



The Kennedy Center

OPENING STAGES

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

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OPENING STAGES ARCHIVES

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FROM THE EDITOR: SAVING OUR LIVES

Recently John Dillon, one of the members of our Opening Stages Editorial Board, sent me an essay he had published in the December 2002 issue of American Theatre magazine titled "Staging Cancer." In it John vividly describes how he used the creative approach to life that he has honed for years as a theater director to manage the pain and terror he endured in his post-surgery radiation treatment for throat cancer.

Confronted with the situation of lying helplessly on a slab in a sterile hospital environment and being zapped with almost lethal doses of radiation, John realized "the only way to get through this was to devise a scenario to play in my mind as I underwent radiation.... I began to 'direct' my cancer treatment, creating a script, working through a design process, casting my drama and then staging it."

John cast his script with loving friends and designed a beautiful, comforting set -- a Caribbean island. "Rather than being subjected to near lethal doses of radiation, I told myself that I was really lying on a pristine Caribbean beach on a cloudy day. As the beam began, I would imagine myself willing the clouds to part and I'd ask the healing rays of sunlight to come down and rid me of the cancer on my tongue. I was trying to transform a deathly environment into a healing one and, just as importantly, I was imagining myself to be the one in control."

John's story resonated deeply in me, because I have also used creativity to get through a medical ordeal. Many years ago I had to have a tracheotomy and became permanently wedded to a ventilator. While still in the hospital I started using creative imagery to process my anxieties about the operation and what it would be like to be completely dependent on a machine. One particularly vivid image that came to me

early on was that of a space-walking astronaut, tethered by a fragile umbilical line to his capsule. Never could he forget how deadly was the void in which he floated, how without his clumsy high-tech gadgetry he would die. I saw myself as an astronaut on earth. Then I began to realize that an astronaut is not just the victim of fear, but also a bold and privileged adventurer. And I could be, too. I began adapting to my strange, new accoutrements, mastered their complexity and started to enjoy my better energy. Now I bear my private designation as an astronaut on earth with pride.

This process of creative imaging is mysterious and powerful. When we are in dire circumstances, it gives us a way of achieving some sense of mastery, holding on to our core selves and communicating to others on a profound level. We create for many reasons -- to have fun, to show off, even just to fulfill a contract. But in those worst of times it can truly be said that we create to save our lives.

Paul Kahn

LETTERS

In response to Paul Kahn's editorial, many actors have disabilities. Some have even acted in roles where the character has the disability. Bipolar illness, deafness, physical disability, blindness, to name a few, have all been portrayed. To assume that an actor with a disability would never win an Oscar because of the disability is a meaningless generalization and appeals to those that see people with disabilities as victims. I know a young woman with CP who is in an improv group and I don't believe for a moment that people pity her or feel sorry for her or devalue her skills because of her disability. Maybe you should try acting. I'm sure if you're great or stink it will have to do with your acting skills and nothing else.

Stephen S. Pennington, Esquire
Philadelphia, PA

It was a real delight receiving the most recent issue of Opening Stages. I marveled at the material it included and would very much welcome receiving later issues, since I am very much interested in continuing my efforts in the artistic community.

I am an aging writer with some success in articles and with the hope of writing plays that might be acted by disabled persons or others who need to know more about what it is like being limited. I would welcome learning about opportunities for such plays and/or learning about groups who might be interested in receiving some of my efforts.

Over the years I have been active as a storyteller, featuring some of the successes of others who battled to overcome their limitations. In addition I am active in sharing some of my experiences of blindness.

Again may I thank you and others who see us as persons with disabilities but who also see us as persons who are eager to help others know and succeed as persons who are different.

Wishing you and others who are involved in this effort all of the goodness that the new year may offer.

With gratitude
Arthur Jackson
Cedar Rapids, IA

WHAT IS DISABILITY ART? by Steven E. Brown

When I first attempted to write this essay, I composed the following paragraph: “The question gives me a headache. Why? Not because I can’t define ‘disability art.’ I can. But as soon as I do, I foresee questions, exceptions, qualifications, equivocations, explanations, etc.”

That’s the problem. I can easily offer my definition of disability art. Then I can find all kinds of reasons why that definition might not work. So, as I thought more about this question, I realized my link to the art world might have some bearing on why this seemed so difficult to accomplish.

