



The Kennedy Center

OPENING STAGES

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

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FROM THE EDITOR: THE GOOD TIMES ARE KILLING ME

In her letter published in the previous edition of Opening Stages, Tennise B. Morse raised the issue of the frustrating financial challenges that artists with disabilities face. This problem hit me with special force this year when I was awarded a fellowship from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation for a four-week residency at the Vermont Studio Center, an artists and writers colony nestled in the Green Mountains.

Initially I was thrilled to learn that I was one of only three artists and writers with disabilities honored with this opportunity. Then the next moment I panicked. I can't function without my

PCAs (personal care attendants). But, the fellowship award made no mention of room and board for them. As a poor poet and playwright there was no way I could possibly dig up the almost \$3000 that would cost. I had to tell the Vermont Studio Center: sorry I can't afford this success. Luckily their development people went to work with the Reeve Foundation, which generously came through with another grant to pay for my PCAs' room and board.

I was relieved but not out of trouble yet, because I soon realized that there was another financial disaster looming up to bar me from enjoying the fruits of my talent. If I was going to Vermont for four weeks, I was going to need a lot more PCA care time than I do at home -- time that my health insurance didn't cover. Happily with luck and nerve I was able to knock that barrier down, too, by getting yet another grant from a different private foundation.

So, I went to Vermont, and it was a great experience. My PCAs and I were fed three meals a day and given our own living and working studios with a view of grass and trees. Beautiful orange day lilies bloomed outside our windows. I didn't watch TV or read a newspaper once. With the help of enormous amounts of time, healthy air and supportive fellow residents I was able to concentrate on my writing and get a lot done.

Shortly after I returned home I received more good news: a play of mine had been accepted by a festival in Maine. So, I was back again to that dizzy up and down of joy and anxiety. Could I afford the expense of going there? Who among my PCAs would be willing to go with me? And would that person be flexible and intuitive enough to work well in an unfamiliar environment?

I seriously wonder how much good news I can take before it totally breaks me both financially and emotionally. I live on the East Coast. There is a play competition in San Francisco that sounds right for me, but it requires the playwright to be in residence for a week of rehearsals. Should I go for it, even though I know how expensive two cross-country plane tickets would be, how the airlines are prone to mangle power wheelchairs like mine, how the theater would probably have difficulty finding me accessible digs?

In future issues of Opening Stages we hope to probe deeper into these challenges that artists with disabilities face and relay some practical advice. So, if you, our readers, have any, please share your wisdom by writing to us at access@kennedy-center.org.

In the meantime, I intend to live dangerously.

Paul Kahn

New! Bigger! Better!
INTERNET EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS
compiled by Judy Goldberger

(Editor's note: In the first issue of Opening Stages we presented a modest listing of performing arts online job finding resources. Here we offer with due modesty a vastly expanded version of the same.)

The internet can prove to be a valuable tool in your job search, enabling you to easily find job listings, audition notices, grant opportunities, career advice, professional associations, and more from across the country, or even the world. The following is a sampling of websites specifically catering to artists, which you may find useful. Some are specifically for artists with disabilities.

Most of the listings below provide services free to job seekers and artists. The ones that charge a fee for basic services are noted. There are many more fee-based services than those listed here. You should exercise caution in using such services. *Opening Stages* has not verified their claims.

One general resource to check out is The Riley Guide, a free compendium of employment and career information sources and services on the Internet compiled by Margaret F. Dikel. Two especially useful pages are The Arts & Humanities resources at <http://www.rileyguide.org/arts.html> and resources specific to the needs and interests of people with disabilities at <http://www.rileyguide.org/abled.html>. The Riley Guide also provides instruction for jobs seekers on how to use the Internet to their best advantage.

The listings below are organized as follows:

- 1 - GENERAL ARTS RESOURCES THAT INCLUDE PERFORMING ARTS
- 2 - GENERAL PERFORMING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
- 3 - DANCE
- 4 - FILM, RADIO AND TELEVISION
- 5 - MEDIA ARTS
- 6 - MUSIC
- 7 - THEATER
- 8 - THEATER - BACKSTAGE

The descriptions that accompany them are compiled from website content.

