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SPRING 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

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**THE BLESSINGS OF
CHARLES "CHUCK" DAVIS**



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Johnny Clegg Band

Mariachi Las Reynas

Mariachi Sol de Mexico

Niyaz featuring Azam Ali

The Nile Project

Tomatito

Vicente Amigo

Villalobos Brothers

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California Guitar Trio + Montreal Guitare Trio

George Perris "Picture This" in Concert

Jonatha Brooke **"My Mother Has 4 Noses"**

Karla Bonoff and Jimmy Webb

Loudon Wainwright III **"Surviving Twin"**

Loudon Wainwright III and Iris Dement

Martha Redbone and Buffy Sainte-Marie

Martha Redbone **"Bone Hill"**

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|

BUSINESS COMMITTEE FOR THE ARTS BCA 10 Honoring the Business Community

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|--|--|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|
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| NV Energy and the NV Energy Foundation | Jorge M. Pérez, Chairman, The Related Group 2015 BCA Leadership Award | Prospective Inc. | Spec's Wines, Spirits & Finer Foods | The Trust Company of Kansas <small>Credited Trust of Professional Advisors</small> | U.S. Bank |

ANNUAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS Honoring Arts Community Leaders and Tourism Partners

| | | |
|--|---|---|
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| Jeff Hawthorne Regional Arts and Culture Council, Michael Newton Award for Innovative arts funding | Richard E. Huff Irving Arts Center, Selina Roberts Ottum Award for arts leadership ⁽¹⁾ | Ann Marie Miller ArtPride New Jersey, Alene Valkanas State Arts Advocacy Award |
| The City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department with Destination El Paso ⁽²⁾ | Arts Council Napa Valley with Visit Napa Valley ⁽³⁾ | Xiangyu "Lucy" Wang NABE Foundation Americans for the Arts Scholarship Awardee ⁽⁴⁾ |

PUBLIC LEADERSHIP IN THE ARTS AWARDS Honoring Elected Officials and Artist Advocates

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Florida State Senator Dan Baetz Public Leadership in the Arts Award for State Arts Leadership ⁽¹⁾ | Governor John Rickonlooper Public Leadership in the Arts Award for Governors Arts Leadership ⁽²⁾ | Mayor of Nashua, NH Donnolee Lozeau Public Leadership in the Arts Award for Local Arts Leadership ⁽³⁾ |
| Lt. Gov. Matt Mielwets (SD) Public Leadership in the Arts Award for State Arts Leadership | Mayor of Houston, TX Annise Parker Public Leadership in the Arts Award for Local Arts Leadership | Riverside County, CA Public Leadership in the Arts Award for County Arts Leadership ⁽⁴⁾ |
| Sen. Tom Udall (NM) National Award for Congressional Arts Leadership | AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS THANKS ALL WHO SUPPORT THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION IN AMERICA. VISIT US AT WWW.AMERICANSFORHEARTS.ORG | |

(1) presented in conjunction with National Endowment for the Arts. (2) Arts Destination Marketing Award, presented in conjunction with Destination Marketing Association International. (3) presented in conjunction with United States Conference of Mayors. (4) presented in conjunction with National Association of Counties. (5) presented in conjunction with National Lieutenant Governors Association. (6) presented in conjunction with National Conference of State Legislatures (7) scholarship presented in conjunction with the NABE Foundation, the charitable arm of the National Association for Business Economics (NABE)

INSIDE ARTS

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SPRING 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS



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BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

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COVER: Pianist Joey Alexander was one of more than 1,000 varied showcases at APAP|NYC 2016.

ADAM FESSECCER/APAP

**Thank you for attending
APAP|NYC 2016!**
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Jan. 4-8, 2019
Jan. 10-14, 2020

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INSIDE ARTS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

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APAP is a national service and advocacy organization with nearly 1,600 members worldwide dedicated to bringing artists and audiences together. Leading the field, APAP works to effect change through professional development, resource sharing and civic engagement.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



I'd like to start with a thank you and a congratulations to all the attendees of APAP|NYC 2016. What a busy time January is, and what a dynamic time to be together amid so many experts, artists, leaders and members. Most of us attend APAP|NYC primarily to see the artists, hear the speakers and network. This year's theme – MAKERS – served as a reminder of the greater implications of everyone's work beyond the conference walls. We always want to reaffirm that we're all creative; we're all makers in one sense or another.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Inside Arts*, with several reports from the conference, including a crucial discussion of the role of presenters when communities are in crisis, and a

lively interview with Charles "Chuck" Davis, recipient of this year's APAP Award of Merit. Davis was so gracious in his acceptance speech, a time he used to get the audience singing and dancing. It was a joyful moment.