As a kid I used to make things up all the time: I made up words; I made up songs; I made up drawings; I made up comedy routines; I made up worlds. I guess you could say I had an active imagination. But I also had a hard time translating what was in my head to something either I or someone else could easily distinguish. My drawings were fairly often criticized, for example, as not being all that good.

Acting was a passion. But it was not to be. When I entered junior high school I really wanted to be in the drama club. But it met at the same time as another commitment my parents believed more important. My parents won, and I never got to join the drama club. I put acting into the back of my brain.

So, as the years passed, I focused less on what people often consider art—visual art, performing art—and focused more on words. Nobody could stop me from writing. Even

me. I couldn't stop writing if I wanted to. I had to write. For me, writing became like breathing. I couldn't live without it.

So I wrote. I showed my early poems to my fiancée, who became my first wife. She didn't like them that much. So I stopped showing. But I kept writing. All kinds of things: poetry, essays, fiction. Anything I could attempt, I did. One form I didn't attempt was plays. Until I was in my forties.

At that time, I lived in Las Cruces, New Mexico. I had a job that linked me with a local arts organization that facilitated a group of people getting together to write a one-act play to be submitted to the VSA arts playwriting program. I learned that I could indeed write a play. But, much more importantly, for the first time in my life, other people began to look at me more as an artist than as an advocate.

I know this because I was asked to teach poetry. First, to middle school kids, then to elementary school kids. Then I was asked to read poetry. Then I began to submit my material to local poetry contests. And as a result I placed one of my poems in an award category and became an "award-winning poet."

While I lived in this creative milieu, I began to create more. I used the computer to create posters of some of my poems. I put books together that I not only self-published, but with the help of my computer, a heavy-duty stapler, and a binding machine, even self-produced.

At least in the eyes of my local community I had become an "artist." Then I moved. Once more I'm known more as an advocate than anything else. Even though I still write. Even though I just published a book.

So, am I an artist? I think so. I hope so. Am I a disability artist? Sometimes. Because I have a disability I'm always an artist with a disability. But do I produce disability art? Sometimes.

How do I know when my art is disability art and when it's not? By asking if my art meets the following statement: disability art is art that expresses a lived experience of disability. Some of my poems are disability poems without question. Others have nothing to do with disability. When I write a poem that has nothing to do with disability, then I'm an artist with a disability. When I write, or read a poem that has a disability-central theme, then I'm a disability artist.

That might lead someone to inquire, if someone who doesn't have a disability can express a "lived experience of disability." I'd say yes. I don't think one has to live inside a disability to have a disability experience. Our families, lovers, friends, teachers, colleagues, and others all have a disability experience when they are around individuals or groups with disabilities. Is it the same experience? No. It's their experience. Not

mine. Theirs. And that's what I hope they'd express. Their experience, not mine. Just as I'd think they'd want me to create from my experience, not theirs.

The other question I've been asked to address is, how artists with disabilities might grow professionally in a culture that tends to narrowly define and marginalize them.

First, we have to recognize some truths. This society marginalizes both individuals with disabilities and artists. While there are exceptions to this marginalization in both groups, they are not typical. So what can we do to try and break through these barriers? I'd say the same things other artists do.

First, we have to produce our art, whatever it is. We can't wait for someone to approve of what we do. We have to create our art, because for us it's like breathing. We create art to live.

Second, we have to be willing and able to share our art. That's a lot easier these days than it used to be, at least for anyone with access to a computer. In the early 1990s, we started a catalog called *The Next Renaissance*. It showcased artists with disabilities. We put out two issues then stopped. We ceased publication for a number of reasons. One was that when we started most of our artists didn't even have an e-mail address. When we decided to stop, most of our artists had web sites of their own.

Third, we have to market our art. This is not my strong suit, so I'll leave that discussion to someone else. Except to say this: there are lots of people now about in the world who are trying to help us promote our art. There's VSA arts, of course, and its state programs. There's the National Arts and Disability Center, at UCLA. Those are two, but I know there are lots of others.

Fourth, (and this will be hardest part for some people) those of us who are comfortable in the disability advocacy arena will have to break out of it and share our work in arts arenas, and those who are comfortable in arts venues will need to do the reverse.

