



**STAGE
DIRECTORS AND
CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER
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your source for important notifications of all Union matters

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COVER

PASSING THE TORCH FORWARD

A Tribute to Israel Hicks by STEPHEN MCKINLEY HENDERSON, Member

I first worked with Israel Hicks in August Wilson's, *Fences*, for the Denver Center Theatre in 1990. It was his first production of August's plays for that theatre, but by no means his first production there. By the time I was fortunate enough to work with him again on *Seven Guitars* in 1997, he had become an associate director with the theatre. Recently Israel was acknowledged for staging the entire 20th Century Cycle there, giving the Denver Center a singular distinction as well. This was accomplished while he also successfully mounted the works of Tennessee Williams, Jean Giradoux, SS Massat, Derek Walcott, and of course, William Shakespeare. The breadth of Israel's work included countless other playwrights and theatre companies, many he had to edit from his CV long ago to make space for his new accomplishments.

One of the plays he eliminated from his profile was the Jacobean tragedy, *The Changeling*, by Middleton and Rowley, which he directed with Webster Conservatory undergrads in 1979. I was then a company member of the Loretto-Hilton Repertory (a.k.a. Repertory Theatre of St. Louis) where we were presenting Athol Fugard's, *The Island*. I attended a performance of this undergraduate production and was amazed. First, by the profound relevance of what was for me at the time an obscure classic and then by the fact that students whom I had witnessed fall short of the mark occasionally in other more accessible plays, delivered this one with style. They commanded a grasp of the human circumstance in the historical period, displaying it with ease; an ease that allowed me to enter a world centuries removed from my life's journey. I found in this a renewed devotion to the timeless power of dramatic art. This was unquestionably due to this director, Israel Hicks. I did not know he was a Black man. I had worked with Harold Scott professionally before he joined the Rutgers faculty, the same department which Israel later led until recently, but when I attended the Juilliard School, The North Carolina School of the Arts, and Purdue University Graduate School between 1968 and 1976 I was never directed in a European classic by a fellow African American. Contextually, Israel Hicks displayed an exceptional stature, one which made him for me

and many others a man for all seasons. We met and conversed during the run of *The Changeling* and he attended a performance of *The Island*. He encouraged me with the assurance that we would work together in the future. Eleven years later he called and offered me a role at the Denver Center. Israel had a long memory.

Flashing forward eighteen years, Tony winning actress Phylicia Rashad attended a production Israel directed with Juilliard's students a few years ago. In a now famous interview for *The Denver Post* she expressed her amazement that these young people were able to capture the world of 1911 Pittsburgh and master the poetic text that eludes many experienced actors. She acknowledged that the artist/educator responsible for the excellence of this production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* was undoubtedly the director, Israel Hicks. Having seen his production of *The Changeling* in St. Louis nearly thirty years earlier I knew her insight was true.

His gift was not merely his own excellence and high standards, but his ability to pass the torch of those standards forward. In his capacity on the Fox Foundation nominating committee he challenged many artists to write a convincing proposal pursuing their Fellowship. At the turn of the century he challenged me. I subsequently studied with and was mentored by Lloyd Richards, one of modern theatre's major figures. Once again I was renewed by Israel Hicks' generous humanity, this time with a renewed belief in the classroom. What greater generosity could a master artist/educator display than a willingness to share the fount of his own inspiration?

His patience and willingness to listen coupled with the calm clarity with which he replied made progress inevitable each day of rehearsal. For many who have worked with him his rehearsal process was the equal of the greatest. The Ebony Repertory Theatre (which he and Wren Brown formed in Los Angeles with accomplished actors) already boasts numerous nominations and awards.

Israel Hicks was an artist entirely at home in an inclusive theatrical community. And that makes me all the prouder he was a master teacher who was a Black man.

FROM OUR UNION

REASONS TO VOTE!

by KAREN AZENBERG, Executive Board President

So, it's that time of year once again. The candidates' statements are readied and the ballots are headed your way! Oh, I can hear the groaning from here – another "get out the vote" article. Well, yes and no. It is important for you to vote. The SDC Executive Board members are your advocates and voting for its members is one of your responsibilities as a Member of this community. But it is also the way that your voice can be heard. Heard where? In the Board Room, yes, but also at the negotiating table and within the wider theatrical community. SDC Executive Board members attend monthly Board meetings and also serve on standing committees that address issues ranging from Property Rights to Foundation Programming, Finance, Regional Presence and more. They are your representatives, and the only way to insure that the issues you are concerned with are addressed is to read the candidates' statements and vote for the people who best understand your needs and whom you feel can be a strong representative for those needs as a member of the Executive Board.

There are many factors to consider when casting your vote, and the Nominating Committee faced this challenge with intelligence and sensitivity when putting together the slate. In addition to the

traditional issues of diversity there are those that are our very own: Director versus Choreographer versus Director/Choreographer, New York versus National, Broadway versus LORT versus Tier, musicals, new plays, classics – all information worth considering when contemplating a potential Board candidate.

In this election, the ballot also includes candidates for two of the "Regional Representatives." These are candidates who are going to be elected from a specific region (in this case, Midwest and Southeast) to help maintain a geographic diversity on the Executive Board. Each and every Board member represents each and every one of you. Regional reps are the icing on the cake. The amazing thing about our Membership in this day and age is that we are everywhere, and the state where you live is not always where you work. I am sure that many of you find yourself working in a state not your own as often as you work at "home" and that your home theatre is not where you live...interesting.

