



The Kennedy Center

OPENING STAGES

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

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IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editor: The Personal and the Political – Page 2

Feature

The Art of Accommodation... by Susan Abod – Page 3

People

Charles Mee, playwright – Page 6

News and Notes

Other Voices Program Closes – page 11

SAG Releases Report on Performers With Disabilities - 12

Jobs at AXIS Dance Company – page 13

Deaf Theatre Festival to Be Held in Boston – page 14

READERS' ALERT

Opening Stages is always interested in hearing from our readers about pertinent programs, resources and events, as well as ideas for articles. We can pay a modest fee for articles we accept. Contact us at access@kennedy-center.org.

FROM THE EDITOR: THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL

For this issue I had the pleasure of interviewing playwright Charles Mee. In his excellent autobiography *A Nearly Normal Life*, Mee recounts contracting polio during his adolescence in the 1950s and how that shaped the course of his life. He also sets the polio epidemics of the period in a sociological context, describing the widespread terror they inspired and the consequent lionization of Dr. Jonas Salk for inventing the polio vaccine.

For me one of the fascinating, yet horrifying, revelations of his account is the fact that the revered Dr. Salk first experimented with his vaccine on institutionalized developmentally delayed people -- completely without their knowledge or consent. In the culture of the time the goal of eliminating disability was seen as a perfectly valid reason for trampling on the rights of people who were already disabled. Or, more accurately one could say that people with disabilities had no perceived rights.

How far we have come since then! Now all human beings are protected from exploitation or abuse in scientific experiments. Now our rights are articulated in a range of laws affecting education, public access, community integration, communication and transportation.

On the other hand, how far we still have to go. When our rights are often resented and go unenforced. When many more Medicaid dollars still go toward institutional care than community-based care. When a culture hero like Clint Eastwood receives acclaim and awards for portraying disability as a fate worse than death.

One could go on and on about the barriers and affronts we still too frequently encounter. But why waste time arguing whether the glass is half empty or half full? Most of us simply want to go on with our lives, making them the best they can be and leaving the world better for our followers. And we each do that in our own ways. Some of us, like members of ADAPT, are drawn to the rough and tumble theater of direct action. And some, like Charles Mee, simply by practicing their art force society to reassess its notions about disability.

Mee says in our interview "I've always thought that the most effective propaganda is the propaganda that is never mentioned." And while that's not the only truth, it is a truth. One might say that for us there is no distinction between the political and personal. We make political statements every day simply through our passionate existence in the world. That is our burden, and that is our privilege.

Paul Kahn

FEATURE

THE ART OF ACCOMMODATION by Susan Abod

My disability has informed and greatly influenced the direction of my work as an artist. In the course of that work, I have learned that the most valuable assets I have are an open mind, a willingness to try something new, persistence and patience, patience, patience. Whenever I have been able to accept the reality of my limitations -- a changing and ongoing process -- it has actually granted me more creative possibility. And taking any action to express myself as an artist in any way, no matter how miniscule the step might seem, keeps the artistic flow moving and, therefore, keeps my spirit alive.

Getting sick

I was a professional singer, performing in clubs and concerts and teaching music in Boston, until 1986 when I had to stop. It's been nineteen years since I was first diagnosed with the mysterious, baffling conditions of Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS). Since that time, my whole life has completely changed. My energy and activity level was reduced to less than half of what it was. I had unexplainable chronic muscle soreness, headaches, significant memory and concentration loss. I found that my body would react severely with a multitude of other symptoms when it came in contact with common household and commercial products and chemicals I had to learn how to monitor and create an environment that would protect my body from chemical exposures that could cause these severe reactions and symptoms. I found out that MCS controls where I live, what I eat, what I wear, where I go, what I buy or, more often, do not buy and whom I hug.

