



False Creeds directed by Wendy C. Goldberg, Alliance Theatre at the Woodruff

## NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*I yield the floor. I can't think of anything to say that is as remotely inspiring or as important or as heartfelt as **Jonathan Moscone's** remarks as he accepted the inaugural Zelda Fichandler Award in Los Angeles on Sunday evening, December 6th. A year ago a contingent of LA Members asked that we make sure the 50th Anniversary Celebration had a lasting impact and one that recognized the work of directors and choreographers nationally. With leadership from **Michael John Garcés, Tom Moore** and the entire Executive Board, SDCF proudly established this important award. With Jon's permission I share his remarks with you:*

I have been having such a hard time writing this speech. And I can write a speech. I've written hundreds. Words come easily to me. But I cannot write anything now that sounds, I don't know, authentic. I think I know why. Because this award, named for **Zelda Fichandler** and given to me by **Gordon Davidson** (two looming figures, no question) is for "transforming the regional arts landscape" through singular creativity and artistry. Here's the thing; I have never been remotely comfortable thinking of myself as an artist. I am a director and an artistic director. That's how I define myself and I have religiously held firm the belief that my job is to make it possible for others to be artists, and to contribute to the making of art.

But I take enormous pride in that.

I take pride in being able to lure directors and designers to California Shakespeare Theater, with not a lot of money, but with a total commitment to making a nurturing environment for risk to be taken. By "risk" I don't mean "edge." I mean the risk of being authentic.

I take pride in the actors I work with. I am a tough director; rigorous, eagle-eyed, pushing like a sports coach, a conductor without a baton, but always aware that the most important thing on stage is what's happening psychologically, emotionally and physically between two people. And that the actors I work with get turned on by that—well, I think that brings out the artist in them.

I take pride in making it possible for people to make a living as arts administrators and artisans. With health benefits. To provide insurance for people, and growth opportunities and a challenging,

rigorous, humor-filled work environment—that brings out the best in them whether they like it or not.

I take pride in being able to talk frankly to my Board about what it means to put on plays; that success is never guaranteed, but genuine feeling and complex thought are. They get it and support it. They also get that our facilities are falling apart and that artists, as well as patrons, deserve better. They raised the money to rebuild.

I am proud to have a partner and a staff that thinks what I believe in is worth working their asses off for, that they share in the vision, and that they make that vision a daily reality in the scrappy way that has come to define our company.

I take pride in having had a father who taught me that the doors should be open for anyone who wants to come in. Which is what theatre is; a place where everyone belongs.

I am proud, too, to have worked for Joe Papp, whose mythic ego was matched only by the same belief held by my father, George. Only for Joe, it was about theatre and Shakespeare. It was for everyone. He drummed that into me. I remember Joe walking out at the end of a production of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at the Public, directed by Joanne Akalitis, with sets by George Tsypin and music by Philip Glass, featuring a lisping, brilliant Joan Cusack as Imogen. He stopped, turned to all of us (his entourage) and proclaimed,

"That is how you do American Shakespeare." And then he kept walking.

Almost 15 years later, I sat in the audience at our theatre, which is outdoors, and watched our own production of *Cymbeline*, directed by Daniel Fish. The God Jupiter was played by a wheelchair-bound



ABOVE LEFT: Jonathan Moscone ABOVE RIGHT: Moscone, Laura Penn  
BOTTOM Tom Moore, Jonathan Moscone, Gordon Davidson

Jazz singer, and he sang his invocation courtesy of composer Gina Leishman, bathed in Scott Zielinski's blue light from one HMI (which was the entire set and lighting budget). As he exited, the actor popped a wheely—yes, a wheely—and as they watched him go, the entire company, who had been onstage to hear the incantation, responded quietly, en masse, with Shakespeare's "Thanks, Jupiter." Then in a feat of pure magic, each actor released a small ball of fire from his and her palm, and the blue light that bathed the stage disappeared and was replaced by a blue square of light that appeared above the stage, framing one of our lighting towers where it remained for the rest of the production. This, courtesy of Set Designer, Christine Jones.

And at that moment, I thought this is how you do American Shakespeare. I didn't pronounce it to anyone (I don't have an entourage), I just felt it.

To be American is to have freedom of speech, and for us to do American Shakespeare now demands freedom of expression and diversity of thought. And at that moment, that beautiful moment (and there have been a few others on our stage), I felt my father and Joe in me. And I knew then that being an Artistic Director was the greatest job I could ever hope for.