If you weren't able to attend the conference or want to revisit special moments, you can watch videos of select sessions at apapnyc.org.

In addition to stories about the conference, we have a roundup of insights and advice from colleagues in the performing arts festival field. It's our spring issue, after all, and we know that festivals have always been and are increasingly some of the most popular events of the year. Many appeal to families and reach out to communities in exciting and engaging ways. They also offer the opportunity to gather the best in a particular genre, such as jazz, dance or theater.

Festivals are flexible and adaptable, and even though they are as old as the Greeks, they have a contemporary resonance that makes them vital to our performing world. Is there a festival idea you want to implement? There's inspiration in the following pages.

We look forward to hearing from you throughout the year and to seeing you at APAP|NYC 2017 – when we will celebrate our 60th year as an association.

Mario Garcia Durham, PRESIDENT & CEO

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Watch for the new **KNOWLEDGE** edition of *Inside Arts* magazine in June.

Our survey and guide to the hottest writing in the field will be the brightest collection you've read this year.

Get ready to get smarter.

DakhaBrakha

Emel Mathlouthi

Maarja Nuut **Pussy Riot**

- Amaan & Ayaan Ali Khan
- Amjad Ali Khan
- Belem
- Cambalache
- Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino
- Cimarrón
- East Gypsy Band featuring Tim Ries
- Freddy Clarke & Wobbly World
- Hector Del Curto Tango
- Hermeto Pascoal
- Huun Huur Tu
- King Sunny Ade
- La Bottine Souriante
- Lautari
- Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares
- Les Yeux Noirs
- Nomfusi
- Paris Combo
- Puerto Candalaria
- Quetzal
- Rocky Dawuni
- Rolling Stones Project
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It's a question that dance writers and publicists for dance companies have asked since the beginning of time – or at least since 1892: What's the angle for *The Nutcracker* this year?

Frankly, it's a tough nut to crack. The ballet reappears every December. It rarely changes. And what more is there to say about a magical sugar-plum fairy and a wooden statue that transforms into a handsome prince?

But if anyone is up to the challenge, it's Meghan Swartz of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. She brings a natural curiosity to her role as the company's associate director of communications, which serves her well at Christmastime and throughout the year.

"I'm not a dancer, so I think that helps," says Swartz, who has been with PBT for four years. "The ballet is so interesting to me. The dancers' art, their skill, their talent is so

different from anything I could do. It's so incredibly physical, so nuanced, almost otherworldly. They're incredible athletes."

As it turns out, they're also incredible makeup artists. Which snagged the ballet company's principal dancer Julia Erickson a multimedia feature in the *Pittsburgh Gazette's* style section, where she shares tips, tricks and favorite products. (FYI: MAC Studio Fix Fluid foundation is a must.)

"This sprung out of a conversation I had with [dance writer] Sara Bauknecht about another behind-the-scenes feature," Swartz says. "She came to the studios to learn some of the steps, and she was intrigued by the fact that ballet dancers are jacks of all trades – they're also professional makeup artists and hairstylists."

Finding those unexpected story hooks and forging great relationships with the arts media in Pittsburgh and beyond have resulted in great buzz for the company. And a lot of it stems from Swartz's willingness to think beyond the stage.

"I try to get reporters and photographers behind the scenes as much as possible, because they always walk away with a new idea," she says.

In one case, a *Pittsburgh Magazine* photographer came to shoot a portrait of the company's costumer for a story on her 40th anniversary with PBT and ended up doing a full photo essay on the costume shop. In another, Swartz promoted an upcoming performance of *Cinderella* by pitching a clever story to the local National Public Radio affiliate: what it takes to break in a pair of perfectly fitted pointe shoes.

Swartz's enthusiasm is contagious, and her ability to continually see her company's art form with fresh eyes is a boon to her colleagues on the stage and in the media.

KELLY PERKOVICH

“The dancers are really multidimensional. It’s really fun working around such elite artists,” Swartz says. “They are so artistic in different parts of their lives that it’s not uncommon to find a dancer who is a really good cook or runs a side business or sews and designs their own dance apparel.”

