



**STAGE
DIRECTORS AND
CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 54

MARCH/APRIL 2010

your source for important notifications of all Union matters

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COVER

WHAT'S IN A FESTIVAL?

by BARBARA WOLKOFF, Senior Contract Administrator

AS the snow continues to fall and the noted groundhogs seem to be correct in their predictions, it is somewhat of a challenge to imagine the season of festivals is upon us. But, just as the snow will melt, the festivals will begin. In cities all across America, spring and summer bring a cornucopia of festivals. From the Fringes to the Centers, the opportunities can be bountiful. The contract related questions Directors and Choreographers may have are likely to be just as plentiful.

We may not be able to predict every question, or have answers to all you might pose, but as festival season approaches, it seems time to provide some assistance as you navigate the waters of festival directing and choreographing. We've put together some guidelines on what to ask and what you should know.

First and foremost, remember that as an SDC Member, Work Rules require you to file a contract wherever and whenever you are directing and choreographing for the stage (Associate Members may not file contracts with SDC but should take care to protect themselves and their work nonetheless). The appropriate contract for festivals, in most cases, is the Tier Contract. The Tier Contract sets fee minimums based on the size of the venue, the top ticket price and the number of performances, and includes protections for your right of first refusal, property rights and gives you arbitration protection.

Contracts should be signed and filed PRIOR to the first rehearsal. Festival schedules for pre-production, rehearsals and performances are often so compacted it can be easy to ignore or postpone this step in the interest of a production meeting, a technical emergency or any number of issues that seem more pressing as the first performance approaches. We cannot stress how important it is to make filing your contract a

PRIORITY. Though your producer is negotiating many contracts or agreements in addition to yours, making sure the producer understands the SDC minimum contract terms and contract filing process will help you both complete the process and address any issues that may arise before the issues threaten your focus on the production.

Remember, too, *that it is your responsibility to be sure the contract is filed whether or not the producer remembers to file.* So, while you wait for your approved copy of the Tier Contract from SDC, keep a copy in your files in case the copies sent to SDC get lost in the mail. Believe us, this has happened. There is so much promise and hard work in every piece on which you collaborate that it is critical to take this contracting obligation seriously to ensure you'll be as protected as possible.

Over the years, Members have shared with us some of the things they'd wished they'd known or done differently from the business side of things before agreeing to work on a Festival production. We encourage you to think about the following areas: press and marketing, scheduling, choreographic safety, number of performances per evening (same or different productions), availability of comp tickets for the industry, rights holders for future productions. Be sure your rider includes terms regarding any element of the above that is not included in the Tier Agreement but for which you want coverage. If you have a questions about this, please don't hesitate to call or email us.

Thinking ahead is your best defense against so many possible troubles. Besides your Union, the person who cares the most about you being protected is you (or maybe your mother). Taking steps to contract appropriately can help make your festival experience truly festive.

HEADER: *The Arabian Nights* directed by Member Mary Zimmerman at Berkeley Rep. Photo by Kevin Berne.

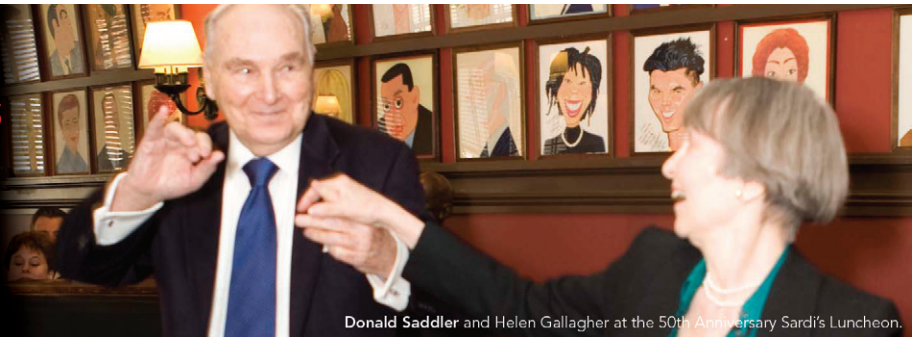


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Donald Saddler and Helen Gallagher at the 50th Anniversary Sardi's Luncheon.

NEWS FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

RANDOM THOUGHTS

Part-One by LAURA PENN

Facebook – I know, hardly a revolutionary concept. In fact SDC has been remiss for not having signed up sooner. I am not trying to make excuses now – but to Facebook or not to Facebook? It is a question and one we all seem to have to face one day. If we Facebook, how do we Facebook? Is it personal? A way to keep in touch with family? Is it a social activity, a “social networking” tool as they say? Is it professional? Are those one and the same? Fully integrated are we? Can we expect or should we desire boundaries at all anymore?