1 - GENERAL ARTS RESOURCES THAT INCLUDE PERFORMING ARTS

ArtJobOnline is a fee-based service of the Western States Arts Federation. It offers nationwide listings of jobs, internships, fellowship, conferences, commissions and other employment opportunities in the arts. Listings are constantly updated as new ones arrive. This site also offers free job search and career advice. <http://www.artjob.org>

The National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) is the national information dissemination, technical assistance and referral center specializing in the field of arts and disability. NADC resources include listings of opportunities for artists, theater and dance companies with performers with and without disabilities, resources for media artists, funding opportunities, support organizations, and individual artists' web pages. <http://nadc.ucla.edu>

NYFA Current (formerly Artswire Current) is sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts. It offers national listings of art related jobs, grant opportunities, and fellowships. New listings appear every Sunday. For a free e-mail subscription, click on "Subscribe to NYFA Current" under "NYFA Current." <http://www.artswire.org>

The Pauper provides business and financial planning resources for artists, including links to many online arts-related job-finding services. <http://www.thepauper.com/Planning/Career/jobs.asp>

The Survivors Art Foundation is a non-profit organization for visual, literary and performing artists. Its goal is to provide entertainment, education, exposure to the arts, and public awareness, while mainstreaming trauma survivors with physical and mental disabilities into the arts. <http://www.survivorsartfoundation.org>

The Texas Cultural and Arts Network lists openings around the country on its site, <http://www.arts.state.tx.us/employment/jobs.asp>

2 - GENERAL PERFORMING ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Actor Access, a service of Breakdown Services, Ltd., offers a list (updated daily) of casting breakdowns for projects in New York, Los Angeles, and Vancouver at <http://www.breakdownservices.com/access.html>. Actors can also access sides, the portion of a script that an actor will need to prepare for a part at an audition, at <http://www.showfax.com>.

ActorNEWS.com allows you to view film and theater audition notices for free, and also offers free e-mail subscriptions and career advice. <http://actornews.com>

The Actors' Equity Association (AEA) site lists job postings, stage manager notices, photo/resume requests, and regional auditions seeking union members. <http://web.actorsequity.org/CastingSearch/>

BackStage.com is a fee-based service offered by Back Stage magazine. It includes advance and current casting and tech notices for theater, television, film, dance, cabaret and comedy; career advice; and film, theater and TV industry contacts. <http://www.backstage.com>

The Non-Traditional Casting Project is a not-for-profit advocacy organization established in 1986 to address and seek solutions to the problem of racism and exclusion in theater, film, and television. NTCP has a few postings online, and maintains a national talent database, Artist Files/Online (AFO), of artists who are African American, Asian Pacific American, Caribbean Black, Latino, South Asian, Native American; and/or who are Deaf or hard of hearing, blind or low vision, ambulatory or otherwise disabled. NTCP's Artist Files are a national resource of approximately 3,000 actors' resumes and photographs, as well as the resumes of writers, directors, choreographers, designers and stage managers. <http://www.ntcp.org>

ONSTAGE: The Performer's Resource offers listings of stage and screen auditions, a national database of theater and live entertainment production companies, links to organizations (including unions), publications, services (such as photographers, duplication and promotional services), and training, and classified ads for rentals and sublets, miscellaneous for sale items, and other jobs. <http://www.onstage.org>

PerformInk, a bi-weekly trade paper for the theater and film industries in Chicago, charges a fee for website audition notices. Articles of more general interest are available for free on the site, including regular columns discussing specific facets of business and unique to the performing arts, such as tax and financial matters and the legal side of filmmaking. <http://www.performink.com>

Playbill lists academic, administrative, design, internship, performer, real estate, and technical casting calls and job openings on its site <http://www.playbill.com/jobs/find/>.