These are challenging times for all artists, but not a time when apathy will advance our cause. The SDC leadership needs your support and your vote to continue to make a difference. So yeah, maybe this is a "get out and vote" article...

A special thank you to the 2010 Nominating Committee

Oz Scott, *Chair*

Andrea Andresakis

Pamela Berlin

James Bond

Joe Calarco

Bill Castellino

Tisa Chang

Michael John Garcés

Doug Hughes

Gary John La Rosa

Mahayana Landowne

Mary B. Robinson

Andrew Volkoff

Chay Yew

As per SDC By-laws: Any Member-in-good-standing for at least two (2) years has the right to be a candidate for a position on the Executive Board by submitting a written petition containing the signatures of ten (10) Members-in-good-standing to the Executive Director, which must be received forty (40) days prior to the annual meeting in November.

The 2010 Annual Membership Meeting will be Monday, November 15th. All write-in candidate submissions must be received no later than Wednesday, October 6th.

Ballots will be mailed to all Full Members-in-good-standing in October and all completed ballots must be returned to SDC no later than 3:00 PM on Monday, November 15th in order to be counted. Please direct questions about the election to Elizabeth Miller at 212-391-1070, ext. 252.

2010 Executive Board Slate

Julie Arenal

*Incumbent Director/
Choreographer*

David Bell

Director/Choreographer

Jesse Berger

Director

Walter Bobbie

Incumbent Director

Larry Carpenter

Incumbent Director

Jeremy Dobrish

Director

Marcia Milgrom Dodge

*Incumbent Director/
Choreographer*

Timothy Douglas

Director

Angel Gil Orrios

Director

Richard Hamburger

Incumbent Director

Devanand Janki

Director/Choreographer

BJ Jones

Midwest Rep. Director

Moisés Kaufman

Director

Paul Lazarus

Incumbent Director

J Barry Lewis

Southeast Rep. Director

Pam MacKinnon

Director

Art Manke

Director/Choreographer

Amy Morton

*Incumbent Midwest Rep.
Director*

Sharon Ott

*Incumbent Southeast Rep.
Director*

Andy Sandberg

by petition Director

Susan Schulman

Incumbent Director

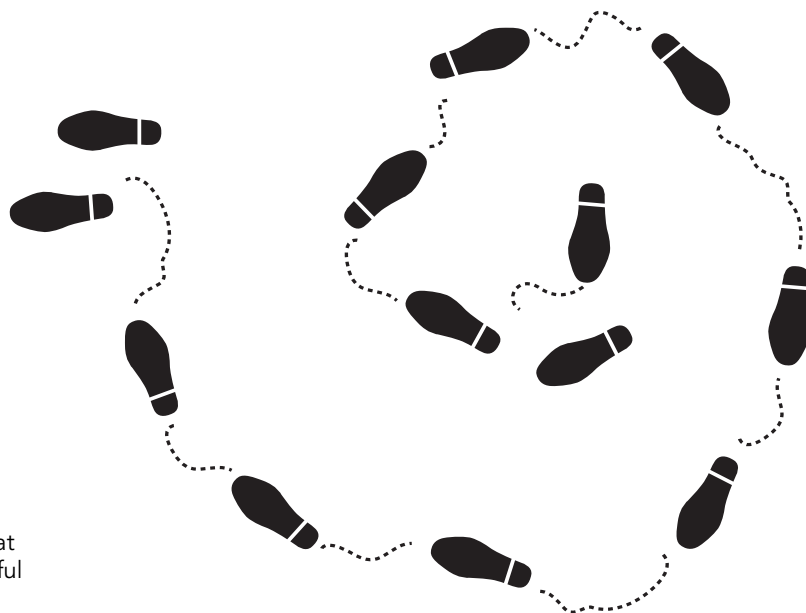
Seret Scott

Director

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CHANGES AFOOT AT SDC

by LAURA PENN



Following the 50th Anniversary last year, the Union has continued to examine the goals and objectives necessary to advance the priorities set by your Executive Board. Commitment to our Membership is strong and clear. Managing contracts and expanding jurisdiction is at the core of what the Union does. We must also be mindful of the running of the business of the Union so we can continue to further the services that you expect the Union to provide. Speaking of services, creating a department to look specifically at how and where the Membership is served is an important next step. To accomplish these goals and have staff resources align more fully with these priorities, there will be a shift in how the Union office is structured. There will now be three distinct departments in the office: Contract Affairs, Finance and Administration and Member Services. Mauro Melleno, as Director of Contract Affairs, will continue to manage the contract department which will now have a regional focus (Eastern, Midwest & Western). This focus will serve us well in advancing our organizing efforts, and realigning responsibilities on the contract desks will make it easier for Members to find their advocate. Cole Jordan, Director of Finance and Administration, has taken the reins since his arrival in June, ensuring we meet the current and future business requirements of the Union, he will find ways to improve office systems and efficiency.