Bringing music back

I assumed I would have to give up singing entirely. For about 9 months I couldn't even listen to music. Then slowly I brought music back into my life -- first by walking into my local library and listening to Elgar's lullabies. Then several months later, I progressed to voice and guitar recordings. Ella Fitzgerald and Joe Pass were pivotal listening experiences -- very low key, simple, but highly creative. Then not too much later an old

bass player friend of mine (who had not heard I was sick) asked me to sing for a mass she was conducting. At first I said I didn't think it would work with all my environmental and energy restrictions. But she was insistent. She asked me what I would need to be able to participate. Thus, I had my first lesson in learning about what my accommodation needs were and trying out what it's like to request them. I asked her where they were rehearsing. What was the space like? Were there cats, potpourri, incense or new paint? Would people agree not to wear fragrances? I went to one rehearsal with the choir. I lasted an hour, and got a bit wiped out. So, we arranged for the rest of the rehearsals to consist of me singing along with a recording of the mass and that I would just show up at the performance. The mass was performed successfully in a church. Yes, I was tired and sick afterwards but not for too long. And the emotional reward was great.

Soon after I was asked by a friend to "just come to a local non-smoking café on Saturdays for an hour to hear people's stories about living with AIDS." I tried it out with some trepidation, but after a brief visit I felt able to come the next week. This led to being inspired to write a few songs for the newly formed Living with AIDS theatre project. The project turned into a musical production that ran for 6 weeks in the café's cabaret space. I was asked to perform in it. I didn't think this was possible for me. But I was encouraged by a disabled friend to write down what it would take for me to be able to perform. Before I agreed, I sat down with the director and producer and told them about MCS and what my limitations might mean for them. They agreed to have a prepared understudy for me, to use special paint for the sets and to allow me to use my own clothing for my costume.

Asking for what I need

Every time I had to ask for something I had to screw up my courage. The producer and director did their best. However, some requests were met with grumbles and resentment from the other cast members, like when I asked one of them to not polish her nails right before the show. I sat next to her on stage, and I got so spaced out from the polish that I couldn't remember my lines. She just didn't get that this was an accommodation to prevent me from getting sick. She, like many people, thought I was too demanding. But the overall experience of singing a few songs in a show and in this particular space encouraged me create an evening of performance there. Six months later I performed a set of nine songs, with another singer friend with a disability performing the second half. It was a rousing success.

But for me the real success was that my relation to music began to change. I found that I was able to connect with a lyric more deeply, that I chose material that affected me and helped me deal with my circumstances more than what I thought others would like. Music became more of a healing, comforting, uplifting, energizing companion, whereas before it had been my hoped-for meal ticket with all sorts of compromises attached.

So, I learned a jazz and cabaret singer with chemical sensitivities is not an oxymoron!

Slowly I became open to whatever presented itself for me to try. They had cabaret offerings at my local adult education center, so I went and checked out the performance space. I stayed in it for a while, and it seemed non-toxic enough. I hoped to be able to put on a full evening of singing, including my original material. This seemed a realistic goal. I gave myself three months to prepare for this one evening. It was wonderful. So, I began doing this about once a year for several years.

I learned that it really was possible for me to perform – but not as often as I would like. It is challenging to find accessible places to perform in public. So many clubs permit smoking, and many opportunities for gigs are in hotels or restaurants where regular pesticide spraying occurs. It forced me to be inventive but patient and more willing to ask for what I need. I've learned it takes courage to ask. But that's my job, and how people react is out of my hands. I have found other safe places to perform---a university theatre, two church halls, and now mostly house concerts. These have turned out to be a wonderful alternative to clubs -- so much more intimate. And a fragrance free suggestion can be posted. In 2001 I produced and recorded a CD of the music I had been singing over the previous five to six years. I had to find a studio that had no long history of people smoking, incense use and the like, good ventilation, without recent remodeling, that would allow me to record in short intervals over a long period of time. And it worked!

Another issue about accessibility is finding musicians to play with. Not only do their musical credentials matter, but also their openness to not wearing aftershave or cologne or smoking around me. Recently I have been interviewing a guitar player for an upcoming concert. He is a brilliant player, but he is a smoker. So, we've been having a conversation. Would he be willing to change his clothing, which holds a lot of the smoke odor that I react to, before we enter a room together to rehearse? Yes. Okay, next question: where can we rehearse where there is no smoking, new paint and or mold?