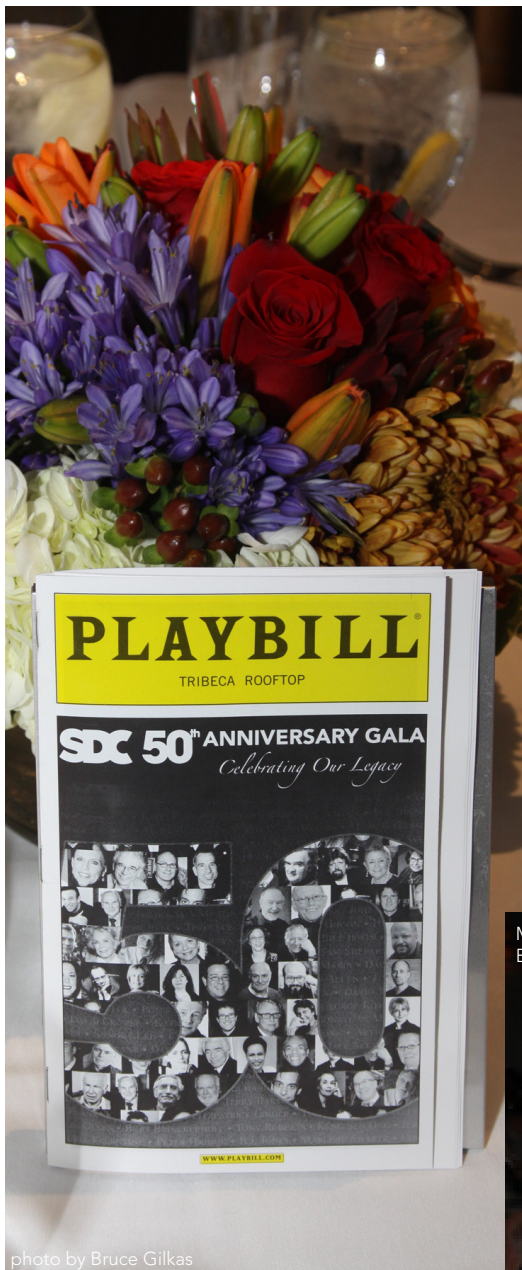
It's hard for me to think of myself as an artist, but tonight I will shed my Catholic fear and own up to it. By making it possible for others to be artists—whether they are on our main stage or in classrooms or in communities new to us, and perhaps to theatre itself—I guess that is a form of artistry.

And I accept this award for that artistry. Although I'm not a bad director, that's not what I'm on this earth. And to get this inaugural award in recognition for my work as an artistic director, just sends me all the right messages about what I chose to do. I joke that this is my "as close to my Tony Award" award. As such I would like to thank God, my mother and my agents at ICM. But really, I wouldn't want any other kind of award than this, because I think what I get to do and where I get to do it makes a real, genuine, authentic difference in the lives of a lot of people, not the least of whom is myself.

Thank you.

*Jonathan Moscone*

*P.S. - Next year the Foundation will recognize a Director or Choreographer from the Midwest. Stay posted for details including guidelines and nomination process. Location and date of announcement TBA.*



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

by Karina Miller, Director of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Initiative

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season and a very happy New Year. I wanted to take a moment to wrap up SDC's 50th

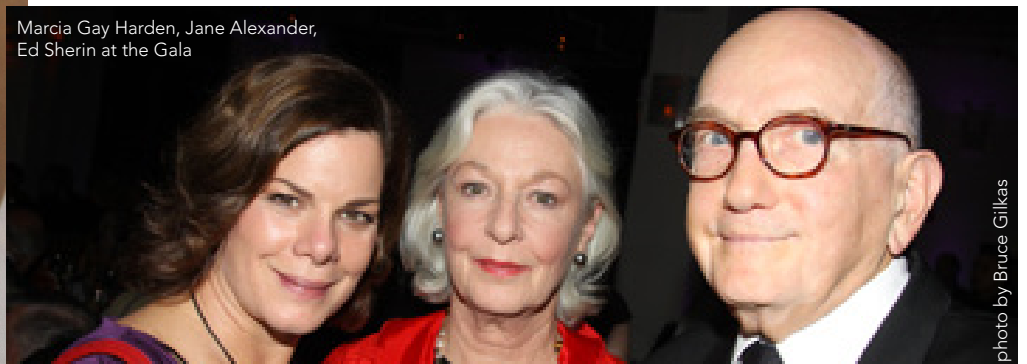
Anniversary and thank you all for inviting me to join the SDC family, for what ended up being a very eventful year.

Speaking of events... I wanted to report on the 50th Anniversary Gala and the 50th Anniversary event in Los Angeles. First of all, neither of these spectacular events could have happened without the dedication of SDC President **Karen Azenberg** and my 50th Anniversary Initiative Co-Chairs **Larry Carpenter** and **Tom Moore**. Along with **Bill Castellino**, **Art Manke** and **Douglas Clayton** and countless other Member volunteers and the Staff – Karen, Larry and Tom's leadership over the last year and especially during the Gala and the LA Event were unprecedented.

The Gala was held on November 8th at the Tribeca Rooftop in New York City. It was a beautiful evening – with a star-studded sky and a star-studded room of our most illustrious Members and collaborators. The speakers included **Karen Azenberg**, Jude Law, **Daniel Sullivan**, **Tom Moore**, **Bartlett Sher**, Katie Holmes, **Oz Scott**, Laura Penn, Marcia Gay Harden, **Larry Carpenter** and Jane Alexander. The date marked the inauguration of the Zelda Fichandler Award and there was a fascinating Legacy "round-robin" of sorts that tracked the Legacy of SDC from its founders all the way to its newest Members and Associates. The program ended with a medley of songs from Broadway Musicals on stage in 1959 performed by Stephen Buntrock, Raul Espanza, Montego Glover, Cheyenne Jackson, Debra Monk and Jill Paice and staged by **Kathleen Marshall** and **Rob Ashford**.

