursuing a career in the entertainment industry. The M.A.O. does not create the work, but serves as a one-stop shopping center to locate talent with disabilities. Producers, casting directors, event planners, and others in the media and entertainment industry use the free service. Some M.A.O. members have



representation by agents or managers, and the M.A.O. staff works along side the talent's representation and refers all bookings to them. Other M.A.O. members do not have outside representation.

To become a member of the M.A.O. you need to contact the office and request a New Client Packet. Once you receive the packet you need to fill out the forms and return them with copies of your I.D. and ten photos and resumes that the M.A.O. may use to submit to potential employers.

The M.A.O. encourages all individuals to assist them in educating the media and entertainment industry. The M.A.O.'s monthly newsletter lists all appearances of people with disabilities that the office is aware of. The office asks you to watch the shows and contact the studios and networks by mail or e-mail to let them know how much the appearance of a character with a disability is appreciated. Continually thanking them for including characters with disabilities will encourage them to do more. This will create awareness and familiarity within our society and bring about more inclusion, employment and a better quality of life for all individuals with disabilities. All M.A.O. members receive the monthly newsletter. Others, who do not wish to become members, may contact the office and request to be added to the "Friends of M.A.O." mailing list, which will enable them to receive the newsletter.

The M.A.O. has a friendly staff ready to assist you in any way they can. Gloria Castañeda is the M.A.O. Program Coordinator and Casting Liaison. She writes and edits the monthly newsletter and is responsible for submitting members' headshots and resumes to perspective employers. Gail Williamson heads the Talent Development and Industry Relations Department. Williamson focuses on outreach to the media and entertainment community, bringing disability to all discussions of diversity within the industry. She also assists individual members to set goals and helps them see a realistic view of the industry. Frances Gleason runs the front office and would be glad to send you a new client packet or add you to the Friends of M.A.O. mailing list. Many other volunteers assist the office as well.

You can contact the Media Access Office at 818-752-1196 (voice) or 818-753-3427 (TTY) You may e-mail Gloria Castañeda at gcastane@edd.ca.gov or Gail Williamson at gwilliam@edd.ca.gov. The office address is: 4640 Lankershim Blvd., Suite 305, North Hollywood, CA 91602.

Gail Williamson heads the Talent Development and Industry Relations Department at the Media Access Office.



THE NON-TRADITIONAL CASTING PROJECT **(adapted from the Project website)**

The Non-Traditional Casting Project (NTCP) is a not-for-profit advocacy organization established in 1986 to seek solutions to the problems of racism and exclusion of minorities in theatre, film and television.

The only organization of its kind in the country, NTCP's principal concerns are artists who are African American, Asian American, Caribbean Black, Indian (subcontinental), Latino, Native American, Deaf and hard of hearing, blind and low vision, mobility impaired, or have developmental disabilities. NTCP believes that these artists are denied equitable professional opportunities and that this exclusion is not only patently discriminatory, but a serious loss to the cultural life of the nation. Furthermore, this exclusion has resulted in a theatre, film and television industry that does not accurately reflect the diversity of our society.

NTCP works to promote inclusive hiring practices and standards, diversity in leadership and balanced portrayals of persons of color and persons with disabilities. NTCP considers diversity a comprehensive issue, which extends to the participation of those who make up the artistic team – actors, directors, designers, writers, stunt performers, choreographers – as well as the production team and administrative staff, board of directors and the audience.

Since its inception, NTCP has been a leading voice in the movement toward inclusion. As efforts to achieve diversity accelerate throughout the theatre, film and television industry, NTCP is increasingly being called upon to assist casting directors, production companies, theatre organizations, film studios and television networks with a range of needs from consulting to casting.

NTCP's aim is to achieve a theatre, film and television industry that accurately reflects our populace; where each artist is considered as an individual; where ethnic, cultural and physical difference is understood and appreciated as part of one's individuality; where the stories being told reflect our communities; and where our individual humanity and forms of expression can be celebrated.

NTCP's work involves: advocacy toward more inclusive standards and practices, consciousness raising and education, and specific programs through which producers, directors and casting directors can implement inclusion.