For now we set aside the larger questions and decide to step into cyberspace. We begin step-by-step. First, how do we make sure it grows into a vital, dynamic, important intersection? Nothing worse to imagine than a dull Facebook page!

A few years back I attended a conference where author Alison Fine spoke. She had just published a book, *Momentum Igniting Social Change in the Connected Age*, which explores our communication revolution. She spoke about how to take advantage of the explosion of platforms available to connect with constituencies and about the need for service organizations to be active and careful. She cautioned us to think about how to remain vital as people are able to more easily connect directly with each other. What is our enduring value if not the center of the community? If non-profits and service organizations are no longer the central hub, the one place people can go to get all the information they need, then how does this change how we serve our Members?

At the time, I was running a theatre and was fascinated but not completely tuned into those messages. I was caught by another equally important message – She cautioned against trying to manage relationships and

information in this new communication dynamic. I will never forget when she said, “If your blog doesn’t allow for uncensored interactivity then it isn’t a blog. It is a newsletter.” She had nailed something that I believe is a central issue for many of us – namely that we have worked so hard to “professionalize” our organizations, our unions, our theatres, our professions – that the idea of letting raw, unfiltered, non-strategic messaging just happen is frankly unimaginable to us. We have learned to proof and edit. We have all worked with consultants to clarify our “strategies” and now you want me to open up a direct line to just anyone? To say anything? Clearly there need to be some standards, some rules of etiquette. But beyond ensuring safe and respectful discourse, how do we learn to stop editing ourselves, and more importantly to enable our Members converse with each other and with us in a free-form way?

...how
does this
change
how we
serve our
Members?

Today I am remembering both of these messages from Alison Fine – needing to make sure we take advantage of every platform available to assist our Members. A couple months ago at an LA Membership Meeting the talk turned to Skyping. When asked “why don’t we Skype?” – I had no answer. I am knowledgeable enough to know that the technology is available and simple. Last month I promised a Board Member that by May we would be Skyping (not sure why I picked May – we should be able to get there sooner, ya think?). And our challenge here and now is to ensure that our website, Facebook, online communities – are ignited, well-managed (not over controlled), and inspiring. We need to become content providers and reach out to you and ask you to become providers of content as well.

So let’s begin...Become an SDC Facebook Fan.

To be continued...

BOOTLEGS: BAD FOR EVERYONE

by RANDY ANDERSON, Contract Administrator

Smile, you're on not so candid camera. That's right, turn around in your seat at the theatre and you'll find yourself staring into a semi-microscopic lense. Or, if you're an SDC Member you'll find that the show you may have labored over for years has now been fully captured and is being broadcast to the bedroom laptop of a Belgian musical theatre junkie. And no, your check isn't in the mail; you've actually just been robbed.

I've just spent fifteen minutes watching a terrible online video bootlegged from what would otherwise be a splendid live production. Even professional filming of live productions leave a lot to be desired, but bootlegged footage is unbearable. The shaky camera, the focus delays, and the sudden camera sweep from bright stage to darkness (which appears to be the operator hiding the camera from a suspicious usher) make for a very unpleasant viewing experience. Regardless, there is a great demand for these videos. A search on the Internet reveals countless avenues for purchasing or swapping bootlegged footage. These videos are broken down into casts, filming locations and even graded for video quality. People are going to great lengths to illegally capture live theatre. It is an issue that affects the entire theatre industry and creates some specific challenges for our Members.

Two major ways that bootlegging hurts Directors and Choreographers can be categorized as **property theft** and **financial theft**.

1. **Property theft** happens when bootlegged copies of a Director's and Choreographer's work are passed around, viewed multiple times, and studied for the purposes of duplication on stage. It is not acceptable to recreate someone else's work without permission. This bears repeating, especially now that a camera the size of a wallet can record an entire performance and beam it around the world that same night. It is because of this that we must be more vigilant in educating other artists about the need to secure permission to recreate another artist's direction and choreography.
2. **Financial theft**, while seemingly obvious, is often less considered. Not unlike illegally copied music and films, money changes hands in the exchange of these bootlegs. People are making money and you, the producers, and all the other artists are receiving no compensation. Not only is this theft immediate, but it also erodes potential future income.