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Marcia Gay Harden, Jane Alexander, Ed Sherin at the Gala





TOP: West Coast 50th Anniversary event; LEFT: Douglas Clayton, Art Manke; BELOW from left to right: Mauro Melleno, Tom Moore, Laura Penn, Kitty McNamee, Paul Lazarus, Karen Azenberg (photos by © Ryan Miller/Capture Imaging)



## HAPPY NEW YEAR! continued

The night ended on high note with 'Art-attack' performances choreographed by Members and a dance party with music by DJ Jo Lambert.

Less than a month later, on the opposite coast, our West Coast Membership celebrated the 50th Anniversary. This event was co-chaired by **Douglas Clayton** and **Art Manke** and included the presentation of the inaugural Zelda Fichandler Award to **Jonathan Moscone** from CalShakes. Presentations included moving tributes from **Tom Moore** and **Gordon Davidson** and an engaging acceptance speech from Mr. Moscone (see section one for a transcript). The entire evening was a wonderful homage to the depth of talent and passionate determination embodied by the SDC West Coast Membership.

Thank you again to everyone who made these two events so successful and a big thank you and take care to the entire Membership. I really enjoyed my time here at SDC and wish you all the best.

## WEST COAST MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On December 7, 2009 SDC President **Karen Azenberg**, Executive Director **Laura Penn**, Director of Contract Administration **Mauro Melleno** and SDC-League Funds Administrator **John Everson** held a Membership meeting at the AEA offices in Hollywood. Despite the dreary rain soaked day, nineteen L.A. based Directors and Choreographers attended. Among those present were Executive Board members **Tom Moore** and **Ethan McSweeney** and SDC Pension and Health Trustee, **Stephen Rothman**.

Laura Penn began the meeting with a wrap-up of the number of activities over the last year celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Union. Many of the Members attending the meeting had been present at the West Coast Celebration held the prior evening.

The Membership engaged in discussions on a number of issues including the state of our pension and health funds, the new Tier contract, the number of shows staged in L.A.'s 99 seat Equity-waiver theatres, and the desire of Directors and Choreographers to continue the sense of community fostered over the 50th Anniversary year. Members suggested meeting more often to discuss issues that are affecting the craft, the industry and ultimately their employment.

In support of the Membership, SDC will continue to hold bi-annual Membership meetings in Los Angeles as well as continuing to organize the area theatres, and support such programs as Director's Lab West.



– West Side Story directed by Karen Azenberg, Alabama Shakespeare Theatre

## OUR UNION: SDC WELCOMES LINDA HARTZELL TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



The SDC Executive Board and Staff are thrilled to welcome the newest Executive Board Member, **Linda Hartzell**

**Linda Hartzell** has been the Artistic Director of Seattle Children's Theatre and its Education Programs since 1984. She received her BA in Education from the University of Washington, and was a recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award from UW College of Arts and Sciences in 1994. She has directed more than 45 plays for SCT, over 35 of which were world premieres, including *Busytown*, *Addy: An American Girl Story*, *Goodnight Moon*, *When I Grow Up I'm Going to Get Me Some Big Words*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and *Holes*. She recently directed *The Grapes of Wrath* at Intiman Theatre, and the Australian premiere of *Afternoon of the Elves* for Adelaide's Windmill Performing Arts and the Sydney Theatre Company. Linda was formerly on the board of Theatre Communications Group, and she is a former vice president of the United States Center for the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (TYA/USA). Among her recent honors are the prestigious Gregory Falls Sustained Achievement Award from Theatre Puget Sound in 2001, the Mayor's Arts Award in 2006, and ArtsFund's Outstanding Achievement in the Arts award in 2009. Linda has been instrumental in developing Connecting Stories, a cross-cultural exchange program with theatre artists in the U.S., The Netherlands, Syria and Iran.

## MEMBER SERVICES UPDATE

by Gretchen M. Michelfeld, Membership Coordinator



The November and December Director/Choreographer Networking Meetings were a lot of fun. In November we welcomed special guests **Ari Laura Kreith** (freelance director and Artistic Director of the Jackson Repertory Theatre), Carrie Dubois and Melissa Kalt (Programming Manager and Friends Program Manager of the New Victory Theatre), and Taro Alexander (Founder and Director of Our Time Theatre Company) for a special discussion about Children's Theatre. The group agreed on three things: 1. Children's Theatre has the potential to be the most theatrical and compelling work out there. 2. Dumbing things down for children is a practice that gives Children's Theatre a bad name. 3. Theatre for Young Audiences provides unique career opportunities for all kinds of artists. Stay tuned for more on this topic in 2010!

December's DCN was a fabulous holiday party complete with snacks, wine and wonderful connections. Several Members stayed late to help your frazzled Membership Coordinator clean up, and the fabulous **Gary John LaRosa** even escorted me home on the subway! Thanks guys!