Sounds like another pitch in the making for the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

ASSESSING THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts is launching the leadership initiative Creativity Connects as part of its 50th anniversary. This three-part effort will demonstrate how the arts contribute to the nation’s creative ecosystem, investigate the ways in which support systems for artists are changing and explore how the arts can connect with other creative sectors. Creativity Connects includes an infrastructure report that will investigate the types of artistic practices and how they’re expanding and the key resources that artists need to produce their best work; an interactive digital systems graphic

that shows the elements of the arts-based creative ecosystem in the U.S., focusing on how the arts connect with non-arts sectors; and an ArtWorks pilot grant opportunity to support partnerships between organizations both within and outside the arts sectors. This initiative will allow the NEA to investigate the conditions and trends affecting, shaping and promoting creativity in the U.S. and examine the ways in which the arts sector, government, for-profit sector and philanthropic community can collaborate to support the arts, grow our nation’s creative economy and enhance the contributions of creative workers to our society. For program details, visit arts.gov/50th/creativity-connects.

FAN(ALE) CLUB

How did Italian opera singer Paolo Fanale attract the level of buzz usually reserved for pop stars? By changing the tenor of the conversation. The 33-year-old made headlines thanks to a two-minute video that the Orchestre de Paris posted to its Facebook page. At press time, Fanale’s rehearsal of Rossini’s *Stabat Mater* had garnered



COURTESY ZEMSKY/OREEN ARTISTS MANAGEMENT

Tenor Paolo Fanale’s T-shirt photo went viral.

Jazz



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Toshiko Akiyoshi Trio Nea Jazz Master
Brian Lynch
Eddie Daniels
Marlena Shaw
Mills Brothers

EDDIE PALMIERI
Nea Jazz Master

Little Joe
Y La Familia
Pete Escovedo
Orchestra



Claudia Villela -
Brazilian

Orquesta
La Moderna
Tradición -
Cuban Danzon



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Heatherwick Studio and Diamond Schmitt Architects have been hired to re-envision Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall (pictured before renovations).

nearly 1.7 million views. But why? The clip depicts Fanale singing in a fitted T-shirt that reveals his tattoos. While his movie-star looks and tremendous voice fueled social media commentary, Fanale attributes the video's success to something else entirely: novelty. "Maybe if I had been singing in a tuxedo it would have been taken for granted," he said in a story by the Italian news agency ANSA. "Actually, Michele Pertusi and I were so exhausted that we didn't feel like changing for the open dress rehearsal. I think the success

of this video shows that people want to see something different. We need to refresh it, update it, because after all, opera is modern: Mozart is like 'the Bold and the Beautiful.' It's only a matter of perspective." Which raises the question: How can your organization refresh the perspective on your art form?

SOUND DESIGN CHOICE

After an intense two-year competition, Heatherwick Studio and Diamond Schmitt Architects have

been selected to lead the renovation and re-imagining of the David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center's largest concert hall. This collaboration combines each firm's experience designing innovative public spaces and specialized expertise in the design and execution of top performing arts halls. Heatherwick Studio is known for designing a cornerless university building in Singapore, a master plan for the new Google campus in Silicon Valley (a collaboration with BIG) and Zeitz MOCAA, an art museum in Cape

MARK RUSSELL, LINCOLN CENTER

Transitions



Industry veteran **MARTIN BRAGG** has joined the staff of Arts Consulting Group Canada as senior vice president. Bragg will lead the firm's Canadian subsidiary

in partnership with ACG president Bruce D. Thibodeau and ACG senior vice presidents throughout North America. His experience in arts management includes leadership positions at the Alberta Ballet and the School of Alberta Ballet in Calgary, Canadian Stage Company in Toronto, Vancouver Playhouse and the 1992 World's Fair in Seville, Spain.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has appointed **MARY CARACCIOLI**, an Emmy Award-winning journalist and



media executive, as its chief of public relations and media strategy. Caraccioli will direct and lead the organization's public relations and media strategies and messaging for all institutional initiatives, programs and performances. She has created and presented award-winning content for broadcast, cable and digital media, including work at ABC, CNBC, FOX, Comcast and Al Jazeera America. She most recently served as senior vice president of news and planning at Al Jazeera America.

TERRI TROTTER, secretary of APAP's board of directors, is the new president and chief executive officer of Midland Center for the Arts in Midland, Michigan. She succeeds Michael D. Hayes, who



recently retired after serving as president and CEO since October 2010. Trotter comes to MCFTA from the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in Sun Valley, Idaho, where she served as CEO and executive

director since 2014. Prior to that, she held numerous executive leadership positions at the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas, serving as chief operating officer during the final five years of her tenure there.