As I wrote in an earlier column, theatrical unions, including SDC, have been working with our bargaining partners to ease legitimate filming restrictions for promotional purposes. In many cases there are strict rules regarding the usage, including time constraints and the prevention of serialization. But, ultimately, the entire show cannot be broadcast without some form of negotiation with our Members. Sadly the same cannot be said for illegal pirating.

This past year, SDC opened this discussion up to our Collective Bargaining partners and in some jurisdictions we have agreed to the following statement:

"Bargaining Partner and the SDC share a strong mutual interest in preventing any unauthorized stage reproduction of the direction

and choreography or any unlawful use of captured materials, and that those producers and the SDC and its Members have taken and will continue to take appropriate action to advance that interest."

You'll notice that you, as a Member of SDC, are included in this statement. So what is expected of you? What can you do to prevent unauthorized stage reproduction? Some good places to start are: Always report any illegal recording activity to the theatre management. Do not participate in the market by purchasing or swapping illegal footage. Educate your casts, colleagues, students, and anyone else you work with about the artistic and ethical corruption that plagiarism creates. This is a massive and monumental task and efforts must be made by the entire industry to ensure success.

Be sure to check our website and future newsletters for updates on this important initiative.

**The show you may
have labored over
for years has now
been fully captured
and is being
broadcast to the
bedroom laptop of
a Belgian musical
theatre junkie....
you've actually just
been robbed.**





Apollo directed by Member Nancy Keystone at Portland Center Stage. Photo by Owen Carey

FROM THE CONTRACT DESK

SDC Completes Negotiations on Several Agreements

by MAURO MELLENO, Director of Contract Administration

The conclusion of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 have yielded positive results in SDC contract and Independent Producer Agreement negotiations.

Dinner Theatre Agreement (DTA)

SDC Contract Administrator RANDY ANDERSON led the Dinner Theatre negotiations with the two contract signatories, Marriott Lincolnshire and Westchester Broadway Theatre. The new four-year contract is effective 1/1/2010 – 12/31/2013 with 3% increases in Fees and Royalty payments each year. Over the term of the Agreement, the Health contributions increase 26% at Westchester Broadway and 42% at Marriott Lincolnshire. In addition to the above-mentioned signatories, Golden Apple Dinner Theatre, Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, and New Theatre Restaurant negotiate Independent Producer Agreements referencing the DTA contract. Staff would like to thank the following Members for their help on the Dinner Theatre Contract: **Patti Wilcox, Donna Drake, Victoria Bussert, Michael Susko, Gary John La Rosa, Tom Polum, Rachel Rockwell, Richard Stafford, Richard Roland, David Edwards and Peggy Taphorn.**

Steppenwolf Theatre Company

SDC has had an Independent Producer Agreement with Steppenwolf Theatre since 2000. SDC Contract Administrator RENÉE LASHER successfully negotiated the new four-year Agreement effective 7/1/2009 – 6/30/2013. Though Fees were frozen in the first three years of the contract, there is a significant health contribution increase of 50% (from \$800 per contract to \$1200). Fees increase 3% in year four with another significant increase in health to \$1300. SDC would like to thank David Hawkanson and David Schmitz at Steppenwolf for acknowledging the current challenges we face with regard to health insurance coverage. SDC Staff would also like to thank Members **Jessica Thebus, Amy Morton and Eric Simonson** for their time and input during these talks.

New York Stage & Film

A renewed Independent Producer Agreement between SDC and NY Stage & Film effective 1/1/2010 – 12/31/2012, was completed in January. Fee increases on mainstage productions are 1.93% in year one, 3.15% in year two, and 3.06% in year three. Fee increases in Workshop productions are 3.85% in year one, 3.70% in year two, and 3.57% in year three. Health contribution increases are \$25 per year per contract (10% over the life of the contract).

ENCORES! Summer Stars

Senior Contract Administrator BARBARA WOLKOFF completed negotiations with City Center ENCORES! for the 2010 Summer Stars production. The Agreement is modeled on the LORT A+ Theatre rates with a \$25,000 Fee, which includes five weeks and five days of rehearsal, and a Recognition payment (royalty) at Broadway minimum that begins if the production runs beyond the originally scheduled number of performances.

Next up in SDC negotiations is the renewal of the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre Agreement and the Off-Broadway Contract. If you are interested in being part of the Off-Broadway negotiating Committee, please contact Barbara Wolkoff at the SDC office (BWolkoff@SDCWeb.org).