The Screen Actors Guild union offers two free publications: "Everything you always wanted to know about working with performers with disabilities but were afraid to ask," and "Everything production needs to know when performers with disabilities are hired." <http://www.sag.org/disabilityfaqs.html>

ShowBizJobs.com lists jobs in many areas of the entertainment industry, searchable by region, job category, minimum salary, keyword, company, or industry. The site also includes links to free

career research services offered by partners. Premium fee-based services include resume posting, saving searches, and tracking responses to job listings. <http://www.showbizjobs.com>

3 - DANCE

Career Transition for Dancers offers career counseling and scholarships for education and retraining free-of-charge to current and former professional dancers who can demonstrate having earned their livelihood from performing as dancers. <http://www.careertransition.org>

DanceArt.com offers free message boards where job listings and audition notices are posted. Go to <http://www.danceart.com>, click on "List the Boards;" then click on "Audition Notices" or "Jobs Available."

Dance/USA posts job and audition announcements as a free service on its website. Its fee-based members-only bulletin includes up-to-date job openings, auditions, and funding and fellowship opportunities. <http://www.danceusa.org/ourmembers/auditions.htm>

Voice of Dance offers free message boards. Go to <http://www.voiceofdance.org> and click on "Jobs" or "Auditions" for free listings.

4 - FILM, RADIO, AND TELEVISION

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists union local offices offer programs including publication of talent guides which are distributed to local producers, agents and casting directors; scheduling of conservatories or seminars which help members improve skills, write resumes and develop audition techniques; on-going seminars where members meet casting directors, agents and others who hire talent; and casting hotlines and bulletin boards listing job opportunities. <http://www.aftra.org>

Entertainment Careers offers both free and fee-based job, internship, and no/low/deferred pay listings and career information in the entertainment industry, including entertainment jobs and internships listings at studios, networks, production companies, record companies, radio stations, VFX, animation, and broadcasting. The site is searchable by category, region, or state and includes a free e-mail subscription. Fee-based membership includes 24 hour advance listings and daily e-mail alerts. <http://www.entertainmentcareers.net>

The Film, TV, & Commercial Employment Network provides free information and sells print resources to individuals interested in pursuing a career in the entertainment industry, both behind and in front of the camera. Includes job postings and lists job hotlines for talent and crew. <http://www.employnow.com>

The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Job Bank offers free job listings from television companies at <http://jobbank.emmyonline.org>.

TVandRadioJobs.com offers job listings in radio, television, film, and music for performers and behind the scenes support at <http://www.tvandradiojobs.com>.

5 - MEDIA ARTS

The Bay Area Video Coalition posts unsolicited job listings it receives from media companies nationwide. The site is updated daily (Monday through Friday). For those in the San Francisco

area, BAVC also offers career workshops and classes.
<http://www.bavc.org/resources/jobs/index.htm>

The Corporation on Disabilities and Telecommunication's mission is to promote and support performers, artists, and media makers with disabilities. CDT offerings include art and media employment referrals to CDT members and networking with other mainstream organizations in art and media. <http://www.madknight.com/cdt>

The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture lists job openings in the media arts, including film, video, audio, and digital. <http://www.namac.org/Announce/index.html>

The University Film and Video Association, for professionals and institutions involved in the production and study of film, video, and newer media arts, offers production grants for students and other producers and organizes a student film and video festival. Active members have access to job listings on-line. A reduced membership rate is offered for students.
<http://www.ufva.org>

6 - MUSIC

The American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada offers audition ads seeking union members, updated the first of each month. Union members can also take advantage of local job referral programs. <http://www.afm.org>

The American Guild of Organists offers AGO Positions Available Online at <http://www.agohq.org/profession/newjobs.html>.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) posts listings for employers seeking union members at <http://www.ascap.com/jobline/jobline.html>.

The Berklee College of Music offers career resources and links at <http://www.berklee.edu/careers/resources.html>. The college's site also lists music related associations.

ClassicWeb lists orchestra vacancies and music jobs at <http://www.classicweb.com/Jobs.htm>.