This year, the Sphinx Organization will honor three artists of color for artistic excellence, outstanding work ethic, a spirit of determination and great potential for leadership. **JULIA BULLOCK**, **GABRIEL CABEZAS** and **LARA DOWNES** are recipients of the fifth annual Sphinx

Town, South Africa. Diamond Schmitt Architects' acclaimed work includes the New Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto and the Maison Symphonique de Montréal. In addition to its primary purpose as the home for the New York Philharmonic, the new David Geffen Hall will be designed to facilitate a broader, ongoing array of community activities and events. Construction is expected to begin in 2019 at a preliminary estimated cost of \$500 million. In addition to creating a 21st-century concert hall with world-class acoustics, Heatherwick Studio and Diamond Schmitt Architects will be charged with reimagining the auditorium and ultimately creating a place where the architecture is at one with music. When complete, the new

hall will also be the permanent home of Legends at Lincoln Center: The Performing Arts Hall of Fame.

BE A PRESENTING PRO

Entering the world of presenting is not for the faint of heart. Where will you find the best artists for your community? How will you market activities and negotiate contracts that are beneficial to your organization and the artist? Enter Launchpad, a program recently launched by South Arts to advise and support professionals who are new to the field. The program will provide professional development, mentorship and peer networking opportunities, along with a travel subsidy for the 2016 Performing Arts Exchange in Orlando, Florida, for up to seven presenters. For information, visit southarts.org.

Medals of Excellence. Each will receive a \$50,000 grant for career development. "We are honored to celebrate these exceptional musicians. Individually and collectively, they exhibit authenticity, commitment and true artistic leadership, which is so essential to Sphinx's mission and our field as a whole," says Sphinx president Afa S. Dworkin.

Arts Consulting Group will provide interim management services to the League of American Orchestras with the appointment of **DALE C. HEDDING** as interim vice president for development. Before joining ACG, Hedding served for seven years as the vice president of development at the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He also served as director of development and volunteer services at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and held senior fund-raising roles at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



DENNIS HANTHORN is the new general director of Opera Naples. Hanthorn has more than 30 years experience in the field, serving as the senior

executive of three consecutive city opera companies. Most recently, he served as general director and CEO of the Atlanta Opera from 2004-2012. Previously, he spent 15 years as general director of the Milwaukee Florentine Opera Company. He has served on the board of directors of OPERA America and as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts.

CCI - Ontario Presenting Network has changed its name to **ONTARIO PRESENTS**. Theatre IV has changed its name to **VIRGINIA REP ON TOUR**.

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VOICE



RUTH A. FELT, founder and president of San Francisco Performances, has announced that she will retire from the nonprofit she created and has led

for 36 years in fall 2016. Felt and her staff have made a practice of scheduling artists and programs two or more years in advance, so details of the next two seasons are already squared away, including a performance by soprano Dawn Upshaw, a thematic, multi-concert series curated by pianist Jonathan Biss and the return of the Paul Taylor Dance Company. A gala benefit honoring Felt and San Francisco Performances is being planned for Sept. 30, 2016, with details and artists to be announced. A search for Felt's successor is underway.



TAMARA NUZZACI **PARK** has been appointed executive director of the Breckenridge Music Festival, where she has served as part-time development director for the last

two years. She brings more than a decade of nonprofit arts experience to the role, serving as executive director of Maryland Symphony Orchestra and personnel manager of the Philadelphia Orchestra. In addition, she has worked as an independent consultant and project manager for such organizations as Curtis Institute of Music, Play On! Philly, Eighth Blackbird and Vail Valley Youth Foundation.

Veteran orchestra manager **JAMES W. PALERMO** is the new managing director of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. He most recently led the organization in an interim role, working with the board to create and

implement a plan to retool fund-raising and marketing programs and reposition the organization's finances. He previously served as president and executive director of Colorado's Bravo! Vail Festival and earlier served as artistic and general director of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival.



GEORGE NUNES has been named director of development at Mesa Arts Center. He comes to Mesa from Ballet Arizona, where he worked as development

director, and his previous experience includes positions at Seattle Art Museum and Pacific Northwest Ballet. Nunes is a former professional dancer and business owner.