LEFT: Michael Mayer directing Dallas Roberts and Collin Farrell in *A Home at the End of the World* (Warner Bros. Pictures Inc.) RIGHT: *Beyond the Sea*, starring Kevin Spacey and Kate Bosworth; choreographed by Rob Ashford (Lions Gate Entertainment)

Member Services Update

by GRETCHEN M. MICHELFELD, Membership Coordinator

2010 got off to a grand start with two fabulous DCN's in January and February.

In January we had a Roundtable discussion about the nature of being a "hyphen." We talked about the unique challenges and rewards of being a director-choreographer, a playwright-director, a designer-director, etc. Our special guests were playwright-director **Joe Calarco** and playwright-performer-director **Yvette Heyliger**. Both artists were truly inspiring as they challenged each person in the room not to resist being pigeon-holed and boxed in. We had a wonderful surprise in the form of Mr. **Tony Walton** (director-designer) who joined us round the table and invigorated the conversation and reminded us that one talent can inform another and make the work richer as a whole.

In February **Michael Mayer** and **Rob Ashford** spoke to a jam-packed room about working in film. Each of these thoroughly accomplished theatre artists took us along for the ride as they described the emotional and intellectual journeys they embarked on right after they "got the call" from Hollywood. As burgeoning film artists, they talked about everything from the undeniable importance of believing in your own talent, to the invaluable prep work of watching DVD's and reading screenplays.

The March 30th DCN will be another panel about working in Festivals. In April **Edie Cowan** will lead a panel discussion about working with a dance arranger. We're working on some very special guests for each evening and will let you know ASAP!



MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

All **Seattle-area** Members and Associates are invited to join SDC Executive Director LAURA PENN and new Executive Board Member **Linda Hartzell** at the Seattle Membership Meeting. Laura and Linda are eager to share SDC's goals and achievements for 2010 and to understand the specific needs and issues of Puget Sound-area Members.. Bring your questions and concerns. They want your feedback!

WHEN: Tuesday March 30th, 2010. 5-7 p.m.
WHERE: The Staff Lounge of the Seattle Children's Theatre
201 Thomas St. Seattle Center

DETAILS: Wine and cheese will be served.
Please come to the glass vestibule at the southeast corner of the building for entrance.

RSVP Email Gretchen at GMichelfeld@SDCweb.org

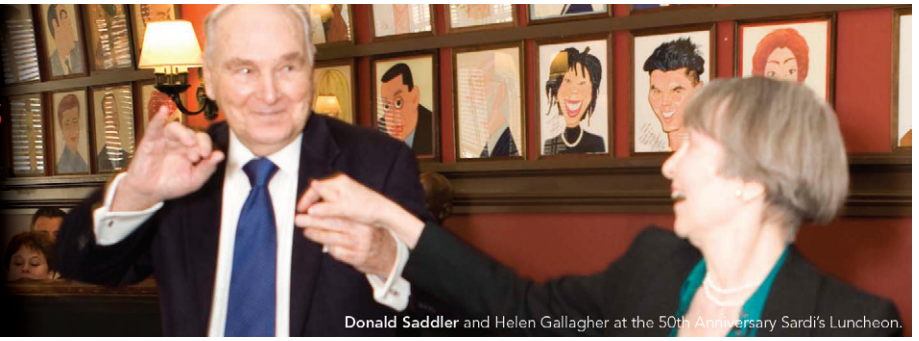
ALSO...

On **Monday April 5th** (time and place TBA) DC-area Members and Associates are invited to a **Membership Meeting** with Contract Administrator RENÉE LASHER and Membership Coordinator GRETCHEN M. MICHELFELD.

And on **Monday May 17th** the **Semi-Annual Membership Meeting** takes place in New York City. Time and place TBA.

Stay tuned for more information!





Donald Saddler and Helen Gallagher at the 50th Anniversary Sardi's Luncheon.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

I HOPE I GET IT: A CANDID INTERVIEW WITH TARA JEANNE VALLEE

by EVAN SHOEMAKE, Contract Administrator



Certainly most theatre industry folk will recognize the reference to one of the most noted musicals in the canon, *A Chorus Line*, and it seems a simple transition to focus on dancers when speaking about musicals. After all, they are

the ones who put themselves on that proverbial line each time they audition for a show. But what about that person behind the work lamp, that person standing in front of the dancers in an outfit not unlike the one most of them are wearing, that person giving them the eight count? With little doubt a choreographer can often be an unsung hero, that individual involved in a project who, because they often so closely resemble the dancers and actors for whom they create, might not seem to speak with the loudest voice or "drive" the production. But as any choreographer, director, dancer, actor, set designer, lighting designer, costume designer or patron knows, a successful musical cannot function without a choreographer and because many choreographers find themselves standing outside the spotlight, we decided this would be a great opportunity to spotlight an SDC Choreographer, Tara Jeanne Vallee.