We look forward to continuing the dialogue in the New Year. The next Director/Choreographer Networking Meeting will take place on Tuesday January 26th at 6pm and the topic will be "Hyphenates." What are the unique challenges and rewards of being an Actor-Director, Dancer-Choreographer, Writer-Director, Composer-Performer-Director (you get the picture)? Come meet your fellow hyphens for a lively conversation. RSVP to [GMichelfeld@SDCweb.org](mailto:GMichelfeld@SDCweb.org).

**Remember:** DCN's are the last Tuesday of every month. More topics TBA.



## BROADWAY AGREEMENT REACHED

SDC and the Broadway League have reached a new three year agreement terminating August 31, 2011.

The Union's primary focus going into these talks was the impact of recording rehearsals under the new Media rules set by other unions and the ever increasing cost of health insurance. The contract provides protections in the areas of new media as well as significant gains for Broadway Directors and Choreographers in terms of health contributions by Employers.

Our successes in these negotiations are tied directly to Broadway Directors and Choreographers solidarity and their willingness to demonstrate their unity. The Members provided clear and consistent guidance to the Committee at critical times throughout, particularly early on as the major issues and tone were being set for the talks.

Following are some of the salient terms of the new SDC/League Agreement:

- Health contributions – by the end of the contract weekly contributions will increase by as much as 43% (including retroactivity to 9/1/08 for shows still running)
- Increases in fees for the second and third year of the agreement (2% and 2.5%) and increases in weekly royalty minimums beginning July '10 (3%)
- Increases in pension contributions in the second and third year (2% and 2.5%)
- Promotional Media provisions. Until now the Broadway agreement has been silent on Media and Promotion. Our Members are keenly aware of the role of new Media in the promotion of Broadway productions. We are pleased to have established terms for Directors and Choreographers participation in ensuring live theatre has a high profile in all electronic mediums while maintaining protections for SDC Members' work particularly as it pertains to the capturing of footage within the rehearsal hall and guaranteed notification of any capture of performance.
- Producers are also now required to negotiate additional terms for distribution of electronic reproductions beyond the initial broadcast.
- In order to achieve these gains we responded to some of the League's proposals most particularly with respect to the

evolution of Broadway Touring.

- SDC provided options for producing subsequent productions that behave more like sit downs than traditional tours. In cases where a tour is scheduled to sit down for more than 12 weeks the producer now has the option of using the Broadway provisions (including fee and advance schedule) or the Touring provisions.
- The Union provided some additional discounts for what is now referred to as the Short Engagement Tours (SET) as established by AEA as well as sit downs in houses of 500 seats or less.

Finally SDC and the League have agreed to create a standing committee comprised of League and Union Members to engage in dialogue between now and the next negotiations to explore concepts for new and mutually beneficial compensation structures that would enhance the industry.

Along with Executive Director Laura Penn, the Staff and legal counsel, Ronald H. Shechtman, the SDC Negotiating Committee Members **Susan H. Schulman**, **Kathleen Marshall**, **Walter Bobbie** and **Mark Brokaw** spent the better part of the past sixteen months developing strategies, providing leadership and sitting through seemingly endless sessions remaining focused and passionate. They were joined by **Karen Azenberg**, whose keen sensibilities repeatedly served the process well, making a material difference at critical junctures. **Dan Sullivan** and **Doug Hughes** completed the picture providing increased rigor to our thinking. In addition to the above-mentioned Committee Members, over fifty Broadway Directors and Choreographers were involved either by participating in caucuses or providing invaluable counsel; a true demonstration of strength and solidarity.

For more information regarding the newly negotiated collectively bargained agreement, including Fee/Royalty and Employer Pension/Health contribution rates, please call the SDC office. The "Contracts" section of our website will be updated soon.



*False Creeds* directed by Wendy C. Goldberg, Alliance Theatre at the Woodruff

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

by Evan Shoemake, SDC Contract Administrator



A well-known, pint size muppet said once upon a time, "It's not easy being green." Well, he probably knows first-hand about the challenges and while it may not be easy being green, it's certainly necessary. Hopefully by this point we're all aware that we're not actually speaking of skin pigmentation but actually being environmentally conscious.

As we're all painfully aware, the earth that we inhabit is not in great shape and is clearly not responding well to the effects of aging and human use and abuse. Recognizing the importance of taking steps to ensure the preservation of our world, the Broadway theatre community came together in June 2008 to create the Broadway Green Alliance (BGA), an organization dedicated to "working to educate and inspire environmental action among theatre professionals and audiences." The BGA is comprised of representatives from across the theatre industry spectrum and representing SDC is Tony-nominated Director/Choreographer **John Carrafa**.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with John during his recent stint in Los Angeles where he's been working on episodes of *Big Love* in between providing choreography for *The Other Guys* with Will Farrell and Mark Wahlberg and hustling back to NYC for work on *Ugly Betty*.