The reality is, though, I am not able to sing as much as I want to and have to accept that. So, I tried to find something else that was creatively fulfilling.

Becoming a videographer

During a time when I was very sick, I saw a documentary "The Broadcast Tapes of Dr. Peter" (HBO, July, 1993) that inspired me, and I got a very strong desire to make a video. I knew nothing about the medium, but I got out of bed and wrote a synopsis in a half-hour. Three years later, with the help of a few very dedicated volunteers and technical crew, "Funny You Don't Look Sick, An Autobiography of an Illness" was showing at the Museum of Fine Arts in front of 200 people! The reception of "Funny, You Don't Look Sick" far exceeded my expectations. The video has been screened internationally, both in public forums and via cable television networks. The Cinema Guild of New York is now distributing it professionally. Video gave me a new, accessible way to express myself artistically.

During the final editing of "Funny You Don't Look Sick;" I realized how much another video was needed to expose the proliferation of MCS and the frightening variety of causes for its onset. I especially wanted to explore the vital issue of safe housing as treatment and prevention for MCS. I was personally being challenged to find and keep safe housing in Boston. In 1997 I got an ADA Mini-Grant from the Massachusetts Very Special Arts, and soon after I arranged to go on a five week road trip, traveling in my MCS accessible van to the Southwest with a very brave camera woman in search of safe, non-toxic housing solutions.

Now eight years later, this video production entitled "Homesick: Living with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities" (www.homesick-video.com) is yet to be completed. The severe fluctuations of my health condition are a big factor. But the other main reason is that most of my time has been spent on looking for accessible housing for myself. Art imitates life. It is not how I planned it, but I have made a decision to document what's been happening to me for the film. I have since moved to Santa Fe, thinking I had found an accessible little house. However, after a short while it was causing me severe reactions. My exciting plan was to move to New Mexico and finish the film with a happy ending and a new home. But since December, I have been staying with a MCS friend while continuing my search for a safe place. So, now I am the subject of this film, waiting around to see what the ending is going to be. How will my film turn out? My plan is to just show up and see what happens.

I have learned much about the art of accommodation. Not just in the "ADA" sense of understanding my rights, but also I have learned how to accommodate my illness into my life and art.

For more information about Susan or to purchase her CD go to www.susanabod.com.

PEOPLE

**CHARLES MEE
PLAYWRIGHT**

"If I just do what I love, because I'm not from Mars, maybe some other people will like it, too."

You've had a very successful career. What do you think of as some of the highlights?

Well, I don't think of my career as a successful one or not successful. I graduated from college in 1960 and wrote for the theater and did some stuff off-off-off-off-Broadway and then got very caught up in anti-Vietnam War activities. And that led to political writing, which led to writing political books and books about American history and American

foreign relations. I did that for 20 years and came back to writing for the theater in the 1980s. When I came back to it, I thought, I'm too old to care whether I succeed or not. This is something I've always wanted to do. If all I do is write these plays and put them into my bottom drawer to remember what I thought and felt about my own life, that's all I care about. I also thought, I really don't know what anybody else likes in the theater, but I'm the world's leading expert in what I like. So, if I just do what I love, because I'm not from Mars, maybe some other people will like it, too. So that's really all I ever thought about. I get up every morning, I come to my desk, I sit down and I write something that I love. Whether it then succeeds or fails in somebody else's terms -- I honestly just don't think about it.

How did you come to playwriting? Was it something you wanted to do from very early on?

I got polio in 1953. As a young kid, I played football and really didn't have a brain in my head. After I had polio, I thought, I see I'm not going to make my way in the world anymore with my body, which is what I'd always thought. I'm going to have to find my way in the world with my mind. And my mind is empty, so I better fill it up. And I started reading a lot. And then I started writing, pretty much because it was something I could do sitting down. I don't know why I became interested in the theater, except I think it was just because the theater is, by its nature, the art form of warring passions. My own emotions were in such turmoil and at war with themselves that theater sort of felt naturally like my form.