Ms. Vallee was recently selected as a finalist in DanceBreak 2010 alongside five other choreographers, including another SDC Member, **Vince Pesce**. She was chosen from an incredibly large applicant pool and showcased her talents at DanceBreak 2010 on March 1st. As noted on the DanceBreak Foundation website (www.dancebreak.org), the purpose of this program is to "identify and nurture talented early and mid-career musical theatre choreographers, and offer them an exceptional platform to showcase their work for an audience of industry leaders who can be most beneficial in advancing their careers." While Ms. Vallee is certainly worthy of being selected for this opportunity, her career has progressed quite well on its own since leaving Rochester, NY. She has assisted on shows at the Goodspeed Opera House, and choreographed numerous productions at regional theatres such as Surflight Theatre and The Palace Theatre. Additionally she choreographed the National Tour of *Cirque Dreams Jungle Fantasy*, and has been involved with multiple productions in NYC.

Recently I had the opportunity to chat with Ms. Vallee as she continues to prepare for her "debut" at DanceBreak and learned a little bit more about a choreographer's process, what it's like to work with family, and what we can expect from her pieces at DanceBreak.

Did you begin your dance training in Rochester, NY?

VALLEE: I danced in Rochester and Buffalo but I went to college for TV broadcasting. My parents thought it would be more practical to go to school for broadcasting but I make my living as a choreographer and dancer.

What do you consider your signature style?

VALLEE: My signature style is kind of a mix between Gene Kelly and Michael Kidd. I love using very universal movement that everybody does in their lives and heightening it. Everyone can dance, it is a universal thing. We may not all be amazing entertainers but dance is a form of expression that we are all capable of. I also love to see musical theatre coming from a very organic place, very grounded and super stylized and nothing beats musical comedy.

Just to shake it up a little, then, what is the one show, if you were able to pick, that you'd want to choreograph, where would you want to stage it and who would be your lead?

VALLEE: I would love to imagine for the stage one of the classic Gene Kelly films. *It's Always Fair Weather* comes to mind. Where would I stage it? Hmm, well, I guess Broadway; they'd have the most money! As far as casting, I believe in finding new talent so I would love to do a national casting call for the next Gene Kelly. Maybe we could turn it into a TV show...hmm.

Now that we're talking about choreographing a show, can you tell us a little bit about what your creative process is like? Where do you start? How do you communicate your message to the director/cast/designers?

VALLEE: My process, internally, as far as choreography goes, begins by looking at the music, especially if I'm working on a new piece. We have to start there because that's how I get inspired. I sort of map out logistically what the story arc is and how to build the number. I choreograph in my head a through line, what is on the stage as far as numbers of people and what visuals I want. Then I go in and weave in the movement. I'm a layered choreographer. I don't like a lot of unison dancing so that when I do use unison choreography it is intentional and powerful.

Once the movement is in place and the visuals are laid out, then I'll start with the principals and make sure they're telling the story and are clear with their movement and then formulate the ensemble around them.

Before I do all of this, of course, I'll talk to the director and go over what he/she wants. Does he want the number to be a star vehicle, is the choreography the feature, what does he basically want to see and what does he want the audience to gain. Once I'm in the studio I love to collaborate; I feel like you learn a lot in the studio. I will work with the music director in putting the piece up and then check in with the director to make sure it is following his vision. I also take into account the dancers I'm working with. For instance, with DanceBreak, I knew who I wanted to cast and now that I have them I can choreograph around them and their talents. You really take who you're given and bring them forward and make them shine. I love finding little things about people that they can bring to the table.

When I'm communicating, I'm a very visual person. I like to teach visually, that's part of my process and I hope I can always do it, get up and show them what I mean, how their body works differently than mine. That's how I was taught. It helps not only working on that particular show; it also allows me to know the dancers' lines and capabilities for the future.

Speaking of working with directors, what is it like to work with your spouse, SDC Member Matthew Hamel?

VALLEE: We started working together on tour when we were performing. Honestly I love coming home and being able to debrief. With all the relationships in the theatre, he's someone I can speak to openly with and trust. We have a connection. We finish each other's sentences onstage and off and to see that onstage, it's beautiful and seamless.

So tell us about your DanceBreak application process.