### What is the Broadway Green Alliance and how did you get involved?

The Broadway Green Alliance is an organization that started in 2008 and brings together all segments of the theatre community, including producers, theatres in New York and around the country, theatrical unions and their members, and related businesses. The organization works with the Natural Resources Defense Council, and identifies and disseminates better practices for theatre professionals and reaches out to theatre fans throughout the country. I was asked by SDC to serve as the representative for Directors and Choreographers and I accepted because I feel strongly about the environment and the impact we are having. The things that get me the most are the rainforest deforestation, how climate change is affecting the natural environment and the animals.

### Is the green push, all the green initiatives that seem to have arisen over the past couple of years, just a passing fad or do you think we are truly making an impact and these initiatives are going to last?

I think it's going to become mandatory; people will be forced to drive less, and people will be forced to make choices about driving vs. carpooling. The environment is going to change so drastically and quickly that people will be forced to do it. People don't really believe it but it's become obvious that it has to happen. America is the 2nd biggest polluter in the world.

The most important thing to remember is that each person can do a little and if everybody does that it adds up. There are so many small things that people are doing, recycling water bottles at a show, rechargeable batteries for microphone packs, all these little things take an effort. It's hard to make that effort because what does turning off one switch do but the whole point is the impact is huge.

There is a symbolic aspect that if Broadway does this the word will get out so it's more than Broadway using less energy, it's Broadway setting a good example.

I've worked at the Goodman and ACT and theatres across the country are adopting green practices. Each places their own set of rules but I think because Broadway established it it helps other theatres do it too.

### Can you tell us some things the theatre community has been employing to "go green" that people may not know?

Some of the changes are what some may consider obscure stuff such as when an actor goes on for someone else. Instead of printing multiple pieces of paper for each substitute actor, we are now working toward limiting it to one sheet of paper. Another example is what the Broadway Green Alliance has done for the Tony Awards - Playbills were printed on recycled paper and there was a recycled red carpet. Other current green practices employed by participating productions include use of water filtration systems, turning off and unplugging electrical devices, and limited paper and battery usage backstage. Almost every production running on Broadway has self-selected a "Green Captain" who shares the BGA's findings with their fellow cast and crew members. Many of the Green Captains at various shows have initiated their own energy curtailment and waste reduction initiatives, which have been spreading from show to show.

## Do you have any suggestions for Directors and Choreographers on simple ways they can make their productions/work environments more "green?"

The Director is the one who can lead the way when they start a production. Do we need to print so many copies of scripts, can we use electronic scripts, what kind of cups do we use in rehearsal, etc. Directors can set the tone and just say hey let's go green. In fact, I ask the question for every show I work on. I've never had any pushback and in fact, most people already say they're doing their green practices.

People can also go to [www.broadwaygreen.com](http://www.broadwaygreen.com) and find numerous ways they can be more environmentally aware, some of which include: put someone in your operation in charge of green procedures as a resource for all your employees and clients, encourage scenic, costume and lighting shops to use recycled materials, ensure that any waste produced is sent to a local recycling facility, offer designers ways to re-purpose sets and costumes from previous productions, encourage producers and general managers to recycle sets and costumes upon the closing of a show, beginning with the first call to the actors and staff regarding schedule and location of rehearsals, let them know that greener practices will be incorporated into the production on the first day of rehearsal, point out the ways that the production will be working to implement better green practices.

## What are some of the upcoming projects/events/initiatives?

We celebrated the one-year anniversary of BGA with an event that I was responsible for, an E-Waste Event held in Duffy Square December 16. The event was arranged to allow people to deposit electronic waste such as broken cell phones, computers, printers and dry batteries for safe disposal and recycling. The event included Broadway cast members and informative speeches about e-waste and the BGA.

It was a lot of work to get people to commit their time, to come perform in Times Square because there are a lot of causes that the (Broadway) community supports and "oh here's one more." It's a lot of work to get people excited and show them it really matters. However, it seems to be making an impact. Based on statistical information from the BGA website, of 8 Broadway shows that closed in January 2009, 88% of scenery was recycled or reused, thirty-eight Broadway theatres that converted to energy efficient lamps on their marquees are expected to save two million kilowatt hours a year, 77% of touring productions recycle playbills, 81% recycle backstage materials, and 82% have a set/prop recycling program. In terms of the Broadway shows, 100% have backstage recycling, 89% use cold water for costume laundry, and 77% switched from paper to digital communications.

For additional information about upcoming events everyone should visit the BGA website, [www.broadwaygreen.com](http://www.broadwaygreen.com).



**John Carrafa** is a dancer and choreographer. He has been nominated for the Tony Award twice. He performed with the Twyla Tharp Company for ten years after graduation.

His work on Broadway began as a performer and assistant to choreographer Twyla Tharp for the stage musical version of *Singin' in the Rain* (1985). He did the choreography for the dramatic play *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (1994), and recently both choreographed and directed *Good Vibrations* (2005). His two Tony Award nominations were for his choreography for the revival of *Into the Woods* (2001) and *Urinetown* (2002), for which he also received a Drama Desk nomination and is the winner of the Obie Award and Lucille Lortel Award. He has done choreography for many films, among them *The Thomas Crown Affair*, and for television, including *Sex and the City* (HBO).