So it's a way of externalizing inner conflicts.

I think so. I spent a lot of time talking to myself in my own head. And then when I started writing it down on paper it was not like anything I had to try to do; it was just something I did all the time anyway. When I was in college, I did take a couple of playwriting courses.

Where did you go to school?

I went to Harvard, and I studied with Archibald MacLeish. I was a history and literature major, which was kind of a cool thing to do at that time. My interests have always been somewhat divided between the personal of literature and the public world of history and politics. In most American theater since Ibsen, since Freud, people have thought we're creatures of psychology, and the ultimate truth of a human being is that character and personality are created in the domestic conditions of early childhood. I really think that's simple-minded. I think human beings are also a product of history, culture, gender, genetics, accidents, virus, and other things that have nothing to do with psychology. So, in my plays that's the kind of stuff I try to mobilize to understand what people are doing and why they're doing it.

Given that your plays haven't sat in a drawer but have been performed widely, what's been most satisfying about that?

Well, I like it. I write these plays to please myself, but then, of course, it does feel good that people like them. I guess it's a pleasure to have a connection with other people in

this way. Obviously, you write a play and you feel you have exposed some deep, inner self, and to have that deep, inner self accepted rather than scorned is a nice feeling.

"I've always thought that the most effective propaganda is the propaganda that is never mentioned."

You've said that an individual is shaped by his culture and in turn helps create his culture. Do you think about how your plays are affecting our culture?

I think a lot of playwrights wonder what influence they're having on the world and are they having a big enough influence. I don't think about that because obviously there are other things that have immense impact on the culture -- the policies of the Republican and Democratic parties, television shows, stuff that really impacts millions of people. The theater has such a small audience, even the most popular theater. So, I think that people in the theater really need to be a little more modest about the kind of influence they have and hope they're just making some small contribution to how the world thinks and feels.

But I should also say, on the other hand, if what I do has an impact on the world, then it should be something I believe in. In other words, you might think if you go into the backyard and shoot a cat, it has no big impact. But maybe you shouldn't do that, if you believe people shouldn't shoot cats. I've always thought that the most effective propaganda is the propaganda that is never mentioned. Television is effective propaganda because nobody on a television show really talks about politics. The Bill Cosby Show never talked about the conditions of black people in America. It just put an African-American, middle-class family on television and said, they have problems about raising children and getting along and what to have for dinner and how to make a living and what kind of clothes they like to wear. So, the unspoken message of the program was African-American people are exactly like white people. Because it was never mentioned and nobody ever argued the case, it was incredibly powerful.

It's the old axiom of writing: show, don't tell.

Right. This is what I think of in my own life and disability. I've written more than 30 plays, and maybe two of them have dealt directly with questions of disability. Otherwise, they're all plays about people living lives. My assumption is that they should be cast with people of all colors and all sorts of abilities and disabilities and that should be considered normal. So, in that sense, there's that kind of political propaganda.

I'm a person who hopes that the disability movement succeeds, that people with disabilities are completely integrated into society. If that happens, then what kind of plays would you write? I'm writing plays assuming that this movement has succeeded. Why not create a world in which you live for a couple of hours thinking, I have nothing to be afraid of.

"I go a lot to museums and art galleries and look at stuff I see there and think, what would happen if you put that on stage and it started to move and talk?"

Were there any particular people that helped you get your plays produced?

There certainly were. When I came back to playwriting in the 1980s, it happened that I used to go to a Xerox store in Greenwich Village, and a guy who worked in the Xerox store was the playwright Wally Shawn. So, when I wrote my first play, I gave it to him to read, and he gave it to Joe Papp at the Public Theater. Joe Papp said, do this! So, in a way it was that easy. For the most part ever since I just give plays to friends, and as time has gone on I've made more and more friends. So, it's gotten easier to do things. The great thing about doing that is then, whenever you're doing anything, you're working among friends, and that feels good. I almost never send plays out to strangers.