VALLEE: I'd never applied before so I got lucky because I had my reel compiled last year. Fortunately for me I had worked for someone on a multi-million dollar Christmas production that allowed me to work with 22 talented dancers. I also worked with the youngArts program on their New York presentation. They brought the silver and gold high school scholarship winners in and we had 24 hours to work the show. One of the pieces I did for them involved a modern dancer, a jazz dancer, an Irish step dancer and a tap dancer performing in front of a filmmaker, who was also a winner. These were tremendous opportunities that allowed me to have a versatile reel.

Because DanceBreak wants to see specific things, such as telling a complete story, and has a reel time limit of four minutes, most of the work in my application process was editing.

In terms of dancers, I chose people who were tremendous actors. This was really important in my casting process.

Why do you think it's beneficial, if it is, for a choreographer to have a program like DanceBreak? Would you encourage other SDC Members to apply? Why?

VALLEE: Absolutely I'd encourage other SDC Members to apply. The proof is in the pudding as they say. It's been very beneficial; a lot of choreographers have gone on to big things. It's a great visibility for your choreography and even if you don't get a job from it, you're on people's radar, people recognize your name. It's a huge learning experience. It's kind of amazing because you're not just choreographing, you're directing, writing, casting, producing, and set designing. There's a lot more to it, you have to envision everything. There's a learning process, a high stress one for sure. It's so worth it.

Shifting gears a little bit, what do you consider some of the challenges, issues, hurdles facing Choreographers today, if there are any?

VALLEE: I feel like the combo of the Director/Choreographer that the industry has turned to is not always the best way to go. For some shows I believe it's okay but nine times out of ten, a show would benefit from the checks and balances of a separate director and Choreographer. There are many times when one falls down to the other, not for the lack of their talent, but for the time, the focus, the importance needed to be placed on each specific department. You don't get that pull that the other person provides.

As we wrap things up, are there any parting thoughts?

VALLEE: I am excited for the future. DanceBreak is going to be a great night and I'm and I'm looking forward to what the other Choreographers have done. Hopefully we will form a support system and a kind of choreographer family through the process!

BUILDING BRIDGES: STRENGTHENING OUR UNION BY SOLIDIFYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GUILDS AND UNIONS

An Interview with President **Karen Azenberg**

by GRETCHEN M. MICHELFELD, Membership Coordinator

As SDC continues to build relationships with other performing arts unions and guilds, we check in with President Azenberg about the progress thus far.

So tell us about this new outreach initiative.

AZENBERG: Basically we want to be able to have greater flow of information between all of the guilds and unions resulting in advancing our industry and ensuring mutual strength at the bargaining table. In these challenging times, the exchange of information creates stronger negotiating positions for all of us.

Let's start with the DGA.

AZENBERG: Last year Laura Penn and I met with **Gil Cates**, former president of the DGA and a long-time Member of SDC. There is a huge number of crossover Members and all the of the issues relating to New Media are now actually concerns for both organizations. There will be ways we can support one another as we start to deal with all of these new opportunities, the artistic execution of filming a Broadway show for instance.

What do you mean?

AZENBERG: Simply put, how do the visions of DGA and SDC artists intersect when a live theatrical performance is captured on film?

What about Equity?

AZENBERG: We're going to participate in a very important casting discussion with AEA on March 2nd. Again, there are so many crossover issues concerning the substance and style of auditions.

And the Dramatists Guild?

AZENBERG: Stephen Schwartz and I had a lovely lunch last month. We're looking forward to addressing issues of mutual concern for both organizations. His son, **Scott Schwartz** is a Member and it's clear Stephen understands the unique concerns of directors and choreographers.



Are you eligible for health benefits?

The arrival of April brings with it the beginning of a new six-month eligibility period for participants in the SDC-League Health Fund. Eligibility notices have been sent to newly eligible participants, as well as Option B participants with ongoing eligibility. If you are currently an Option A Participant (on Oxford, Kaiser, or Premium Reimbursement) and have continuing eligibility, you will not receive an updated eligibility notice. If you believe that you have new eligibility for the cycle beginning April 1st and have not received notification, please call the Fund Office at 212-869-8129, or send an email to Health@SDCweb.org.

What do I do if I lose my health coverage?

If you have been covered under Option A (with Oxford or Kaiser), and lose your eligibility for paid benefits, you will receive a COBRA notice from the Fund Office. COBRA is an acronym for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1996. In short, this law allows people to pay out of pocket to keep their health insurance for a limited time in the event that they lose employment or have insufficient work to maintain paid health coverage.