Effective September 1, Barbara Wolkoff will move from the Contract Department into her new role as Director of Member Services. Working alongside her will be Gretchen M. Michelfeld, as the Associate Director of Member Services. Gretchen has already made huge advances in this area for SDC during her tenure as Membership Coordinator. Barbara's contractual knowledge and experience over her thirteen years with SDC combined with her expert ability to lead, organize and tackle challenges, make her more than an ideal candidate for this new role. Now, together, Barbara and Gretchen will take Member Services to the next level. Gretchen and Barbara have a deep commitment to our Members and we are going to feel the impact of their partnership immediately.

Thank you in advance for your support in this transition. As always, any feedback is deeply appreciated. Happy fall!

To assist you in navigating these changes we've included a guide to who to call when you need us.

✂

Who to call at SDC...

SDC (212) 391-1070

CONTRACT AFFAIRS

Mauro Melleno	<i>Broadway/First Class tours</i>	ext. 237	MMelleno@SDCweb.org
Randy Anderson	<i>Eastern, Off-Broadway Commercial activity</i>	ext. 232	RAnderson@SDCweb.org
Renée Lasher	<i>Midwest and Southeast, LORT A+ theatres</i>	ext. 245	RLasher@SDCweb.org
Evan Shoemake	<i>Southwest and Western; Off-Broadway Institutional Not-For-Profit Theatres and ANTC</i>	ext. 231	EShoemake@SDCweb.org

MEMBER SERVICES

Barbara Wolkoff	<i>Director of Member Services</i>	ext. 246	BWolkoff@SDCweb.org
Gretchen M. Michelfeld	<i>Associate Director of Member Services</i>	ext. 236	GMichelfeld@SDCweb.org

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Cole Jordan	<i>Director of Finances and Administration</i>	ext. 247	CJordan@SDCweb.org
Michele Holmes	<i>Member billing questions</i>	ext. 240	MHolmes@SDCweb.org
Kim Rogers	<i>Producer/Theatre billing questions</i>	ext. 238	KRogers@SDCweb.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

Elizabeth Miller	<i>Executive Assistant to Laura Penn</i>	ext. 252	EMiller@SDCweb.org
Lena Abrams	<i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Main	LAbrams@SDCweb.org



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CAREY PERLOFF

by KRISTY CUMMINGS, Hauptman Fellow

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Carey Perloff, Artistic Director of the American Conservatory Theater. Below are some highlights from our conversation about her career, A.C.T.'s recent world premiere dance-theatre work The Tosca Project, and some of her thoughts about the future of the theatre industry.

You have been the Artistic Director of A.C.T. for the past 18 years. Can you tell us about your education and the career path that lead you to this position and to being a director?

All my life I had wanted to be an archaeologist so I went to Stanford to study Ancient Greek. I got into theatre through that experience, through reading Greek tragedies in Greek. I had an incredible professor who taught in a very theatrical way so we got to stage these tragedies at the Frost Amphitheatre.

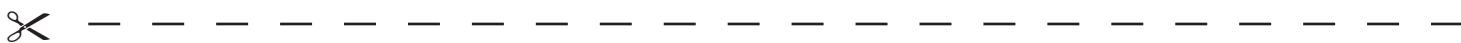
After I graduated, I had a Fulbright scholarship to go to Oxford. Although Oxford doesn't teach drama, they do a vast amount of it. That's where I started directing and I realized very quickly that directing fulfilled so many sides of myself, so many things that were really important to me. Coming from a literature background, I loved the language aspect. I also loved the archaeological excavation of a script, the psychological and visual elements, and the choreography, since I had come from a dance background.

Then I went to New York when I was 21 and I was completely clueless. I got a job as a secretary at the International Theatre Institute, which provided a fantastic opportunity to understand

theatre as an international discipline, which has always been important to me. Then, I started directing readings and workshops wherever I could and also began an internship in the casting office at the Public Theatre, which was like my version of graduate school. I would recommend that every director work in a casting office; it is an incredible way to learn quickly how to evaluate actors and collaborate with them and to watch other directors at work.

I knew the plays I wanted to direct and I was passionate about finding places to do that kind of work. I loved classical theatre and at least at that moment, and still to some degree today, it is much harder for women to get the opportunity to direct the big classical plays. By sort of a fluke, I ended up becoming the Artistic Director at Classic Stage Company and I learned everything about running a theatre in three months. I mean it was total guerilla artistic leadership and I really tried to figure out how to make rich theatrical events happen for that community in a non-commercial, heavily contextualized way. It was the most insane couple of years of my life but I feel like theatre is such an experiential art form and you should walk through any door that opens.

Photo by Jock McDonald



Don't forget to cut out your "Who to Call" card on the back of this page!

Don't forget...

- ✓ Watch your mailbox: SDC Executive Board elections are this November. Look for your official ballot next month. Your vote counts!
- ✓ Also in October, proposed amendments to SDC's By-laws will be circulated. Again, it's important to vote.
- ✓ At present, Off Broadway negotiations are underway. Watch the web site for further information.
- ✓ Please mark your calendar for the Semi-Annual Membership Meeting. The event will be on Monday, November 15th. Stay tuned for details.
- ✓ DCN Update - September 28th @ 6PM: Melinda Atwood of Dancebreak

This past June A.C.T. produced a dance-theatre piece called The Tosca Project. How was this project first conceived and can you talk about its developmental journey?