Are there people who have been models and inspirations for you?

Lots, I guess. The funny thing is I don't look to other playwrights much for inspiration about writing plays. I go a lot to museums and art galleries and look at stuff I see there and think, what would happen if you put that on stage and it started to move and talk? I've actually just written several plays that do that. A few years ago there was a big retrospective of the work of Robert Rauschenberg. So, I wrote a play called "bobrauschenbergamerica," and it really is based on his work and thinking, what does he come back to over and over again? What does he look at over and over again? And then I created characters and conversations around the themes in his work.

The other thing I look at a lot is performance. I go to a lot of dance, which is a great vicarious pleasure for me. When I write plays, there's usually some combination of text and movement and music, so that the world moves and dances.

In a way you can choreograph.

The theater is a terrifically complex art form because you can mobilize four or five things onstage. In a movie, your attention is usually focused on one thing, but in the theater you can have this very complicated form of expression. I guess I feel life is a complicated thing, so the complexity of the theater feels good.

How do you feel about theater being a cooperative art form, in which actors and directors and designers bring their own contributions to your work?

I actually love that, and I'm a guy who usually gives a play to a director and says, have a good time. I'll see you on opening night. I'm usually not there during rehearsals and usually not there saying, oh no, that's not what I meant. This is what I meant. I don't try to create a definitive production of a play. I don't believe there's a definitive version of anything. If you're just incredibly lucky as a playwright, your plays will be done after you're dead, and then you'll have no control over the way they're done. It's very cool to go to a play that you've had no control over. It's like a bonus treat for me.

Do you think that having a disability informs your aesthetic in any way?

There was a guy who taught architecture at Yale years ago named Vincent Scully. He said that the buildings that architects designed were in one way or another a projection of their own bodies. I thought, yeah, the plays I write are projections of my body. That is, they're fucked up, they don't work well, they feel like a lot of disparate parts kind of stuck together. My plays mostly have a sense of seeming like a collage. I think that's an expression of how I feel in my body.

Instead of it feeling like a smooth, organic whole?

Exactly. The well-made play is really for somebody else to write, not me.

You have said that there is no such thing as an original play. Could you elaborate on that?

I think we all start out by taking the culture we've been given, and then we remake it. We start out with the lives we've been given, the bodies we've been given, the minds we've been given, the history and culture we've been born into, and then we recreate it. To think that you create an original play out of nothing just seems to me obviously a mistake. The theater you make inherently combines past and present and maybe some future. That's the material you're dealing with. It's the dramatic tension between the world we've been given and the world we're trying to make that creates drama.

"We've been thrown out, so we're automatically blessed with the view of an outsider."

Do you think that those of us with disabilities have a particular relationship to the predominant culture?

I think stuff is obvious to us that isn't obvious to others. We've been thrown out, so we're automatically blessed with the view of an outsider.

So many artists seem to have that view.

And negotiate it in some way. Learn to live with it or try to change it. I also think finally that must be the human condition. Otherwise, all those insiders wouldn't come to the theater every evening.

We're all separate from each other.

It's just been made intense and undeniable for those of us who have been rendered outsiders against our will.

You've posted all your plays on your web site and invited people to take them and use them. You've been incredibly generous rather than proprietary about your work. Where does that instinct come from?

I didn't think it through very well. The thought occurred to me when I was taking Greek plays and recasting them in the modern world, okay, I've taken this Greek play and I've appropriated a lot of stuff from a lot of the world of today. That is, I take chunks of stuff from television, the Internet, Soap Opera Digest, how-to books and stick them into these plays. Then I thought, how am I going to claim ownership? I think it's okay for me to

claim ownership of the exact combination of things that I put together. That seems like my own individual thing. But to wall it off against other people then appropriating what I've done is wrong. It's turned out to be really fun. I've put this stuff on the Internet, and people do take it and remake it and sometimes send it back to me. It's really interesting to see what they've done.