Fifth, we have to know how to work with the access barriers we might encounter. If we use a wheelchair, we have to know what venues are available to us. We also have some choices to make. Do we present our art in places that are not accessible? If we don't, will we ever show our art? I believe these are individual decisions, so I won't try to answer them. But I will say that if we all work for society to become more accessible to everyone, then maybe, someday, in the future, we won't have to worry about this because all showcases will be accessible to everyone.

There was a time that we artists sometimes revere when patrons subsidized art. But wherever there's a boss, no matter how benevolent he may seem, rules follow. I don't believe the basic rules for art have changed that dramatically over the centuries. The two most important aspects, no matter who we are, what strata of society we represent,

or whatever other characteristics we might share, are still producing and showing our art.

I, for one, always look forward to seeing others doing exactly that.

Steven E. Brown, Ph.D. is the co-founder of the Institute on Disability Culture and Resident Scholar at the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii.

PEOPLE

ALAN TOY ACTOR AND ADVOCATE FROM CALIFORNIA

"I hope my legacy will be that in some small way producers' and casting directors' first impressions will be based more on our strengths rather than apparent 'weaknesses.'"

As an actor what had been some of your favorite roles?

I like the challenging roles, the non-stereotypical ones and, like most actors, I also love playing bad guys. The trouble is, I've worked really hard over twenty plus years to change the images of people with disabilities, who used to be almost all bad guys or pitiful characters. So, I've had to be very picky about the juicy bad guy offers, even at the risk of not paying the rent.

How did you get interested in a career in movies and television?

As a young and pretty cute three-year old with polio, I was constantly sought out locally (in Key West, Florida) to appear at fundraisers for the March of Dimes and polio awareness events. I think that's where the bug first bit. I was always somewhat of a ham or a class cut-up after that. In high school, I got involved through my mom in the community theater. Then the North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA) opened in my hometown of Winston-Salem. I started hanging out there and just felt completely at home.

Where did you get your training?

I first studied at NCSA, then at the Goodman School of Theater in Chicago and then graduated from Cal Arts in southern California. While at NCSA, I also studied in England with some notable teachers and actors there. In LA, I studied with the great director Daniel Mann and several others.

What was your training experience like? Did you get the same training and opportunities as other students?

I had polio when I was three. Both my legs were affected, so I use a leg brace and crutches or, increasingly, a wheelchair to get around. Because of my disability, I didn't really think I'd ever do much, if any, acting. So I was there to study theater and film directing. But in the first couple of years, everyone takes acting and scene study. I wasn't bad as an actor, but no one cast me in any of the school productions. So I was the production stage manager or the assistant director or other backstage positions like that.

Other than not taking dance and movement classes, my curriculum and training opportunities were the same as the other students. I did have to put up a bit of a fight to get admitted to Goodman. They were using the "can't take dance class" excuse for not accepting me, but by then I was an incoming junior year directing major and dance wasn't a requirement.

At NCSA, there was one other student with a significant physical disability at the time (1969-71). He, too, was post-polio and was a classical guitar major. I think times have changed a lot since then, and I know of several students with disabilities who have gone to these schools. During my time, though, it was a good thing I used crutches instead of a wheelchair, because accessibility wasn't even thought about, let alone realized.

How did you break in professionally? Were there particular people, programs or services that helped you?

After graduating, I moved from So Cal to the Bay Area and did low-to-no-pay theater - anything I could get - for a couple of years. Then a very wonderful Department of Rehab case worker saw my potential and got me two paying jobs, one with a terrific small theater in Berkeley, the other as a drama specialist teaching kids in the Oakland Department of Parks and Recreation. They partially subsidized both jobs, with the idea that I'd eventually be hired full time. Oakland did bring me up to full time on a CETA grant, and I got some great experience directing, teaching and then acting in theater for children. That's when I really fell in love with being on the stage, not behind it. Kids are hard critics, but when they dig something, they are wonderful audiences. That led to other roles in the Bay Area and some good reviews.

When I moved back to LA after or seven years up north, I tried to go right into directing TV or film. But it wasn't that easy, unless you wrote a script or, in the case of TV, got into a show and negotiated to direct episodes. So, I continued to pursue acting in the interim, hoping for that regular series part and working on scripts. My acting "break" came thanks to several members of the cast of "M*A*S*H, especially David Ogden Stiers and Mike Farrell. They both talked to the producers about hiring me as one of the wounded soldiers, which they did, giving me a precious SAG card.