Photo by Kevin Berne

I love rich, complex collaboration and I had been thinking a lot about where the field was going, about the fact that much more kinesthetic movement-based theatre has become of great interest to particularly younger theatre makers all over the country. A.C.T. had brought a movement piece over from Canada called *The Overcoat* by Morris Panych and Wendy Gorling that took Gogol's *The Overcoat* and set it to Shostakovich's music. I thought it was thrilling. I had also been doing a lot of work with the choreographer of the San Francisco Ballet, **Val Caniparoli**. He worked with me on plays at A.C.T. and he said to me one day, "If you love devised movement-based material like *The Overcoat* you don't have to keep importing it. We could make it ourselves." So, as an experiment, about four years ago, we took five ballet dancers and five actors and put them in a room together for a workshop week. In order to raise money for this workshop, I went to the Tosca Café, a very famous, legendary literary bar in North Beach to meet with its owner, the head of the Nureyev Foundation, Jeannette Etheredge. The place held within it these ghosts that were extraordinary, so I called Val and said, 'We should make the piece about this bar.' Once we made that decision, I collected about 100 hours of oral history about the bar, talking to everyone I could - bartenders in North Beach, local citizens, dancers who spent time there, etc.

Next we had a public workshop at the Yerba Buena Center that felt very much like a documentary. What I learned from this workshop was that what is so rich about working with dance is that it has a much more abstract, emotional and narrative language than theatre; so you can tell stories in very different ways and it doesn't have to be literal. At the same time I was really trying to understand how to create a narrative because you have to think about character and story in a way that is not necessarily script-based, which is exciting and challenging, particularly for theatre people because we work with language. I also got designers involved from the start because this kind of work is all visual. You have to use every tool in the theatre that you have: lights, sound, movement, music, and iconography, to do things that a text would otherwise do.

We kept building upon it and then we did two big public workshops. It was very interesting to let people in on the process and get their feedback. We just kept trying to get to

the emotional heartbeat of the piece and what I finally realized was that I had to write out the whole scenario like a screenplay, in a format that we could all look at and wrap our arms around because it couldn't all be improvised in the room. I had to come in with the back story, short stories for my three lead actors that told them what their biography was, how they got to this point, what their secrets were, what the emergency was, just like you do when you are writing a play. So I wrote out the scenario and then it was all created in the room in collaboration with the choreographer.

The Tosca Project has been described as both an "exploration of multidisciplinary storytelling" and a "marriage of dance and theatre." Can you talk about the creative process and how it was different (or not) collaborating with both actors and dancers?

It was totally different. Our actors are used to talking about everything and these dancers are used to talking about nothing. They are told this is what it looks like, do it, and they have astonishing kinesthetic memory. Often they come into an empty room with a piece of music, the choreographer sets the movement, and they don't get to imbue it with their own internal, emotional life until later. We told the dancers this was their opportunity to create a character, which they loved because they'd never been asked to do it that way. They were also very quick to do something before they talked about it, which was the opposite of the actors, who wanted to know why they were doing something before they did it. So in a sense we had to meet in the middle.

During the four years of development, I took our actors to the ballet and brought the dancers to our theatre so we could see each other's work. By the time they were in a room together they knew each other as performers and had respect for each other's crafts. It is humbling for theatre people to look at the discipline with which dancers work; that they take class every morning for an hour and a half and there is no discussion about it. For the dancers it was different to see that it isn't enough in the theatre to have a series of beautiful vignettes but that the vignettes had to hold together as a narrative. Working in both disciplines was really a fantastic exercise because it got people totally out of their comfort zone.

You recently attended the TCG conference in Chicago. What did you think of SDC's presence there and what would you like to see SDC do more of in order to support its members and the industry more fully?

I thought it was fantastic that SDC was there. SDC's session, [Capturing the Live Experience: An Evolving Art Form](#), was incredibly informative and for a session that included different unions and theatres in the same room, it was remarkably un-defensive. I also went to an interesting session with a group of independent directors who run their own companies, like **Steven Cosson** from The Civilians and **Moisés Kauffman** from the Tectonic Theatre Project. It would have been interesting to have someone from SDC in that discussion as well because directors as creative artists are a critical part of our field but not something we often talk about. Since these are companies whose creative engines are directors, in a sense these directors are the authors of their work, which is an interesting role for a director to play. I think this is a group of artists that really needs support from the whole field because it is very different from working at an institutional theatre

You mentioned the SDC's break-out session on media at the TCG conference. Overall, do you feel that electronic media is a positive new element in the theatre industry? What challenges do you think it creates?

I think it is really positive. We still have further to go because we are not permitted to do a complete recording of a project and distribute it. The question here is, and this ties back to *The Tosca Project*, when you make a piece that isn't scripted and you are interested in other people picking that piece up, one of the big challenges is how do you represent it? I can't send anyone a script. I could send them the scenario but it wouldn't tell them much. So the question of filming work and getting it out there is germane to all of us. I think we need to unleash some of the restrictions we have on recording because I think in the long run it will be for everyone's benefit.

I am also really excited about what **Sheldon Epps** talked about in SDC's session, which was the training of theatre directors to be part of the recording of their own work. I said to Sheldon, 'Sign me up now. I will pay for it.' This is what those of us in the theatre do not know how to do, not that many of us anyway. This is

something I would love the SDC to take a bigger hand in, to put theatre directors together with people who are both theatre and film directors, like Sheldon, so that we have some say in what our work looks like when it is recorded. (See the article by **Erica Gould** about SDC's Live on Screen Initiative on page 1). We are finally realizing that this technology is not going away and that it is not going to endanger live performance. I don't think technology is going to do away with what we do best.