"Every time you think, this is the wrong way to write a play, you should write it that way."

What kind of advice do you have for other playwrights with disabilities who want to move their careers along?

Two things. First of all, I think they shouldn't think of moving their careers along. They should only think about doing what they really love. If you want to have a career as a playwright, you don't want to spend your career writing what other people like. You really want to spend your life writing what you love. So, I think the only thing to do is to be as honest as you can about what you love. And every time you make a move that's calculated to please somebody else, you should cut it. Every time there's somebody sitting on your shoulder saying, is this going to succeed? you should shut them up. And every time you think, this is the wrong way to write a play, you should write it that way.

And then, as a practical matter, I have to admit, I do think that, although I've put my plays on the web site for the reasons I told you, it's been amazing to see that over 100,000 individual titles are downloaded from my web site every year all over the world. I have a play that's performing right now in Istanbul, Turkey. I think other playwrights should put their plays on the Internet because the reality is almost nobody can make more than \$1.95 by having their plays published in print. But you can make some money, if somebody puts your play on in a theater and gives you royalties. I'm just amazed that more people don't put their plays on the Internet. They're protecting something that isn't worth protecting. You want to do what you love and then put it out in the world and see where it goes.

NEWS AND NOTES

OTHER VOICES PROGRAM CLOSURES

Artistic director Michael Ritchie has announced the closing in Los Angeles of Center Theatre Group's Other Voices program for disabled artists, plus the Latino, Asian American and African American labs. These programs, designed to develop new plays and playwrights, were one of the most distinctive features of CTG's Mark Taper Forum. They were a large part of the affirmative-action legacy left by Ritchie's predecessor, Gordon Davidson.

Other Voices had been part of the Taper since 1982. Its demise will leave only one similar program affiliated with a major U.S. theater, the Victory Gardens Theater in Chicago, said Victoria Ann Lewis, Other Voices' first director.

Ritchie says that the decision to close the labs was agonized over, but that they simply weren't delivering, and he holds the lab directors responsible. Instead of devoting resources to such programs, which seldom result in full CTG productions, Ritchie plans to produce full stagings of new plays by fewer writers. "I want to see a shorter list of plays in production," he said, "as opposed to a long list that gets mired in development."

SAG RELEASES REPORT ON PERFORMERS WITH DISABILITIES

Fifteen years after the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law Screen Actors Guild (SAG) released the executive summary of a first-of-its-kind study that reveals performers with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the entertainment industry and often reluctant to ask producers for even the most minor accommodations.

The new study is especially significant because little data currently exists on the experiences and representation of performers with disabilities. The annual Casting Data Report tallies opportunities in film and television solely by race, ethnicity, gender and age. However, SAG announced today that it and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers are jointly petitioning the U.S. Labor Department to permit the expansion of the report to include annual information on performers with disabilities. The Executive Summary of the report also includes recommendations for advancing their employment prospects.

The study was commissioned by Screen Actors Guild and made possible by a grant from the SAG-Producers Industry Advancement and Cooperative Fund (IACF). Research was conducted by Olivia Raynor, Ph.D. and Katherine Hayward, Ph.D. of the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA.

Some key findings

- Only one-third of SAG members with disabilities reported working in a theatrical or television production in 2003.
- Performers with disabilities worked an average of 4.1 days per year.
- SAG members with disabilities have extensive training and education.
- 36 percent of performers with disabilities felt that they had encountered some form of discrimination in the workplace, including not being cast or being refused an audition because their disability.
- While the little over a third of performers with disabilities stated that a reasonable accommodation would help them in their work, 60 percent never asked for an

accommodation, because they believed that employers would be reluctant to hire them.

- Overall, respondents believed that their prospects for employment were extremely limited and identify the three greatest barriers as: (1) only being considered for disability-specific roles; (2) a lack of acting jobs in general; and (3) difficulty getting an audition.
- The most frequently encountered obstacles to getting an audition were stereotypical attitudes about disability and only being considered for limited roles. Also, the more obvious or visible the disability, the less likely the actor was to be hired or taken seriously by the creative team.
- Performers with disabilities secured the majority of their acting jobs in television (32%), followed by film (28%) and commercials (22%).