Who provides and pays for the accommodations you need?

The SAG contract requires that basic accommodations be covered by the production company, including access to the casting process, dressing rooms, the set, etc. But the

truth is it sometimes still takes some prodding and occasionally meeting them part way on the accommodation. But usually people are pretty aware and on top of things.

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

Definitely attitudinal barriers are the biggest roadblock. With only one exception I can think of (Marlee Matlin), performers with significant disabilities are categorized into a certain kind of box. That doesn't mean that there haven't been lots of non-traditional roles. There have. But as performers, we are usually limited to the disabled characters already written into the script. Rarely, we'll get real shots at other roles, but the next time, we're back in the stereotypical box. Not much has changed in this regard. Only Marlee seems to pop up everywhere without regard to her disability. I guess having a Best Actor Oscar helps. But even she has had rough times in her career.

What do you think can be done to change the image that the mass media has of people with disabilities in a positive way?

This is really tough going. We have been striving mightily for the past twenty-odd years, with great help from the Media Access Office and periodic champions in networks and studios along the way. But we're up against a thousand years of old culture that has traditionally portrayed disability as a moral, emotional or physical failure of the human condition. Ironically, the more we get pissed about that, the more we reinforce the "bitter cripple" stereotype.

I think lifelong education (and a certain amount of patience and perseverance on our part) is the key. Many of the champions we have met in Hollywood (like the Farrelly brothers) have friends or family members with significant disabilities. It's ironic that those writer/producers with disabilities who have made the big time rarely write us into their projects.

We could also use a LOT more support from the disability community at large. They, too, have a tradition of loudly denouncing stereotypical scripts or roles, but not leaping to the defense of the good ones. I still don't think people realize that it was the changing images of people with disabilities in the mass media that played a large part in convincing members of Congress to pass something so "radical" as the ADA.

You helped create the Interguild Committee of Performers with Disabilities. What does the committee do?

The Committee struggles mightily to keep our issues and our talents in the forefront of union business. That means lots of things, like keeping access issues alive in contract negotiations, working for inclusion in guild-sponsored casting seminars and workshops, etc. Right now we are fighting for two major things. One is a study by the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA on various issues facing SAG members with disabilities. The other is to be included in the national minority casting reports. These are actual evidence of how many performers are getting employment and for what kind of roles.

All of the protected groups in SAG and AFTRA are covered in the reports, except for performers with disabilities.

To what do you attribute your success? What generally does it take to succeed in movies and television?

Well, you know, I wouldn't necessarily call my career in Hollywood a "success." Yes, I've had many successes, but it has always been a struggle to make ends meet. But the opportunities I've had were mainly of my own making. For that I needed training – good training, a professional approach to potential employers, more training, access to decision makers, a way with studio gate guards, friends, patience, perseverance, more training and a very supportive and loving wife. Did I mention the training?

With all of that, I have worked more than many who take on this dream, whether with an accompanying disability or not. But I have never felt that my place in Hollywood was secure. I still feel like a beggar when I go on auditions, even though I'm often recognized on the street by strangers.

Success I guess will have to be measured more by the difference I've helped to make in the way Hollywood makes presumptions. I hope my legacy will be that in some small way producers' and casting directors' first impressions will be based more on our strengths rather than apparent "weaknesses."

What advice would you give to other people with disabilities who want to pursue a career in acting?

Go to medical or law school first. Then, if you still want to pursue acting, get your head examined. If you just can't live without doing this, get the skill sets to support yourself during the long periods of unemployment. Then find a boss who will put up with your absences for auditions at any and all hours. Then give it your best, but not your all. It isn't worth that much. Remain humble, tough and true to yourself. Oh, and break a leg!

What's your day job? How does it fit in with your personal mission?