As Artistic Director of A.C.T. you have established both recurring freelance and resident positions for directors at your institution. You have provided job security by constructing a creative home for these artists. What was your impulse to start doing so?

I really love long term collaboration with artists and I am such a believer in company. I like to collaborate with directors over time in part because they really get to know the company and develop a healthy and exciting long-term relationship. I do however make it a rule for myself that every year we hire at least two completely new directors because I want to make sure it doesn't become a club and that new directors come into the mix all of the time. I also make it a priority to hire women directors because I know how hard it was for me.

You have done extensive work as a director of new work and are a playwright yourself. First, how do you balance all of the hats that you wear in the theatre industry? Second, do you have any advice for directors and/or choreographers who are passionate about developing new work?

At different moments in your life there are so many different ways to tell a story. I always think as artists you should understand what you are feeling, what you are seeing in the world, and figure out what tools it will take to respond to that. I started as a writer but after working with Harold Pinter, which was thrilling and terrifying, I thought, why am I adding to the store of mediocre plays in the world when there is a Pinter around? So I stopped and didn't start writing again for 15 years, at which point I was older and had much more to say. People thought I was crazy because I was running a theatre, directing, raising two children, and also writing but it was the writing that actually saved my life in the darkest times. Everything else is very collaborative and often you get sucked dry because running

a theatre is really about trying to secure other people's success as much as your own. You have to be really invested in the other artists with whom you are working. The wonderful thing about writing is it is your own.

As for advice for directors, what's wonderful about being a director of a new work is that you are given an architectural blueprint and then you get to visualize how to build it. You get to go back to the playwright when you find sections that aren't working, but you can't say, 'I would rewrite that scene,' or 'I don't buy that moment.' You have to figure out really good questions to ask that help make that boat seaworthy but not say, 'Rig it this way,' because they may come up with a much more interesting solution than you would ever imagine.

And just for fun, is there a play that you have been dying to direct?

I am a Tom Stoppard fanatic and I have done almost all of his plays but I would love to do the *The Coast of Utopia*, the whole thing. Also, I am about to go into rehearsals for *Elektra*, but one of my big dreams is to do *Hamlet* and *Elektra* in repertory so you have female revenge and male revenge back to back, which I think would be unbelievably cool.

Is there anything else you would like to share with the SDC community before we wrap up?

I know that SDC is for both directors and choreographers and just to go back to *The Tosca Project* for a moment, we tend to think of those two disciplines as slightly parallel. What is happening is these lines are blurring and there is a lot of exciting work going on that draws upon movement, narrative, and text in really collaborative ways. I would love to see SDC have more dialogue with the dance world.

And lastly, as a director, the things that matter most to me are lifelong learning, being a part of training the next generation of artists, dramaturgy, and talking up to an audience – I believe in doing difficult work and then finding a way for an audience to really feel ownership of it and I encourage other directors to take on that challenge as well.

Thank you Carey for sharing your time and thoughts with us!



ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH BENEFITS?

by JOHN EVERSON, Funds Administrator

October 1st marks the beginning of a new eligibility period for the SDC-League Health Fund. If you are eligible for benefits for the upcoming six-month period, you should have received formal notice by now from the Fund Office. If you believe that you are eligible, but have not received notification, please give us a call at 212-869-8129.

To be eligible for benefits, your employer(s) must make contributions of at least \$1,100 during a six-month period, either January through June (for eligibility at October 1st) or July through December (for eligibility at April 1st). When this level is met, you will be entitled to at least six months of paid benefits, with your period of eligibility determined by your first rehearsal date(s). If your contribution level is \$2,200 or more in a six-month

period, you will be entitled to a full year of paid benefits. If contributions made on your behalf in a contribution period exceed \$1,100 but do not reach \$2,200, you may apply the excess to the next period to help meet the minimum eligibility level. Please note however, that excess contributions over \$1,100 may be carried forward one period only.

We believe that the SDC-League Health Plan continues to be one of the best in the industry. For freelance directors Option A provides first-rate medical and hospitalization coverage that is portable from job to job. For those who have insurance through another source, Option B provides a tax-free \$2200 medical spending account that can cover most out-of-pocket medical costs. Don't ignore this hard-fought-for benefit. It has something to offer all eligible SDC Members.

Q & A

Q. Once I am eligible, what else do I have to do to obtain benefits?

A. Along with your eligibility notification letter, you will have received an Option Election form. If you have not already done so, please return this form as soon as possible, electing either Option A (for major medical and hospital insurance), or Option B (for the \$2,200 medical spending account) and we will send you additional enrollment materials. Note that if you are electing Option A, you are required to pay a semi-annual enrollment fee of \$200 for single participation or \$400 for family participation. Family coverage is available on a self-pay basis. While the Fund pays for your coverage, the premiums covering your spouse, partner, and/or children will be your responsibility. Call the Fund Office for details and rates. Your timely response is important. Our plans with Oxford and Kaiser require that all enrollments be completed no later than October 31st.

Q. I don't live in either New York or California. How can the Fund help me with my health insurance needs?

A. For those eligible participants who live outside the Oxford and Kaiser service areas, the Trustees have authorized a premium reimbursement arrangement. Quite simply, you may find the best health insurance plan (including dental insurance) available to you in your local area, and the Fund will reimburse your monthly premium up to the amount we pay for participants in New York.