So the good news is that COBRA lets you keep your health insurance through our Plan. The bad news is that you have to pay for it out of pocket. However, there are now generous subsidy programs in place that can make the coverage affordable. Thanks to President

Obama's stimulus package, the federal government will subsidize 65% of COBRA premiums for up to 15 months. In addition, thanks to the successful lobbying efforts of a coalition of entertainment unions (including SDC), New York State residents can take advantage of a 50% subsidy of COBRA premiums for up to 12 months.

The subsidies could be taken consecutively or concurrently. Simply put, if you are a New York resident and use both subsidies at the same time, you could maintain your coverage under COBRA at no cost for a year. If you use the subsidies consecutively, you could maintain your coverage for up to 27 months at relatively low cost. The details can be complex and not everyone will qualify. Give us a call at 212-869-8129 and we'll be happy to answer your questions and explore your options.

What other health care resources are available?

If you haven't qualified for coverage under the SDC-League Health Fund, there are still options open to you. We have compiled a list of resources that you may find helpful. Please go to the SDC website at www.SDCweb.org and click on "Health and Pension" at the upper right portion of the homepage. In the dropdown menu, click on "Health Resources" for organizations and contact information. As always, if we can help in any way, give us a call at the Fund Office at 212-869-8129.



WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CANCER RIGHTS ACT OF 1998

On October 21, 1998, Congress passed the "Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998." This law requires all health plans offering mastectomy coverage to provide coverage for reconstructive surgery.

Because the SDC-League Health Plan does offer medical and surgical benefits in connection with a mastectomy, our Plan also provides benefits for certain reconstructive surgery. In particular, our Plan provides to a participant who is receiving (or presents a claim to receive) benefits in connection with a mastectomy and who elects breast reconstruction in connection with such mastectomy, coverage for the following:

- reconstruction of the breast on which the mastectomy was performed;
- surgery and reconstruction of the other breast to produce a symmetrical appearance; and
- prostheses and treatment of physical complications associated with all stages of mastectomy, including lymph edemas, in a manner determined in consultation with the attending physician and the patient.

This coverage is provided by Oxford Health Plans for our New York area Members, and by Kaiser Permanente for our California Members. Coverage is also available through Option B. In addition, to the extent permitted by applicable law, this coverage may be subject to benefit maximums and co-payment provisions that may apply under your Plan. You should review carefully the provisions of your Plan regarding any such restrictions that may apply. Please remember that, as with all benefits, the Board of Trustees reserves the right to amend, modify and/or terminate benefits at any time in accordance with the official Plan documents and applicable law. If you have any questions regarding this coverage, or any other benefits available to you through the Funds, please contact John Everson at 212-869-8129 or by email at JEverson@SDCweb.org.



Apollo directed by Member Nancy Keystone at Portland Center Stage. Photo by Owen Carey

SDCF FOUNDATION UPDATE

IN HIGH GEAR

by ELLEN RUSCONI, Associate Director of the Foundation

We've been in high gear at SDCF.

In the last two months we placed **Observers** on productions in Connecticut, New York, California, and both Washingtons. A huge thank you to the Mentor Directors and Choreographers leading these productions: **Christopher Bayes, Sarah Benson, Jonathan Demme, Maurice Hines, Terry Johnson, Mark Lamos, Kathleen Marshall, Casey Nicholaw, Charles Randolph-Wright, Damaso Rodriguez, Leigh Silverman, Chuck Smith, Susan Stroman, and Chay Yew.** We have room for a few more Observerships through June 30th. If you are an SDC Member who would like to have an Observer on your upcoming production, please let me know.

Observership Finalists should keep an eye out in the next few weeks for several opportunities happening in New York and around the country between now and June 30th. In addition, our Observership application will be available beginning mid-April. Early applicants will have access to more opportunities so plan on submitting the application by June 1st.

SDC Member Director/Choreographer **Rob Ashford** was generous in agreeing to host the **2010 Ockrent Fellow** on his Broadway production of *Promises, Promises*. Gregg Wiggins was selected for the Fellowship from a record number of 72 nominees! Thank you to all applicants and to the (again, record number!) 86 SDC Members who took the time to nominate an emerging director/choreographer for this Fellowship and to our selection committee who handled a difficult assignment with grace.

Also, look for a call for nominees very very soon (two weeks?) for our **Gielgud Fellowship**, an opportunity on an upcoming classical theatre piece.