The Coalition for Disabled Musicians is a nonprofit organization of musicians with disabilities. It produces and performs music, conducts workshops, promotes community awareness, develops adaptive techniques to address physical limitations, and maintains a National Referral Service connecting disabled musicians around the nation and the world. <http://www.disabled-musicians.org>, or for text only <http://www.disabled-musicians.org/textonly.htm>

The College Music Society has a free directory of music presentation organizations at <http://www.music.org/InfoEdMusic/performanceorg.idc>.

GigMasters.com is a searchable on-line database of gigging musicians in numerous genres. It is fee-based for musicians seeking to be listed in the database. For more info go to <http://www.gigmasters.com/aboutus.asp>.

Harmony Central (r) has a free musician wanted/available search service on its site at <http://www.harmony-central.com>. Click on "Browse Musician Ads."

The Indiana University School of Music Job Placement site offers listings at <http://www.music.indiana.edu/som/placement>.

Music Business Solutions offers a free resource directory at <http://www.mbsolutions.com/resource>. To read the bi-monthly *Music Biz Insight*, or for a free e-mail subscription, go to <http://www.mbsolutions.com/biz>. Back issues are posted here and can be searched by topic.

For *MusiCentral* Music Classifieds, go to <http://www.musiccentral.com/Classifieds>.

The Musicians' Exchange, a site by Jake Sibley, offers industry career advice and job links at <http://www.musicians.about.com/library/musicjobs/bljobsmain.htm>.

For *The Musicians Network (r) Bulletin Board*, go to <http://www.musiciansnetwork.com/mnet/bullbrd.htm>. Listings are e-mailed to paying members.

The New England Conservatory's NEC Job Bulletin is a bimonthly e-mail job listing newsletter for musicians. It includes employment opportunities in performance, music teaching (higher education and K-12), and arts administration; listings of competitions, festivals and apprenticeship programs; grants, workshops and conferences; and information for musicians about the music business, job search techniques, and other resources. NEC also offers fee-based Music Career Handouts. <http://careerservices@newenglandconservatory.edu/career/jobbltn.html>

7 - THEATER

The American Association of Community Theatre lists jobs in community theaters at <http://www.aact.org>. Click on Job Listings.

ArtSEARCH is a fee-based service of the Theatre Communications Group. Online and paper subscriptions are available. *ArtSEARCH* lists jobs in theaters and performing arts centers, summer festivals, academic institutions, dance companies, opera companies, symphony orchestras, museums, arts councils, and other arts organizations. Members can create and save a job search profile. Go to <http://www.tcg.org> and click on ArtSEARCH.

THEatre SERVICE provides its print subscribers with theater job listings, employment and referral services, marketing contacts for college theater programs, and management services for professional associations. Each monthly issue is mailed first-class to subscribers. To subscribe, go to <http://www.theatre-service.com/job.htm>.

8 - THEATER - BACKSTAGE

Backstage Jobs, formerly known as The Theatre Design & Technical Jobs Page, is a free site maintained by Patrick Hudson for designers, playwrights, dramaturgs, directors, technical crew, managers, administrators, and interns. Listings also include touring shows and concerts, jobs in rental and production shops, educational institutions, and large calls. The site also lists freelance designers, directors and technicians, sorted by geographic area. It also offers an optional fee-based e-mail subscription mailing list with advance notice of job postings. <http://www.backstagejobs.com/jobs.htm>

The Entertainment Services & Technology Association, a non-profit trade association representing the North American entertainment technology industry, hosts a free job board at <http://www.esta.org/jobboard/index.html>.

PropPeople.com is a free job board hosted by Sean McArdle.
<http://www.proppeople.com/jobboard.htm>

Stage Specs Online offers free job listings and a free e-mail newsletter at
<http://www.stagespecs.com/jobs.cfm>.

MENTORSHIPS ADVANCE CAREERS IN THE ARTS

This past year the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Education Office on Special Education Programs and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts implemented the second year of the Careers in the Arts Initiative Mentoring (CAIM) program. The program provides support to arts and arts service organization, so that they can create experiential educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities who are interested in pursuing a professional career in the arts.

Through the CAIM program arts organizations offers these individuals the opportunity to work in a professional arts or arts service environment and be mentored by a working arts professional. The program aims to help these individuals develop professionally and to build experiences and resume credit, which will enhance their potential for future competitive employment.