Q. How are the Funds funded?

A. All of the Pension Fund's revenue and most of the Health Fund's revenue comes from contributions your employers are required to make when you work and from investment income on our reserves. Dues and assessments that you pay to SDC go to support the negotiation and administration of contracts but do not contribute to your eligibility for benefits through the SDC-League Funds.

While closely affiliated with SDC, the SDC-League Pension and Health Funds are legally separate entities from the Union and are managed by a joint Board of Trustees. This Board is comprised of four Trustees from SDC (appointed by SDC's Executive Board) and four Trustees from Management (representing Broadway and Tours, Off-Broadway and Regional theatre producers). With advice from the Funds' actuary and consultant, and the guidance of the Funds' co-counsel and accountants, the Trustees have the responsibility for ensuring the fiscal soundness of the Funds, as well as providing the best possible benefits to you, the participants.

Q. Can I enroll family members in the Plan?

A. Yes. Spouses or domestic partners and dependant children may be enrolled for benefits under Option A on a self-pay basis. If you are enrolling in the Plan for the first time you may enroll your family members at the beginning of your eligibility period. If you are currently covered, you may enroll your dependants only during specified open enrollment months, or within thirty days of your

marriage or the birth of your child. Call the Fund Office for premium rates and further details.

Q. I am a staff director in a LORT theatre and my theatre provides a health insurance plan for me. Can I still take advantage of Option B?

A. Yes, but only if your employer agrees to make health contributions to the Fund on your behalf. Please note that under the LORT Minimum Basic Agreement theatres may be relieved of their obligation to make contributions to the Fund for staff directors if they are already providing health insurance for those individuals. If you are a LORT Artistic or Staff director and want Option B in addition to your theatre's health plan, you must negotiate with your theatre to make the appropriate health contribution for each production you direct.

Q. How do I know which Option is the right choice for me?

A. Only you can make the final decision about your health care needs and options. For most people the first priority is securing good major medical and hospitalization insurance to cover you in the event of injury or illness. Option A provides such insurance through Oxford Health Plans in the New York City metropolitan area, through Kaiser Permanente in California, and through premium reimbursement in other areas. However, if you are already covered under another health plan, Option B can provide you with up to \$2,200 in tax-free medical expense reimbursements for each six months of eligibility.

LIVE ON SCREEN

by ERICA GOULD, Member

*This summer, **Erica Gould** was the recipient of our first Live On Screen Fellowship. She had the privilege of observing SDC Executive Board Member **Larry Carpenter's** award-winning work on *One Life to Live*. We asked Erica for permission to reprint part of her final report and she graciously consented.*

Often during my *One Life to Live* Observership, someone from the soap—a guy on the technical crew, one of the actors, the lighting director, a producer—would say, “you are so lucky to be shadowing Larry—he’s the best.” I did indeed feel blessed to be paired with him. It was amazing watching him work—his beautiful blocking, inventive camera work, rapport with the actors and crew, incredible stamina. Larry’s work was complex, aesthetically pleasing, precise and clean, narratively clear, kinesthetically and compositionally beautiful.

As a theatre director, I found the privilege to trail on a soap opera to be of extraordinary value. I have always perceived film directing as, in some ways, the opposite of theatre directing, in that you are “moving” the audience, rather than the actor. I think, however, that it is possible in theatre to manipulate when and where the audience looks, as well as how, just as thoroughly as in film—not only through lighting, but also through sound and visual composition. Given the way the sets and camera set-ups are used in soaps, this discipline has far more in common with directing for the theatre than does film or episodic television. Choosing what camera to use, when, and for how long, felt to me more similar to “throwing focus,” than to “moving the audience,” but, of course, with other tools than we usually utilize in traditional live theatre.

The very first day, due to a scheduling snafu with one of the actors, Larry had, uncharacteristically, a large amount of downtime and we were able to talk for a few hours. It was thrilling to speak with him and get to know him. As theatre directors, we both come from what one might term a “British” orientation and approach, both specialize in Shakespeare, do a lot of musical theatre, and even both choreograph our own fights. It was delightful and a little freaky how much we had in common. Our directorial philosophy and theatrical aesthetic and way of working with actors were so simpatico—a true meeting of minds. As a director, I have never really had a mentor as a director and cannot have imagined a better teacher from whom to learn a new directorial discipline. Larry really took me under his wing—taking time to explain what he was doing and why. He would turn to me frequently to check in and use something that had just happened on set

or in rehearsal or in the control room as a “teaching moment”—did I see how he kept rotating where “front” was, did I understand how camera 6 was being utilized to help further the visual narrative, etc, etc. And I would take advantage of our rapid sprints from set to control room to share what I had noticed and ask questions about particular choices he had made, etc.

And it wasn’t just Larry who extended such graciousness—the guys on the tech crew would, unsolicited, walk over to explain how a particular piece of equipment worked, the lighting director would point out how he was using light to get a particular effect, how what they were doing differed from what would happen on a film, the SM would share details of procedure, a producer would ask me if I knew what he was getting at by giving a particular note. I felt so profoundly welcomed into this tightly knit, intricately functioning family and was never made to feel I was in the way or out of place.