We've almost completed our inaugural year of the **Guest Artist Initiative**. SDC Member **John Dillon** took this program from concept to fruition, and it has proven to be very popular among both schools and SDC Members. Applicants to our first two Guest Artist Initiative opportunities – Arizona State University and Fordham University – have been collected and submitted to the schools. The schools are now reviewing applications. Through this program, we facilitate the hiring of a

professional Director or Choreographer for the school by posting the position for SDC Members, collecting all application materials – as requested by the school – from individual applicants, organizing and sending materials to the schools by their deadline. The school makes all hiring decisions. In addition, for two selected schools, SDCF provides partial funding for the Guest Artist fee.

We have one more opportunity for this grant cycle. We will be collecting application materials for a production of *The Wizard of Oz* taking place in early 2011 at Michigan State. Please watch our website for upcoming details.

Our next application process for colleges and universities will start in mid-March, with a deadline in May. Please look on the Foundation portion of SDCweb.org (scroll to Guest Artist Initiative) for more guidelines and application form.

With all of these programs happening, you're probably asking yourself, "**What can I do to help?**" Thanks for asking!

1. **Have \$ but no time?** Donate to SDCF! We stretch and stretch and stretch \$20, but we still need that \$20 in order to do the stretching. Visit SDCweb.org (go to Foundation and scroll to Donate Now) or send a check payable to SDCF. All proceeds are tax deductible.
2. **Have time but no \$?** Let me know - we might be able to put you on an SDCF Committee or put you to work for a few hours on a project.
3. **Have connections?** If you know a corporation or foundation or individuals that might like to hear more about SDCF's programs, please connect us! We're interested in building our community and reaching out to those with similar interests.

And finally, congratulations to recent **DanceBreak 2010** participants: Tricia Brouk, Daniel Gwartzman, **Vince Pesce**, Alex Sanchez, Marcos Santana, and **Tara Jeanne Vallee**. Former SDCF Board Member Melinda Atwood produced a terrific program on March 1st showcasing the work of six choreographers. We are proud to continue to fund this program and look forward to DanceBreak 2011.

OTHER UNION NEWS
NOTEWORTHY

NEW MEMBERS

May Adrales
Director
Brooklyn, NY*

Craig J. George
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Ed Herendeen
Director
Shepherdstown, WV

Steven Hoggett
Choreographer
UK

Laura Josepher
Director
NYC *

Liz McConahay Wanfried
Director/Choreographer
Scotch Plains, NJ

William F. Osetek
Director
Berwyn, IL

Evan Pappas
Director
NYC

Sharon Rosen
Director
NYC

Mark J. Schneider
Director
Weehawken, NJ*

Mark Shanahan
Director
NYC

Moritz von Stuelpnagel
Director
Rego Park, NY

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Laura Graham
Director
Gardiner, ME

Jessica Hutchinson
Director
Chicago, IL

Aja Kane
Director/Choreographer
Lockport, NY

Jim Knipple
Director
Camp Hill, PA

Piper Laurie
Director
LA, CA

Laura Lundy-Paine
Director
Portland, OR

Brian Newberg
Director
Albany, OR

Joel David Santner
Director
Washington, DC

Michelle Seaton
Director
Jersey City, NJ

Scott Seidl
Director
Madison, TN

Brian Shnipper
Director
Los Angeles, CA

Alexandra Siladi
Director
Stamford, CT

Marlene Thorn Taber
Director/Choreographer
NYC

Mia Walker
Director
Cambridge, MA

*upgrade from Associate

NEW OR RENEWED IPAS

New York Stage & Film (Individual IPA)

Cape Playhouse (TSS)

National Yiddish Theatre (ANTC)

Gateway Playhouse (CORST)

Williamstown Theatre Festival - Nikos Stage (CORST)

New York Classical Theatre (ANTC)



IN MEMORIAM

The Executive Board and Staff were saddened to learn of the passing of SDC Founding Member **IRA CIRKER** on February 10, 2010. As many of you know, Ira started his career as the youngest cast member of Moss Hart's *Winged Victory* on Broadway and went on to become an award-winning theatre producer and director as well as an Emmy Award-winning television director. Along the way Ira had some unique adventures; he was the telecast director of JFK's Inaugural Gala and an assistant on the world-famous production of the Kennedy birthday party that featured Marilyn Monroe singing "Happy Birthday!" He was also a Member of the Directors Guild of America, and, in 1993, was inducted into the National Academy for Television Arts and Sciences' Silver Circle. Our sympathies go out to Ira's longtime companion and business partner, Leonard Herbst, as well as to the rest of his large family.