I have a terrific day job, working with some very talented people at UCLA. A few years ago both my wife and I went back to school at UCLA to get masters degrees in something else to supplement our acting incomes. She's now a licensed clinical social worker and doesn't do any acting anymore. I got mine in urban planning, which is really just directing on a larger scale. I'm now back at UCLA, occasionally teaching and working in information technology. We have created a web site called LILA (Living Independently in Los Angeles – <http://lila.ucla.edu>), which maps resources for independent living in LA County. It is a partnership project with the Westside Center for Independent Living and is an experiment in using IL philosophies of self-help, peer support, advocacy, benefits information and good I&R to promote independent living -- all through a web site. We've been able to make WCIL a 24/7 center for independent living. Now we're working to expand LILA statewide, to allow folks in urban or rural areas to have access to and a part in the creation of a database of IL resources

anywhere in California.

LILA is giving me a chance to make a difference again on the cutting edge of a movement. In this case it is in bringing high tech tools to a community used to being behind the technology curve. It's got great potential for expanding and enhancing independent living services.

And I occasionally take a few hours off to go on those auditions.

RESOURCES

NEW PUBLICATION ABOUT ARTS ACCESS IN THE UK

Access for Disabled People to Arts Premises: The Journey Sequence is a new book that gives the latest access design solutions for patrons and performers in meeting new legislation. It covers parking, entry, all internal features, and facilities for the visually and hearing impaired. Joint author of the book, Geoffrey Lord said "many owners believed that the cost of access was out of proportion to the commercial return, and some still use this as an excuse to do little, but this argument quickly proved false. Effective access does not come cheap or easy or without planning, but it is worthwhile and also cost-effective. Effective access provision is a gateway and gives freedom to those wishing to enjoy the arts and performances."

Access for Disabled People to Arts Premises: The Journey Sequence is published by Elsevier, Linacre House Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8DP. Tel: 01865 474000; Fax: 01865 474001.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR BLIND MUSICIANS

Located in Connecticut, the Center provides information and referral services regarding Braille music, technology, and strategies that enable visually impaired people to study music in school or college settings. Locally, the center offers private tutorial workshops on an as needed basis. The Center also reaches out beyond Connecticut to share its experience and information regarding blindness and music education with students, professional musicians, parents, and teachers. To learn more about the Center go to <http://www.musicandartscenter.org/tuition-based.html>.

CATALOG OF DISABILITY FILMS

[Http://www.disabilityfilms.co.uk/](http://www.disabilityfilms.co.uk/) is an online catalog of feature films that involve disability. Containing 2500 films, the list is directed toward teachers, students and anyone who has an interest in how disability is represented in films. The films are divided into 15 categories, each category is split into major and minor films, and each film is either review or summarized.

NEWS AND NOTES

CALL FOR ENTRIES TO THE "AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARTS ACCESS" ANNOUNCED

VSA arts and the MetLife Foundation have announced the 2004 call for entries to the "Award for Excellence in Arts Access." Since 2000, 12 arts organizations that have excelled in accessible programming have each received a \$5,000 cash award.

Arts organizations in the United States with a presenting facility open to the general public are encouraged to apply. These may include museums, theaters and performing arts centers. Access is said to be achieved when people of diverse abilities have an equal opportunity to attend, participate in, and enjoy arts programming. An organization can contribute to access by being sensitive and responsive to the needs of people with disabilities through:

- the design and implementation of a program
- the guidelines and policies in place to support the development and implementation of its programs
- the means through which the program is communicated to the public
- the physical design of the facility used to implement the program
- the materials distributed to implement the program.

An application and guidelines for submission may be found at <http://www.vsarts.org/programs/metlife/index.cfm>. Inquiries may be directed to accessaward@vsarts.org or 800-933-8721. The deadline for receipt of materials is April 9.

CBS TO SPONSOR TALENT SHOWCASE

CBS will sponsor a talent showcase for performers with disabilities on Wednesday, April 28, in association with SAG, AFTRA and the California State Media Access Office. Laurence Kaldor, a member of the Media Access Office and SAG, will direct the event. Entertainment development executives and casting directors from the network's

primetime and daytime programs will be on hand, and an invitation has also been extended to casting directors from production companies that work with CBS. The Media Access Office is a co-partnership of the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the State Employment Development Department. The Office currently has 800 adult members and 140 young performers on file, ranging from beginners to seasoned actors.

FILM FESTIVALS ISSUE CALL FOR ENTRIES

The Sprout Film Festival (SFF) showcases features, shorts, animation and documentaries by, for, or about people with developmental disabilities. SFF has officially opened its Call For Entries, accepting submissions of independently produced feature length and short films and videos for the 2004 festival, May 22-23 at the New York University Cantor Film Center in New York City. The submission deadline is March 8. For more information and an application go to www.filmfestival.gosprout.org.