I also felt quite lucky that my Observership included an on-location day—a guerilla affair in multiple locations throughout the city. The way Larry used the pre-existing features of buildings and landscape was wonderful to watch and I was fascinated by the way the lighting designer manipulated and worked with the naturally occurring light.

The nature of my experience evolved over the course of the month. At first I found myself absorbing Larry’s way of working—doing the dry blocking, the way he directed the actors, the rhythm of his camera shots. Some of this felt very familiar, some completely foreign—the rhythm of calling the shots felt like the rhythm of cueing a show or making edits in radio. I realized that several areas in my directorial experience utilized similar skill-sets—from directing radio-theatre, the rhythm of editing, getting/handling takes, watching for continuity; from directing numerous staged readings, having to work fast, achieve polished results quickly, going for an immediate final product; from both, precision and specificity, and the ability to effectively negotiate and orchestrate within a complex, collaborative production environment.

But the moving of the camera seemed initially inscrutable. So I asked Larry if I could practice camera blocking with some scenes from future scripts—I knew

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SDCF FOUNDATION [UPDATE](#)

ANNOUNCING THE CHARLES ABBOTT FELLOWSHIP

by ELLEN RUSCONI, Associate Director of the Foundation

I've always loved people from Maine. How can you not? They're independent, informed, and creative. They keep their beaches beautiful. And, according to Sports Illustrated, 77% of them root for the Red Sox (7% for the Yankees). These are my kind of people.

This summer, I found something else to love about Maine – Jan Wilk. She called me in the late spring to ask if it might be possible to set up an SDCF Fellowship for **Charles Abbott** in honor of his upcoming retirement as Artistic Director of Maine State Music Theatre.

Umm, yes, this we can do.

Of course, it's not as simple as that. Fellowships are eating away increasingly at our time. The number of applicants for SDCF Fellowships has risen sharply in the past year. I attribute this to a number of factors – among them the ailing economy, the lack of paying opportunities, and greater outreach on our part. In addition, we've made the selection process more rigorous, so that means time putting a selection committee together for each Fellowship, not to mention the hours spent by our committee members evaluating, discussing, and selecting Finalists.

But the troubles are more than outweighed by the satisfaction. SDCF exists to foster the art form, and how can we not feel good when each Fellowship is attracting 55 – 75 applicants? Never mind the fact that if **George C. Wolfe**, **Michael Greif**, and **Rob Ashford** (who hosted our 3 most recent artistic Fellowships) have the time to participate in these programs, I think I can manage to put them together.

We clearly need more opportunities, but with each Fellowship carrying a grant of between \$2000 and \$5000, we can't offer any additional opportunities without specific funding in hand. Therein lies our problem.

The phone rings. Here's what Jan has to say:

"For over thirty years Maine State Music Theatre has flourished under Chuck's direction and artistic leadership. In addition to continually improving the theatrical experience for patrons of MSMT and other theaters, he fostered and influenced hundreds of artistic careers along the way.

Those of us who have known Chuck personally and through his outstanding work as an actor, director and artistic director, wish to honor his extraordinary talents in a meaningful, lasting and enduring manner. We feel an SDCF Fellowship is the perfect vehicle for that tribute." Oh, and Jan would do the fundraising among Charles' many supporters in Maine.

Problem solved.

So in July of this year, Jan, a Board Member of Maine State Music Theatre, mailed 125 letters to Charles' supporters and friends. The fundraising goal was to gather enough money to support 2 years of Fellowships in Charles' name and to surprise him with the news at his retirement party.

The surprise was on us. The final tally is still out, but it looks like Jan has collected enough money for 5 years.

We're thrilled to announce the Charles Abbott Fellowship. This Fellowship will offer an emerging Director or Choreographer access to work on high-caliber musicals in prominent regional theatres around the country, following the career path that Chuck chose for himself. The Fellow will gain an understanding of the leadership required to mount a major musical; hone and sharpen directing skills; and experience the making of innovative work being done in regional theatre today. Chuck will be involved in both selecting the project and the Fellow, seeking to find those emerging artists, who, like him, will one day change the theatre landscape.

Thanks Jan. And thanks Chuck. And thanks to the many donors who have contributed to the Abbott Fund, all of whom wish to remain anonymous.

And, in honor of our friends in Maine, I expect at least 77% of you to root for the Red Sox...at least *this* month.

I wouldn't really "get it" until I had to try to tackle it myself. In my first attempts, I made, apparently, all the "classic" mistakes—changing cameras too frequently, moving the camera too much, neglecting to factor in the actor's "eyeline"—the exact kinds of uneconomical, busy choices that I assiduously avoid as a theatre director. But I got better with subsequent rounds and by the end of the Observership, I finally felt myself "getting it" in a real way—moving from intellectual observation to feeling the nature of the beast really dropping into my body in a place of deeper intuitive understanding. And I learned something about myself as a director in the process—Larry had suggested I start by blocking the scene as if it were a play and then seeing if I could shoot it and how. But I found that I had to begin with feeling the rhythm of the text and marking out where I felt the changes of camera wanted to be; then I could focus on the visual composition. For me, the impulse to change the camera mirrored the impulse to move the actor—the question then became whether to do one or the other or both.