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS SDC?

### SOUTH FLORIDA!

by Randy Anderson, Contract Administrator



In December 2009, the Theatre League of South Florida held its Annual Meeting and I was there to talk to theatre managers, SDC Members and future SDC Members about our Union's role in the region. There are over 100 theatres of various sizes in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties alone and this meeting was a great opportunity to reach a large cross section of

theatre-makers in that region. SDC has built some great relationships with theatres on both the East and West coasts of the state and we will continue to build on those as we forge new relationships. Building on our 50th Anniversary Initiative, we're working hard to raise the profile of the organization, expand our presence, and strengthen the Union. If you live or work in the South Florida area and want to help with this organizing effort, contact me ([RAnderson@SDCweb.org](mailto:RAnderson@SDCweb.org)). The more Members participate, the stronger we become.



– West Side Story directed by Karen Azenberg, Alabama Shakespeare Theatre

## **FOUNDATION UPDATE: Fichandler Award and Guest Artist Initiative**

by Ellen Rusconi, SDCF Associate Director



In spring of 2009, SDCF thoroughly assessed its programming. In our assessment, we noted the strength of our programs aimed at emerging directors and choreographers – notably our Observership and Fellowship programs – and our programs celebrating our longtime, established Members – the “Mr. Abbott” Award for lifetime achievement and “Masters of the Stage.” We decided to focus our new programming on

offering additional opportunities to SDC Member Directors and Choreographers who are in the midst of their careers, those Members who have forged a career path and may benefit from finding new outlets or added recognition.

This focus led us to administer two new programs in the fall of 2009, the Zelda Fichandler Award and The Guest Artist Initiative, both concentrating on our Members in mid-career.

### **THE ZELDA FICHANDLER AWARD**

**Jonathan Moscone** of California Shakespeare was awarded the inaugural Zelda Fichandler Award. **Gordon Davidson** presented Jonathan with the Award at the West Coast Celebration on December 6. You can read his acceptance speech in its entirety in the “From the Desk Of the Executive Director” column in this Newsletter.

SDCF created the Zelda Fichandler Award to recognize a director or choreographer transforming the regional arts landscape through his or her work in theatre. This is not a lifetime achievement award; it is an award to recognize accomplishment to date and promise for the future.

Named after **Zelda Fichandler**, one of the founders of the American regional theatre movement, the Award celebrates prominent achievement in the field, singular creativity and artistry, and a deep investment in a particular place outside of New York City. In establishing this Award, SDCF recognizes the profound impact of the founders of regional theatre and honors their legacy.

Our Selection Committee, comprised of eight theatre professionals (Members and non-Members), chose Jonathan from 46 nominated artists. The selection process was inherently difficult as many of the nominees met all of the criteria of this Award. It became clear throughout the selection and nomination process that this is a well-needed award and is coming too late; several of the nominees

have been deeply committed to their region, creating brave, transformative work in their community for decades.

The Award will be given regionally on a rotating basis. This year, it was awarded to a director or choreographer working in theatre in the Western region. In subsequent years the Award will honor achievement in the Eastern, Central, and Southern regions.

Please visit the Fichandler page of the Foundation section of [SDCweb.org](http://SDCweb.org) this spring for more information on the nomination process in 2010.

### **GUEST ARTIST INITIATIVE**

SDCF’s Guest Artist Initiative Program, a grant program for American colleges and universities to encourage the hiring of professional stage directors and choreographers as guest artists, is also new in 2009. Through the program, SDCF will assist schools in finding SDC Member Directors and Choreographers in good standing to serve as Guest Artists and will provide up to \$5000 in matching funds for the Guest Artist’s fee. In addition, we aim to forge new relationships between universities and directors and choreographers, and facilitate the process of hiring a professional director or choreographer as a Guest Artist.

An SDCF panel comprised of professional directors and choreographers, arts administrators, and college educators selected two productions from our proposals received to be awarded grants. SDCF will assist an additional two productions in finding a Guest Artist, without further funding.

The announcement process has taken much longer than expected. Between October 15 (the application deadline) and now, many schools have had their budgets drastically cut, eliminating the possibility of hiring a professional Guest Artist, or forcing a school to alter their production choices, so we have had to essentially review new proposals from the selected schools.

I’m happy to be able to finally report that the top grant is awarded to Arizona State University for a fall 2010 production of “Big Love.” Arizona State was the panel’s initial selection; we were very impressed with their program and their proposal, and although they have changed their production selection and schedule, we are able to offer a Guest Artist position on this production in October, 2010.

We will have details of how Full Members can apply for this position and news on the other selections in the very near future (I am just waiting for confirmation that the schools can still support a Guest Artist hire). Please check the Foundation section of the website in the first week of January for more information.

SDCF will then furnish the chosen school with funds of up to \$5000 to match the fee budgeted for the guest artist. SDCF will also provide assistance by soliciting applications from professional stage directors and choreographers who wish to be considered for the project. Only SDC members, in good standing, will be considered for guest artist

positions. All applications will be forwarded to the school and the school will make the ultimate decision.