The Second International Disability Film Festival "Breaking Down Barriers II" (MOSFEST) will take place in Moscow, September 30-October 3, and later in 5 regions of Russia and 3 NIS countries: Armenia, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. The festival will be presented by Perspektiva, a Russian disability organization, the Moscow City Administration, the World Institute on Disability, together with the Russian Union of Filmmakers, the Moscow Society of Physically Disabled People, the Moscow Society of the Deaf and Reacomp, affiliated with the Society of the Blind.

All works submitted should portray a disability issue. Films that have been produced by and with the participation of persons with disabilities are encouraged. Any size is welcome, including public service announcements. All works must have been produced after January 1, 1995. The postmark deadline for submissions is March 31.

For more information on MOSFEST or to download an application go to Perspektiva's site at <http://www.perspektiva-inva.ru>. Or, contact Denise Roza (droza@online.ru), or Olga Drozdova (festival@perspektiva-inva.ru).

The Sixth Disability Film Festival will be presented in London on September 1-5 by the London Disability Arts Forum. The Festival is open to work created by artists with disabilities. All submissions must be received by April 30. Notification of the Festival Committee's final decision will be sent by June 30. For further information contact the festival office:

Voice: +44 (0)20 7691 4203

Fax: +44 (0)20 7916 5396

E-mail: caglar@ldaf.net

Website: www.disabilityfilmfestival.net

THEATER FELLOWSHIPS AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON D.C.

The Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) has announced that it has expanded its Intern and Apprentice Program to include special Fellows positions. CATF is seeking participants from the Greater Metropolitan Washington area.

CATF's Intern and Apprentice Program offers hands-on training through positions in the management, artistic and production departments of the Theater. Interns, apprentices and fellows will work directly with theater professionals to learn their craft. In addition, participants will attend lectures given by theater professionals and participate in a Theater Showcase production during the season. Positions will be available in the following departments:

- Management: box office, publicity, administration
- Production: scenery, costumes, paints, electrics, sound
- Artistic: stage management, acting

Criteria for acceptance into the program will include: either three years of undergraduate work in the field of theater or two years of experience working with a Washington area theater, a commitment to the profession and a specific interest in the development of new plays. All Fellows must live in the greater Washington Metropolitan area. Applicants referred by a Washington D.C.-area theater will be given preference. Applicants must submit a cover letter, resume and two letters of recommendation. Final applicants may be required to travel to Shepherdstown to meet with the CATF Producing Director, Managing Director and Technical Director. Acting Fellows will be required to audition.

The Fellows will start on June 7 and work through August 4. They will receive a salary of \$200 per week. Housing on the campus of Shepherd College, CATF's host, will also be provided. For more information go to www.catf.org or contact Catherine Irwin at cirwin@shepherd.edu.

PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS OF MIXED ABILITIES DANCE

Alito Alessi, Founder of DanceAbility, and the University of Oregon Department of Dance will offer the 6th DanceAbility Teacher Certification Program June 28 - July 23 at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

The program will focus on techniques for teaching and leading mixed abilities dance, movement and theater groups. The training will include:

- foundations for improvising and performance-making in diverse groups
- learning to plan and teach classes for all levels and all abilities
- learning to lead performance-making projects, including outdoor public space and street performances
- integrating contact improvisation with mixed abilities
- organizational and administrative development, and international networking.

The cost of the program is \$1,350, due by June 1, or \$1,250 if paid in full by April 23. The fee includes the four-week training and a 150-page manual of DanceAbility methodology and exercises. A maximum of 25 participants will be accepted. To reserve a place, send a \$100 deposit. Fees should be sent to Joint Forces Dance Company, Inc., account number 299099, at SELCO Credit Union (Downtown Branch), Eugene, Oregon, USA, Postal Code 97403, Routing number 323274445.

For more information contact:
 Alito Alessi, Joint Forces Dance Company
 Email: alito22@yahoo.com
 Telephone: (541)342-3273

NATIONAL DANCE PROJECT ANNOUNCES PRODUCTION GRANT GUIDELINES

Administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts (<http://www.nefa.org>), the National Dance Project (NDP) provides grants for the production and touring of contemporary dance work by regionally and nationally significant artists in the United States and abroad. The application deadline is April 2.