In terms of moving forward, I have already seen my experience watching Larry make its way into my theatre work. Last week, in a dramaturgy meeting about a new script, I found myself speaking in terms of "shifting the camera" to alter the focus of the narrative, and in a meeting on another project, contemplating the possible use of multimedia in ways I would not have thought of before. And when I am next in rehearsal, beyond being in a more informed position with regard to "capturing" my work on tape, I know that the way my directorial eye processes things will be informed by the new ways of seeing that I developed over the course of the Observership. I recently directed a staged reading of a new play whose script incorporates video images. The way I handled the staging of those scenes was made so much richer for having watched the way Larry conducts the intimate dance between camera and actor.

STRIKE & DEFAULT

Members asked to work for one of the theatres or producers appearing on the Default or Strike list should contact Mauro Melleno (ext. 237, MMelleno@SDCweb.org) immediately. Work rules stipulate that Members may not work for employers on the Strike list and must have an appropriate SDC contract for all employment, otherwise fines or penalties may be incurred.

Strike List - Members may not accept employment from any theatre or producer on the SDC Strike List.

Alternative Scenario LLC
Jeffrey Altshuler, Producer

Baci Management d/b/a B&B Prod.
Mary Card, Producer

BCBGMaxAzria Entertainment, Inc.
Charles Cohen, Producer
Beverly Hills, CA
(producers of *The Ten Commandments* in LA)

BINGO Chicago, LLC
Carel Davis, Russ Tilaro, Agnes Corrado,
Producers

BT Productions

Classical Theatre of Harlem

Darren Lee Cole, Producer

Jack Cullen, Producer

Drama Center, Inc.
Gary Waldman, Producer
Florida

DS Unlimited
David Syner, Producer
Los Angeles, CA

Dublin Theatre Company
Rick Robinson, Producer
Dublin, CA

Steve Hildebrand, Producer

Israel Oh Israel, International, Inc.
Richard Bernstein, Producer

Lombardo Org. LLC,
Matthew Lombardo, Producer

Lone Star Performing Arts Association

L3 Productions
Jon Cutler, Producer

Musical Theatre of Los Angeles

On the Run Productions

Perkins Productions
Robert Perkins, Producer

Prince Music Theatre

Shear Madness Las Vegas, LLC
Terrence Williams, Producer

Gloria Hope Sher, Producer

Stage One Inc.
(City Repertory Theatre of Wichita)

Valley Musical Theatre

White Plains Performing Arts Center



OTHER UNION NEWS
NOTEWORTHY

NEW MEMBERS

Eliza Beckwith
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Enrique L. Brown
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Tammy Colucci
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Amy Anders Corcoran
Director/Choreographer
Allen, TX

Rachel Dickstein
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Maija Garcia
Director/Choreographer
New York, NY

Laura Gordon
Director
Shorewood, WI

Christine Henry
Director
New York, NY

Alexis Jacknow
Director
New York, NY

Chad Larabee
Director
Long Island City, NY

David O'Brien
Director
New York, NY

Matt Pfeiffer
Director
Philadelphia, PA

Mary Lou Rosato
Director
Los Angeles, CA

Brady Schwind
Director
New York, NY

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Jason Cannon
Director
St. Louis, MO

Katherine M. Carter
Director
New York, NY

David Conison
Director
Valparaiso, IN

Paula D'Alessandris
Director
New York, NY

George Judy
Director
Baton Rouge, LA

Vanessa Lancellotti
Director
Hillsborough, NJ

Jimmy LeDuc
Director
Minneapolis, MN

Paul Millet
Director
Glendale, CA

James Santos
Director/Choreographer
Redding, CA

Rhonda J. Soikowski
Director/Choreographer
Boulder, CO

Scott G. Weinstein
Director
Evanston, IL

IN MEMORY OF
Israel Hicks
Director
White Plains, NY

Default - *Serious issues have arisen over these employers' refusal to recognize SDC, or their failure to comply with an SDC Contract.*

A Woman of Will Company, LP
Ashley Road Productions
Jack Nadel, Julie Loshin,
David Braun – Producers

Altar Boyz Chicago
Joe McGinnis, Altar Boyz Chicago LLC,
Producers

American Music Theatre of San Jose

Obie Bailey, Producer

Mark Balsam, Producer

Brian Bantry, Producer

Chanhassen Dinner Theatre

CLO of South Bay Cities

Coconut Grove Playhouse, Florida

C-R Productions
Cohoes Theatre
Jim Charles, Producer

Tony Rivera, Producer

M. Carlyle Productions

Michael Carlyle, Producer
New York, NY

Clyde Winkler Entertainment
Tom Clyde, Producer

Benjamin DeRuyter, producer

Edwards Entertainment Group
Armstead Edwards, Producer

MadCap Productions

Richard Martini, Producer

Myriad Productions,
Grant Robbin, Producer

NET Theatrical Productions
Albert Nocciolino, Producer

New City Stage Company
Ginger Dayle, Producer

Stephen O'Neil, Producer

Plowshares Theatre Company

Rubicon Theatre

Abraham Salaman, Producer

Mark Schwartz, Producer

Sales Guru Consulting, LLC
Karen Paull

Barbara Schottenfeld, Producer

Shows By Jutta, Inc.
Ned Toth, Producer

David Sonkin, Producer

Special Entertainment Events
Christopher Raphael, Producer

Allen Spivak, Producer

Barrie & Lynn Wexler, Producers

Robin Tate, Producer

Stages Repertory Theatre, Houston, TX

Texarts Association

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