To date 28 individuals have participated in the CAIM program. We spoke with a couple of these budding artists and their supervisors to find out how their experiences with the CAIM program went.

Brian Balcom of Minneapolis was mentored at the Guthrie Theater, where he was supervised by John Miller-Stephany, Associate Artistic Director. Brian has a Bachelor's degree in directing from Carnegie-Mellon University, and at the Guthrie he served as assistant director on two productions. He was given a wide range of responsibilities, including script work, planning the logistics of moving props and furniture and developing underscoring with the guitarist who performed in one of the productions. "I would go off with her and we would work for about an hour and come up with some ideas," he says. "That was my greatest participation."

Asked to name the most important thing he learned at the Guthrie, Brian recalls the lesson in patience he received when the playwright attended rehearsals for one of the shows. "She had very poor rehearsal etiquette. She would interrupt people and give people acting notes. I might have been tempted to slap her, but my director was very patient, tolerant and collaborative. He listened to her and served as a buffer between her and the actors. That really impressed me."

Brian is a paraplegic who uses a wheelchair, and that posed some difficulties in getting around the theater. He found three routes to the rehearsal space -- all of them circuitous. But, the administrative offices were inaccessible.

John Miller-Stephany agrees that the theater building, constructed in the early '60s, is not very accessible. He also notes that the Guthrie had to find an accessible apartment for Brian. But, Miller-Stephany considers the effort well spent. "I've been very impressed by Brian's commitment, intelligence and work ethic," he says. "He's an amazing guy."

Miller-Stephany believes that Brian has benefited professionally by being at one of the premiere theaters in the country and having access to the theater-making process at the right hand of

experienced directors. As for Brian's potential for success, he notes, "It's a very difficult field. He has enormous potential and all the right ingredients. But the market is the market, so who knows what's going to happen? I feel that he stands as good a chance as anybody and a better chance than most."

Brian himself is uncertain of his next steps. He has sent out letters and resumes to several theaters and is talking with some old classmates about starting a children's theater in San Francisco. He says, "In school, they have a whole course for actors about how to get jobs, but they don't have a course for directors about how to get jobs." Yet, he's facing the future with optimism and a lot of good experience under his belt.

Sarah LeFeber was mentored in the costume shop of the Skylight Opera Theatre in her hometown of Milwaukee under the direction of Jeffrey Olson, Costume Shop Manager. She had been a visual artist for most of her a life but had always loved theater. When she was at Middlebury College she took a costume design course just for fun and ended up loving it. "The amazing thing was that it gave me a way of combining my love of art, my love of theater and my love of art history into a career," she says.

Sarah assisted the design team on two productions. She helped pick items out of stock, went shopping, sewed and dyed. Then she got the chance to design her own costumes for another production -- The Fantasticks. "That was a lot of fun."

Asked what she learned, Sarah cites the chance to talk with other designers about what to take notes on in dress rehearsals and where to go to find different items. "They gave me all these web sites and business cards of their favorite stores," she remembers. But, what stands out most for her is the difference between the reality of designing in the theater, as opposed to doing class exercises. "There's so much more compromise involved. In the theater, your costumes have to really work, and they have to fit in with the vision of three other people."

Sarah, like Brian, is a paraplegic who uses a wheelchair, and that did complicate her ability to fulfill her responsibilities. When she went through stock she needed to have someone assist her by climbing up ladders and pulling things down for her. Squeezing through narrow aisles in fabric stores was difficult, and an assistant had to go with her to carry the bolts of fabric that she bought.

Jeffrey Olson acknowledges the time that helping Sarah with these physical tasks required, but he says, "It was worth it!" The thing he most enjoyed about working with Sarah was watching her grow professionally. "I think she has all of the makings of being a very successful costume designer."

Sarah's next stop on her career path is a MFA program in costume design at UCLA.

The RFP for the next round of CAIM grants will be coming out in October. To apply organizations must fill out an application form. E-mail a request for an application to: access@kennedy-center.org. Put "CAIM Application Request" in the subject field, and indicate in the e-mail a preference for having the application e-mailed as an attachment (PDF file), faxed or mailed.