NDP Production Grants provide funding for the creation of new dance work that will tour nationally. Funds support a project's development through the time of its premiere, covering costs related to producing the work. Grants generally range from \$15,000 to \$35,000 and are awarded to between fifteen and twenty dance projects annually. Grants are awarded to dance projects based on nominations NDP receives from presenters, artists, artist managers, and agents. In selecting projects, NDP considers scale, geography, and the representation of diverse ethnicities and artistic forms.

All projects nominated should make possible the creation of work that will eventually tour; offer the potential to engage and diversify audiences; explore collaborations within and across disciplines; and involve creative and dynamic partnership with one or more presenter partners in the development of the work.

For complete program guidelines, application procedures and forms go to http://www.nefa.org/grantprog/ndp/ndp_prod_grant_app.html.

DEAF WEST THEATRE ANNOUNCES SUMMER SCHOOL FOR ACTORS

Los Angeles' Deaf West Theatre (DWT) will hold its 4th annual Professional Summer School for Actors. The three-week intensive for deaf and hard-of-hearing actors will run from June 7-27, at its NoHo Arts District Theatre, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA. The Deadline for applying is April 16.

This unique summer school program will offer classes in acting technique, scene study, improvisation, ASL translation, mime and stage combat, as well as preparedness for the marketplace.

For additional information about Deaf West Theatre's Professional Acting School program, please go to www.deafwest.org and click on "Summer School." You can also call (818) 762-2998/voice, (818) 762-2782/TDD, or e-mail DWSS2004@aol.com.

ELA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION NOW AVAILABLE

The Ethel Louise Armstrong Foundation, Inc. (ELA) has announced that the 2004 ELA Scholarship application is now available at www.ela.org in the scholarship section of the website.

The ELA Scholarship provides financial assistance to women with physical disabilities who are enrolled in a college or university graduate program in the United States. ELA Scholarship awards are based on merit and are given in an objective and on a nondiscriminatory basis. Each applicant is required to submit an application packet including an application form, a college transcript, two letters of academic recommendation, a medical verification form and an essay outlining how she will "Change the Face of Disability on the Planet." Scholarships range from \$500 to \$2,000 per year. The application deadline is June 1st, 2004.

The vision of the ELA Foundation, Inc. is to "Change the Face of Disability on the Planet." Its mission is to promote, through grants and scholarships, the inclusion of people with disabilities. Contact Deborah Lewis at executivedirector@ela.org for more information about the ELA Scholarship.

THREE ORGANIZATIONS LOOKING TO MENTOR ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES

This year awards were given to nine organizations to execute a Careers in the Arts Initiative –Mentorship (CAIM) project which is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs.

These organizations all set up projects to mentor individuals with disabilities seriously interested in pursuing careers in the arts. Out of the nine organizations six have already identified mentees.

But, three organizations are currently still looking for an individual with a disability to mentor. If you think you might be the right match, and would like to be mentored by the organizations listed below you should contact them directly to be considered.

Arizona Theatre Company

PO Box 1631
Tucson, AZ 85702
Contact Person: Eileen Bagnall
520-884-8210 ext 8601
ebagnall@arizonatheatre.org

This company is looking for one person who is interested in being mentored in three areas – Box Office Management, Marketing, and Facilities Management. This will be a part-time position, and the hours and duration will depend on the individual.

Round House Theatre

PO Box 30688
Bethesda, MD 20824-0688
Contact Person: Kathy Feininger
301-585-1225 ext 114
kfeininger@roundhousetheatre.org

This is an opportunity for an individual to be mentored in a variety of areas within the Theatre, based on the individual's interest and experience. These areas include Arts Management, Development, Literary/Production Management, Production and Technical, Acting/Teaching Artists. This will be a full-time position for one year.

United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County

336 Fayetteville Street Mall Suite 440
Raleigh, NC 27601-1743
Contact Person: Virginia Zehr
919-835-1498 ext 230
gzehr@unitedarts.org

The Council is offering to mentor someone who is interested in a broad arts administration background -- everything from arts education, artists in schools programs, cultural arts festival planning, to grant administration. This will be a part-time position.

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