To date, NTCP has established the following programs:



- Two national conferences on non-traditional casting and cultural diversity; nine regional conferences in Washington, DC, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Dallas, Toronto, Rochester and Hartford; 170 forums, panels and seminars with professional, community and educational institutions
- A national newsletter, *New Traditions*
- *New Traditions Compendium, Forums & Commentaries: 1992-1996*, a compilation of thirty-eight articles taken from the first four years of the *New Traditions* newsletter
- A national Consulting and Information Program that works with institutions on the process of becoming inclusive, advises public agencies on issues of cultural diversity and provides research materials for journalists
- Two series of roundtables, one focusing on theatre and the other on film and television. The purpose of the roundtables is to deepen the dialogue regarding diversity, to expand our understanding of the issues through the candid exchange of personal views and to build an expanding group of leaders in the profession committed to resolving these issues.
- Production of a book, *Beyond Tradition*, an educational video tape, *Breaking Tradition*, and an *Ethnic Playwrights Listing*
- A series of *Resource Guides* for employers of actors with disabilities. These books, currently in development, provide practical information for including actors with disabilities in the audition process and production. The first guide, "Listening with an Open Eye" focuses on actors who are Deaf and hard of hearing and is available on the NTCP website.
- A national talent bank, the *Artist Files/Artist Files Online*

These files are a national resource of approximately 2,500 actors' resumes and photographs, as well as the resumes of writers, directors, choreographers, designers and stage managers. It has been used by over 3,200 productions.

The *Artist Files/Artist Files Online* are made available to producers, directors and casting directors in two formats: pictures and resumes are maintained in binders at NTCP's New York office, available to the profession Monday through Friday by appointment; and the Files are available on the NTCP website. The binders are organized by cultural identification or physical accommodation, and beyond this, by gender, general age range and alphabetically.

Access to *Artist Files Online (AFO)* is given to producers, directors and casting directors who provide NTCP with their professional credentials. If you are a director, producer or a casting director and you would like access to the Files, please call the AFO Manager, then fax, on letterhead, a brief description of your project and a brief character breakdown. If, after viewing the Files, you are



interested in scheduling an interview or audition, call the actors or their representatives directly.

If you are an artist – an actor, director, writer, designer, choreographer, stage manager – and you would like to be included in the Files, please send NTCP one black and white photograph and resume. Xerox, fax, scanned or e-mailed headshots cannot be accepted for Artist Files/Artist File Online. To ensure inclusion in the Files, actors of color are asked to enclose a covering note indicating their cultural identification. Actors with disabilities are asked to indicate any accommodation used. Please indicate your union affiliation(s). Send to:

Non-Traditional Casting Project
1560 Broadway, Suite 1600
New York, NY 10036
(212)730-4750 Voice
(212)730-4913 TDD
(212)730-4820 Fax
Executive Director Sharon Jensen
AFO Manager David Leventhal

NTCP has been recognized for its work with an OBIE in 1987, a New England Theatre Conference award in 1992, a New York City Mayor's Very Special Arts award in 1993, a Drama Desk award in 1995 and the Rosetta LeNoire Award in 2001.

NTCP receives support from The Shubert Foundation, Actors' Equity Association, Actors' Equity Foundation, Screen Actors Guild-Producers Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, The Chase Manhattan Foundation, The Walt Disney Company, Lee and Lawrence J. Ramer Foundation, AT&T Foundation, Edith Meiser Foundation, Philip Morris Companies Inc., The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., and Radio City Entertainment.

VSA arts
by Peggy Ferrin

More than 5.6 million people with disabilities have found their creative voice through programs sponsored by VSA arts. Since 1974, VSA arts has provided leadership in making the arts accessible through its network of international organizations and affiliates. By promoting arts education and creative expression



for people with disabilities, VSA arts also strengthens the human spirit and enriches the quality of life for everyone.

“The power of the arts to connect, empower and unite us as individuals, communities, and even nations is significant,” says Doris Dixon, president of VSA arts.

In collaboration with The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, VSA arts offers several national programs of significance including: the VSA arts Playwright Discovery Award given each year to promising high school writers; the VSA arts Young Soloists Award given to musicians; and its new VSA arts Artists Registry, a central listing of performing artists which offers them increased national visibility.

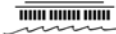
Any performing artist who would like to become involved with the VSA arts network can participate in the Artists Registry. Membership in the registry is free to artists with disabilities and offers them the opportunity to build a larger audience for their work.

The Artists Registry serves as VSA arts premier source for selecting artists to participate in many of its programs and performances. Performers who are registered receive the informative newsletter “The Spotlight,” which offers concrete guidance for performing artists, career advice, and profiles of success.

To participate in the registry, artists send in completed forms with a brief biography, a current resume, a list of performances, and a photograph. Visit the Web site www.vsarts.org for forms or call (800) 933-8721 for information.

This past October VSA arts hosted the premiere performances of two plays about the experience of living with a disability at the Theater Lab of The John F. Kennedy Center. The eighteenth annual VSA arts Playwright Discovery Award program invited promising student writers in grades six through twelve to explore the experience of living with a disability by writing one act dramatic works for the stage. Sponsors of the VSA arts Playwright Discovery Award Evening include the Sprint Corporation, The Kennedy Center Education Department, and the U.S. Department of Education.