In addition to this grant of up to \$5000, a second grant of \$1000 will be awarded to the runner-up applicant school.

Executive Director Laura Penn remarks, "One of the most important things that SDCF can do in this environment is to create valuable opportunities for professional directors and choreographers to practice their craft."

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## PENSION AND HEALTH NEWS: Changes to the SDC-League Health Plan

by Funds Administrator, John Everson



*The following summary describes changes to the SDC-League Health Fund's plan of benefits ("the Plan") that will take effect on January 1, 2010 or as otherwise noted below.*

*This summary is intended to satisfy the requirements for issuance of a Summary of Material Modification ("SMM") under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of*

*1974. You should take time to read this material carefully, and keep it with your copy of the Summary Plan Description ("SPD"). If you need another copy of the SPD or if you have any questions regarding these changes to the Plan, please contact the Fund Office at 1501 Broadway, Suite 1701, New York, NY 10036, or by telephone at 212-869-8129, or by email at [Health@SDCweb.org](mailto:Health@SDCweb.org).*

*Despite prudent ongoing management of our resources and relatively favorable investment experience during the past year, the reserves of the Health Fund continue to decline, with expenses exceeding income by a considerable margin. In light of double digit premium increases, the Trustees of the SDC-League Health Fund have agreed that additional changes are necessary to close this gap, and allow us to continue to provide first-rate benefit options for all eligible participants.*

**Effective January 1, 2010 the following changes will be implemented:**

**1. Oxford doctor co-payments:**

Under the Oxford Plan, the co-payment for doctor visits (both primary care physician and specialists) will increase from \$20 to \$25 per visit.

**2. Oxford emergency room co-payments:**

Under the Oxford Plan, the co-payment for an emergency room visit will increase from \$35 to \$100.

**3. Oxford hospital co-payments:**

Under the Oxford Plan, a co-payment of \$50 will be charged for an out-patient hospitalization, and a co-payment of \$100 will be charged for an in-patient hospitalization.

**4. Oxford prescription drug co-payments:**

Under the Oxford three-tier prescription drug plan, the co-payments will increase from \$10, \$20, and \$50 for tier one, two, and three drugs, respectively, to \$15, \$25, and \$50 for tier one, two, and three drugs, respectively.

**5. Oxford prescription deductible:**

Under the Oxford three-tier prescription drug plan, a deductible of \$100 will be charged per individual per calendar year.

**Effective October 1, 2010 the following changes will be implemented:**

**Eligibility Threshold:** For the eligibility period beginning October 1, 2010, the eligibility threshold will rise to \$1100, based on the January-June 2010 contribution period (The Plan's eligibility rules are described in Section 2 of the SPD.).

As in the past, if contributions made on your behalf in a six-month period exceed the minimum level, you may apply the excess to the next period to help meet the minimum eligibility level. Excess contributions may be carried forward one period only.

The new \$1100 threshold for eligibility applies to both Option A (for Oxford, Kaiser and Premium Reimbursement) and to Option B (for the Medical Spending Account).

No adjustments are being made to our plan with Kaiser Permanente at this time. In addition Option B participants will continue to enjoy the full value of their \$2200 semi-annual reimbursement account, and Premium Reimbursement participants will continue to be reimbursed up to the amount paid for Oxford participants in the New York area. Also, we are encouraged by significant increases in contribution rates soon to go into effect under newly negotiated SDC Agreements (call your SDC contract reps for details). While keeping a close eye on the financial realities we face, the Trustees of both the SDC-League Pension and Health Plans remain committed to providing the finest possible range of benefits to you the Participants of the Plans.

## PENSION AND HEALTH NEWS: Changes to the SDC-League Health Plan continued

### How you can help...

Use the Plan wisely! If you are on the Oxford Plan, whenever possible, utilize in-network providers; you will save money and so will the Plan. When you are on the road see United Healthcare Choice Plus doctors (call Oxford for a referral). Save on drug costs by using mail-order prescriptions from Medco. Consider switching from Option A to Option B, our \$2200 reimbursement account if you have coverage through another plan. Stay healthy! Take advantage of an annual physical exam. If applicable, stop smoking. Be reminded that Oxford participants receive significant discounts for gym memberships with regular attendance. And finally, but importantly, become politically active! Make your voice heard in Washington as your elected representatives wrestle with containing spiraling health care costs and how best to provide coverage for those who need it.

## FROM THE CONTRACT DESK: UPDATE ON CONTRACTS

by Mauro Melleno, SDC Director of Contract Administration



In the summer of 2007, the SDC began researching all the Theatres across the country that have filed the Special contract when hiring professional Directors and Choreographers. The Union not only examined the history of employment

of SDC Members, but also the producing practices and make-up of each of these Institutions. The purpose of the research was to understand more fully how the Union can support Members working outside of collectively bargained agreements. It was determined through member focus groups and Executive Board decisions to focus and hone in on what activities warrant a continuation of the Special contract and what activity/ practices would be more appropriately handled through other Agreements. The process of developing a more equitable contract to replace the Special contract for theatrical productions began. The result is a tier-based contract, appropriately called The Tier contract.