Recommendations

- Advocate for greater diversity in roles and increased hiring of performers with disabilities in film and television.
- Collect ongoing data about the employment of performers with disabilities in the same manner as other underrepresented groups to allow accurate comparisons of employment practices and trends in the industry.
- Advocate for the inclusion performers with disabilities in all diversity in employment initiatives. Address images, language and attitudes that contribute or hinder inclusion in the workplace.
- Educate the industry about the accessibility rights and needs of performers with disabilities.
- Provide resources to the industry regarding accommodations, such as how to get a sign language interpreter, companies that rent out equipment such as ramps or trailers, and so on.
- Examine the needs of older actors, specifically those with age-related disabilities, as more than half of the entire membership of SAG is over the age of 40.

JOBS OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERNSHIPS AT AXIS DANCE COMPANY

AXIS Dance Company is seeking new dancers with physical disabilities. The group is looking for people with a background in athletics, a strong aptitude for dance as an art form, and/or training in modern dance, Contact Improvisation or other dance techniques. While professional dance experience is not required (extensive training is provided), a genuine interest in and commitment to this work is a must. AXIS prefers applicants who can make a minimum commitment of two years.

AXIS maintains an extensive dance education and outreach program for students of all ages with and without disabilities. In fact, education and outreach work comprise about 50% of AXIS schedule. So, individuals with teaching experience or interest in being Teaching Artists are highly encouraged to apply.

AXIS creates, performs and teaches practically year-round locally and abroad. Rehearsals are two to five times a week. All work is paid, and there are opportunities for the right individual to assume other duties, including choreography, teaching, and administration. For more information, go to the Company website at www.axisdance.org.

To apply send a cover letter explaining your dance, athletic and/or movement experience, interest in AXIS, bio or resume, and a video of you dancing, moving, or competing to:

Judith Smith
Artistic Director
AXIS Dance Company
1428 Alice Street, #201
Oakland, CA 94612

AXIS is also currently accepting applications for internships in the areas of:

- Corporate grant writing
- Individual donor campaign development
- Archiving
- Office assistant

If you're interested in applying for any of these internships, send a cover letter and resume to the AXIS office at 1428 Alice Street, Ste. 200, Oakland, CA 94612.

DEAF THEATRE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN BOSTON

A SHOW OF HANDS: A Celebration of Deaf Theatre, a three-day festival, will be held in Boston November 17-19. The event is being co-presented by VSA arts of Massachusetts and A Show of Hands Theatre Company and will be funded in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

"Deaf theatre is one of the ways in which Deaf people in Massachusetts inspire, borrow ideas, and find solutions from each other through a cherished language and culture," said MCDHH commissioner Heidi Reed. "This same theatre also has a way of reaching out to non-Deaf people and creating mutual understanding along with better communication. Deaf theatre entertains us, challenges our perceptions of people, and ultimately enriches us all."

A SHOW OF HANDS will showcase distinguished American Deaf theatre artists and their work. Performances will be presented in American Sign Language (ASL), along with panel discussions and children's activities. Award-winning actors Phyllis Frelich and Bernard Bragg will be Guest Presenters, and performers will include Terrylene,

Peter Cook, CJ Jones, Rosa Lee Gallimore, The Wings Company, and The Con (Howie Seago and Nat Wilson).

"It's our hope that we'll bring both well-established and newer performers together to truly celebrate the magic of Deaf theatre," said Janis Cole, festival co-chair. "Deaf theatre is a pivotal part of Deaf history, not just here in Massachusetts but everywhere in the world, too"

The festival will be held at the Roxbury Center for the Arts Hibernian Hall in Roxbury, Mass. For ticket information or other details visit www.deaftheatrefest.com or e-mail info@deaftheatrefest.com.

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