VSA arts will present the nineteenth annual VSA arts Young Soloists evening on March 20, 2002, in the Terrace Theater of the Kennedy Center to honor four musicians under 25 years of age for their achievements. The VSA arts Young Soloists Award recognizes two national honorees with scholarship funds and is sponsored by the Panasonic Consumer Electronics Company. The VSA arts Rosemary Kennedy International Young Soloists Award recognizes two



international honorees through The Kennedy Center's Rosemary Kennedy Education Fund.

Peggy Ferrin is the Public Relations and Publications Director of VSA arts.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS OFFERS PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (adapted from Institute materials)

Solid Foundations is a unique foundation course in the performing arts designed with and for disabled people. It developed from a long-standing partnership between the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA) and North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDF).

It is a practical course with a large emphasis on performing. Around 50% of the course is integrated within LIPA's BA Performing Arts degree, giving students the chance to learn alongside first year students in this program. The remaining modules have a disability-specific focus.

The course runs for 30 weeks over two teaching semesters. In Semester One students will develop their performing skills, whether these lie in acting, movement, music, or a combination of these. If a student has concentrated on one performing arts skill or has worked in a behind-the-scenes capacity up till now, he or she will also be encouraged to branch out and develop further performing skills.

A module in professional development aims to enhance communication and self-management skills. The Information and Performance Technology module will provide hands-on workshop experience in Information Technology and the chance to develop skills in a choice of two areas selected from lighting, sound and video.

In Semester Two the emphasis will be on applying the skills developed in Semester One to performance. Students will also study a Performing Arts and Disability Culture module, that explores disability perceptions in the media and in the performing arts during the latter half of the 20th Century. Each semester students choose one elective module (from Disability Arts, Management or Community Arts).



Assessment is done through a variety of tasks including continuous assessment, written assignments or performance. There are no exams in this course.

British students accepted onto the course, will be eligible for a Disabled Students Allowance, which can contribute towards the costs of note-takers, educational facilitators, BSL interpreters and educational equipment.

Disabled theatre director, writer and performer Mandy Redvers Rowe is course tutor. She teaches alongside other disabled and non-disabled artists, teachers and practitioners who are active within the disability and Deaf arts movements.

The Solid Foundations program is looking for people with interest, experience and aptitude in some aspect of the performing arts, who are prepared to study a range of performance skills. Applicants will need sufficient academic skills to undertake a higher education course.

Upon successful completion of the course graduates will receive a Certificate in Higher Education from LIPA/Liverpool John Moores University. This will equip them for further studies in other Higher Education Institutes, arts training organizations or employment within the arts and cultural industries.

For further application details contact:

Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts
Mount Street, Liverpool L1 9HF UK
Telephone +44 (0) 151 330 3000
www.lipa.ac.uk

More about "Solid Foundation" An Interview with Nick Owen, Teaching Staff Member

OPENING STAGES: How did the Solid Foundations program come about?
What was the perceived need?

OWEN: There are significant institutional and cultural barriers, which prevent disabled people from participating in performing arts training in Higher Education in the UK. It is recognised nationally that over 80% of disabled people who start Higher Education "drop out" before the end of their courses and as North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF) has noted, "only 1 in 5,000 arts workers is a disabled person, which is vastly disproportionate to the numbers of disabled people in society as a whole."

Consequently, there are very few role models for aspiring disabled artists within either



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the performing arts industry or higher education. LIPA is committed to developing training opportunities to assist in bridging this gap.

This Certificate in Higher Education in Performing Arts For Disabled People is a unique course in the performing arts: unique because it has been designed with disabled arts practitioners for disabled people. It is the result of a long-standing and valuable partnership between LIPA and NWDAF and marks LIPA's commitment to making our services and resources accessible to everybody.

OS: What principles guide the program?

OWEN: The programme is guided by four principles:

1. to embed LIPA's key philosophical tenets of training the "thinking practitioner" and providing training in interdisciplinary collaboration;
2. to provide a coherent student experience, which allows for broad based training, opportunities and skills acquisition for the arts workers of the 21st century;
3. to provide accessible training, which will be delivered in a safe and supportive environment;
4. to consult with disabled people, employers and practitioners in order to ensure that the programme is tailored to meet student needs within the historical and political contexts of disability cultural development.

OS: What kinds of accommodations are commonly needed by students in the program?

OWEN: Educational facilitators, note taking, personal assistants, visual aids, course work in different formats, sign language interpreters, information and communication technology specialists, equipment and training.

OS: Does the program provide them at no extra cost to the students?

OWEN: No, British students are able to apply for funding from the Government – something called the Disabled Student Allowance, which pays for the above.