The new contract has six tiers for established theatres and two tiers for academic institutions. This contract is to be used for productions at Theatres that are not covered by or referenced to a collectively bargained agreement or subject to the Regional Commercial Contract. The Tier contract sets compensation minimums based on seating capacity, number of performances and ticket price. Property rights and rights of first refusal are protected under the contract and there is an Employer pension contribution of 8% (of all compensation), plus a fixed health contribution.

The Union would like to make it clear that the SDC Special contract is not disappearing. The Special contract will continue to be approved by the Union for any activity that is outside SDC jurisdiction (e.g. staged readings/concerts/ cruise ship/ theme parks/ industrials, etc.). What has changed is the process of requesting and receiving the

Special contract from the union.

Here's how it works: a Member or an Employer may request a Special contract through the SDC web-site (located under the "Contracts" tab). When the Union receives the request, the Union will determine whether the information provided warrants a Special contract for that activity. If so, permission to utilize the contract will be forwarded along with a coded Special contract form. Permission will be granted for each production/activity on a case-by-case basis for specific use on that project.

However, the new Tier contract must be utilized at all established theatres and producing institutions beginning January 2010. There are many reasons for this change:

**Minimum terms and conditions for all Members hired to direct and/or choreograph are paramount.** Setting minimum terms is top priority for any union. By providing a foundation, the Tier contract establishes minimum fees for any given production, meaning those Members with less negotiating experience will not have to say yes to a zero dollar contract. At the same time Members with more negotiating savvy are not prevented from negotiating a higher than minimum fee (which is consistent with all our Agreements).

**Fixed Health Contributions are required in all SDC collectively bargained agreements and the Tier contract follows that practice.** As you may be aware, the health contribution demanded on the Special contract is dependent upon the negotiated fee. Though the Special contract (and the concept that fee dictates health contribution) has been utilized for years, the truth is, it is unfair for one Member of this union to be treated differently from another Member when those two Members are working for the same institution(s). By way of example I will use LORT Theatres (as the LORT Agreement is based on a tier structure much like the Tier Contract). If a Director or Choreographer were to work at a LORT A theatre and was

able to negotiate an above-minimum fee that Member would receive on their behalf the same health contribution for that LORT A Theatre as a Member who was not able to negotiate above the minimum. There is complete equity in this thinking. Why should one Member receive a higher contribution than another simply because one Member has name recognition, a powerful agent, or just good negotiating skills? This is why unions exist, to protect all of its working members without prejudice.

**The Tier Contract will help SDC organize theatres across the country in a way that the Special contract was never able to accomplish.** The Tier Contract will (in fact has already begun to) enable the Union to collect information which will be most helpful in trying to advance Theatres from the Tier to a more formal SDC Contract (e.g. LORT/ Stock/ Dinner Theatre, etc.). The Tier Contract will help us track the Theatre's budgets, seating capacities, number of performance spaces, average performance runs, and ticket price range(s). In the past when the Union received a Special Contract, we had no idea of any of this information, making organizing efforts extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve. It is our hope that the new Tier Contract will be successful in this endeavor thereby securing union security at these Theatres and ultimately more work for our members.

The Tier contract can be downloaded from the website (again, under the "Contracts" tab). The form must be filled out online and will automatically determine the proper "tier" based on the information provided on the form. It's that easy!

Of course, if there are any questions or concerns regarding either the Special contract request link or the Tier contract, please do not hesitate to contact the SDC office. All questions should be directed to either Evan Shoemake (EShoemake@sdcWeb.org) or Mauro Melleno (MMelleno@sdcWeb.org).



*The Persians* directed by Ethan McSweeney, Shakespeare Theatre Company

## NEW MEMBERS

**Kimberly Faith Hickman**

Director/Choreographer  
Brooklyn, NY

**Andrew Leynse**

Director  
New York, NY

**Amy Marie McCleary**

Director/Choreographer  
Ft. Myers, FL

**William F. Osetek**

Director  
Berwyn, IL

**Lynne Page**

Choreographer  
UK

**Matt Raftery**

Choreographer  
Chicago, IL

**Christopher Carter Sanderson**

Director  
Brooklyn, NY

## NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**Sherrie Ahlin**

Director  
Maplewood, NJ

**Christopher B. Connelly**

Director  
Bloomington, IL

**Maurice Brandon Curry**

Director/Choreographer  
New York, NY

**Brad Dell**

Director  
Ames, IA

**Matthew A. J. Gregory**

Director  
Brooklyn, NY

**Adam Immerwahr**

Director  
Trenton, NJ

**Geoffrey Kershner**

Director  
Daytona Beach, FL

**Andre Lancaster**

Director  
Brooklyn, NY

**Dane Peterson**

Director  
Birmingham, AL

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## NEW/RENEWED INDEPENDENT PRODUCER AGREEMENTS

**O'Neill Playwright's Conference** (individual IPA)

**Steppenwolf Theatre** (individual IPA)

**Westport Country Playhouse** (LORT)

**Peterborough Players** (CORST)

**Matt Murphy Productions** (TW/USA)