RESOURCES

DANCING DOTS OFFERS MUSIC TECHNOLOGY FOR THE BLIND

Dancing Dots Braille Music Technology, L.P., was founded in 1992 to develop and adapt music technology for the blind. Its president and founder Bill McCann is himself a blind musician and programmer. In 1997 Dancing Dots released its first product, the GOODFEEL® Braille Music Translator. Using GOODFEEL®, combined with a few mainstream products, any sighted musician can prepare a Braille score without needing to be a Braille music specialist.

Today the company is an authorized distributor of a wide range of assistive technology and music products. Blind musicians can independently create sound recordings and printed scores with Cake Talking for SONAR and Sibelius Speaking for Sibelius. Dancing Dots can train blind musicians to use its technology or to learn how to read Braille music. It offers Braille music courses and sells products such as JAWS and Duxbury Braille Translator. In addition Dancing Dots represents many manufacturers of assistive technology and music supplies, including sound cards, MIDI controllers and music software titles.

Contact information

Dancing Dots
1754 Quarry Lane
P.O. Box 927
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19482-0927
Tel: 610-783-6692
Fax: 610-783-6732
Web site: www.dancingdots.com
E-mail: info@dancingdots.com

TECHNOLOGY GRANT NEWS

The Technology Grant News provides advance information on grants, awards, and other philanthropical announcements for technology and the arts, workforce development, teacher professional development and curriculum development. Nonprofits, towns and cities, libraries and museums, and schools and universities are eligible to apply. Some opportunities are applicable to organizations concerned with arts and disability. For instance, the Summer 2003 issue listed grants for universal design and access to the arts. For information on subscribing to Technology Grant News contact:

Web site: <http://www.technologygrantnews.com>
E-mail: service@technologygrantnews.com

NEWS AND NOTES

COALITION FOR INCLUSIVE PERFORMING ARTS TO DISSOLVE

The Coalition for Inclusive Performing Arts (CIPA), formerly known as the Association for Theatre and Disability, has announced that it will dissolve. Citing many examples of progress made in the world of disability culture, the announcement stated that "a great deal of CIPA's original vision has indeed become reality." It also cited the financial and logistical difficulties of fulfilling what in

recent years had come to be its primary function, the organization of an annual national conference.

The announcement concluded with the wish that we "all find whatever ways and means we can to re-commit ourselves, as individuals and as workers within arts and cultural organizations, to the ongoing efforts to make the performing arts community in the United States, and around the globe, fully accessible to and inclusive of all members of the human community."

ACTOR WITH DOWN SYNDROME LAUDED IN RUSSIA

Sergei Makarov, an actor with Down syndrome, broke new ground in Russia when the film in which he stars, "Starukhi" (Old Women), recently won the Golden Rose -- the top honor at Russia's leading national film festival, Kinotavr. Makarov, 37, is the first actor with Down syndrome to ever star in a Russian feature film. His achievement has particular significance in a country where Soviet-era prejudices toward disability are only very slowly dissipating.

Makarov is one of seven actors with Down syndrome who appear at Moskovskovo Teatra Prostodushnikh (Moscow's Theater for Simple Souls), founded four years ago by actor and director Igor Neupokoyev. Makarov says he hopes his role in the film will combat misconceptions about those with Down syndrome. He waved the gold statuette aloft in a gesture of triumph when the win was announced at Kinotavr's closing ceremony. Saima Makarova, the actor's mother, who helps interpret his speech, because he has a speech impediment, says the film's success is not only important to her son but also to the ongoing efforts of the Moskovskovo theater to continue to break down stereotypes.

Vida Johnson of Tufts University, a professor of Russian and an expert on Russian film, said the film sends a powerful message. "It's important that Makarov's character is not just a poster boy for Down syndrome, but is integrated into the plot of the film," said Johnson. "He acted the role very well, and that is important when people see the ability of someone with disabilities who acts not only normally but performs in a way superior to many actors without disabilities."

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