LIPA pays

for various building and infrastructure developments.

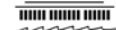
OS: What kinds of job finding assistance does the program provide?

OWEN: Developing self-employment skills, auditions with employers and career guidance into Higher Education or employment.

OS: What have most students done after completing the program?

OWEN: So far, we've only had one cohort of students complete the course, 75% of whom have gone on to study degrees in Performing Arts.

OS: What is the cost of the program in British pounds and American dollars?



OWEN: £7500 - (about \$14,000 I think).

ONLINE JOB FINDING SERVICES

<http://www.artswire.org/current/jobs.html>

Artswire is a free site sponsored by the New York Foundations for the Arts. It offers extensive listings of arts related jobs, grant opportunities and cultural news.

<http://www.commarts.com/career/index.html>

This site is known as the Creative Hotlist and is an enterprise of Communication Arts magazine. The Hotlist enables users to find individuals, companies and resources for various aspects of the creative marketplace, including job openings, creative services, artists, designers, service bureaus, schools and clubs.

<http://www.artjob.org/cgi-local/displayPage.pl?page=index.html>

Denver-based Artjob Online is a fee-based source for professional opportunities and information in all areas of the arts, including presenting, producing, performing arts, visual arts, academic, internships and fellowships, conferences, and commissions.

<http://www.eej.com/>

The Entertainment Employment Journal has both a print and online version. There is a separate charge for each. Companies that advertise jobs include broadcast and cable television networks, major studios, TV stations and many others.

<http://www.showbizjobs.com/>

This site lists positions available in many areas of the entertainment industry.

http://www.tcg.org/frames/fs_artsearch.htm

ArtSEARCH is a fee-based service of the Theatre Communications Group. It lists positions at theaters and performing arts centers, schools and colleges, dance companies, opera companies, symphony orchestras and other arts organizations.

<http://www.backstage.com>

This fee-based site provides performing artists with casting notices and the opportunity to post resumes and headshots online.



<http://backstagejobs.com/jobs.htm>

This free site is designed to help "behind the scenes" people in the live entertainment industry find work.

<http://www.entertainmentcareers.net>

This free site lists jobs and internships at studios, networks, production companies, record companies, radio stations and other companies.

<http://www.jobvillage.com/channel/jobs/arts/>

In its performing arts section this free site has job listings for comedy, dance, music and theatre.

<http://www.emmyonline.org/jobbank.asp>

This job bank is a free service of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The service has two parts: Job Listings and Jobs Wanted.

<http://www.playbill.com/cgi-bin/plb/jobs?cmd=search%20>

This site, sponsored by Playbill, offers job notices for performers, technicians, designers, administrators, academics and others.

<http://www.theatrejobs.com/>

This fee-based site has an online database with hundreds of ads in all fields of theatre. Subscribers can check out the ads and post their resumes and portfolios. Employers can post ads and set up direct links to their web sites.

http://www.theaterservicesguide.com/Classifieds/help_wanted.htm

The Theatre Services Guide is a free site that lists administrative, design and technical positions.

<http://www.employnow.com/>

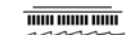
This free site offered by the Film, TV and Commercial Employment Network has job postings for people interested in careers both in front of and behind the camera.

<http://www.talentworks.com/>

Talentworks is an online community of actors and casting professionals. Users must pay a fee to subscribe.

<http://www.thepauper.com/Planning/Career/jobs.asp>

The Pauper is a very useful site that has links to many online arts related job finding services, as well as a range of business information for artists.



NEWS AND NOTES

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING MUSICIANS

The Children's Hearing Institute has announced the 2002 Evelyn Glennie National Music Scholarship Award competition, designed to encourage the pursuit of instrumental music among children who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The \$1,000 scholarships are based on accomplishments, interests and involvement of the candidates in instrumental music, and will be awarded for beginning, intermediate and advanced level skills. Candidates must be residents of the United States and have hearing losses of greater than 75 DB in their better ear.

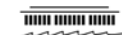
Entries will be judged by a panel of musicians and professionals working in the field of deafness. Selection of the finalists will be made by Glennie, an internationally renowned concert performer who is believed to be the first full-time solo percussionist in the world. Deaf since the age of eight, Glennie gives more than 100 performances in more than 20 countries per year, has won numerous awards including a Grammy and the Queen's Commendation Prize for all-round excellence. She also became an Officer of the British Empire in 1993.

The deadline for scholarship applications is April 30, 2002. Contact Melissa Willis, Director of Development at the Children's Hearing Institute: 212-605-3794 or fax at 212-702-7336, or e-mail at chmelissa@aol.com. Applications may be downloaded from the Evelyn Glennie website at www.evelyn.co.uk.

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