The **PYGMALION FESTIVAL** will co-curate a new venue, The Accord, in Champaign, Illinois. Formerly known as the Highdive, the venue was a Midwest site for touring artists including Arcade Fire, Sufjan Stevens, Modest Mouse, Death Cab for Cutie, Black Keys, The Decemberists, The Flaming Lips, Queens of the Stone Age and The White Stripes. In recent years, the venue's focus shifted to dance parties, but this move by Pygmalion will return The Accord to its roots with an emphasis on live music and comedy. For information, visit intheaccord.com.



BRIAN TAYLOR GOLDSTEIN, partner in the law firm of GG Arts Law and managing director of the project and artist management agency Goldstein Guilliams International, has

been named to the list of New York Metro Super Lawyers for the second year in a

row. Super Lawyers identifies candidates in the New York City/Metro area through independent research and by inviting lawyers in each state to nominate the best attorneys they have observed in action. A lawyer-led research staff evaluates candidates on 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement. Candidates also undergo a peer review by practice area. Goldstein was previously named a top entertainment lawyer in the Washington, D.C., area by *Washingtonian Magazine* in 2011.

MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION

has launched a redesigned website at midatlanticarts.org. The two-year project incorporated feedback from user surveys, interviews and research to create a user-friendly, intuitive, responsive site with a searchable grants database.

SHUBERT TICKETING has acquired Colorado-based Choice Ticketing Systems. Shubert Ticketing is a leading provider of high speed, transaction-based ticketing services for entertainment venues across the country. Doug Crothers, founder and past president of Choice Ticketing Systems, said, "With 25 years of service to performing arts nationwide, it's gratifying and an honor that Shubert has chosen us to join forces to expand market reach and integrate Choice's key technologies into the Shubert STAR system." The acquisition will enhance customer relationship management, increase customized platform options for season subscription operations, offer comprehensive fund-raising tools and allow users to leverage geographical location to service niche marketplaces.

Arts Presenters mourns the loss of key figures in the field: **JOHN EATON**, an avant-garde opera composer, 80; **DAVID BOWIE**, rock star and innovator, 69; and **LUC BONDY**, an influential Swiss theater and opera director, 67.

Follow Spot: UPSTATE OF MIND

Offbeat film series builds a culture and a new audience for Schenectady theater.

BY KRISTEN ANDRESEN

There are performing arts venues that screen movies to round out their schedules. And then there's Proctors, a former vaudeville theater.

The upstate New York-based presenter has attracted a cult following with its quirky *It Came From Schenectady* film series. What started eight years ago as a one-off sci-fi film fest has grown into a pop cultural phenomenon that attracts lovers of fringe cinema, outside-the-mainstream movies and straight-up geekdom. These are more than just movies; they're events "not unlike mini-comic cons" with prizes, games and wacky hosts.

"It came out of a desire to create a film atmosphere that we wanted to be a part of, where going to the movies was more than sitting at a cinder block at the end of the mall," says Peter Hughes, an account executive in Proctors' marketing department and a founding member of the series. Currently, a core team of four to five curators, including New York Asian Film Festival co-founder Paul Kazee, oversees the series.

It Came from Schenectady is Barry Longyear's sci-fi book inspired by a quote from fellow sci-fi author Harlan Ellison. When asked, "Where do you get your ideas from?" Ellison replied: "There's a swell Idea Service in Schenectady, and every week I send 'em twenty-five bucks, and every week they send me a fresh six-pack of ideas."

The curators are open to any and all ideas, as long as the person who proposes the idea is willing to help with the work. The ideas are often as clever as the series' name: Saturday morning cartoons with a cereal bar; a double-feature of *Groundhog Day* followed by



Proctors, a theater in Schenectady

Groundhog Day on Groundhog Day; a *Grease 2* sing-a-long that drew a group of women from Georgia because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate their favorite movie in a unique way.

"For those 200 people on that one day, they knew no one was ever going to make it happen again, and it worked," Hughes recalls. "You have to do something more than show a film. You have to create a culture that doesn't exist anywhere else."

At Proctors, movies have been a mainstay for decades, but *It Came From Schenectady* takes it a step further. As Hughes says, "our venue is the living room of the area. We transform it into the performing arts equivalent of your mom's basement or den."

The atmosphere and the offerings attract a very specific audience. It skews male and tends to be 10-to-15 years younger than the main stage typically draws. Often, the film series paves the way for a touring Broadway show or another live performance. At a recent main stage showing of *Mel Brooks: Back in the Saddle Again!* – a national tour

that includes a conversation with Brooks and a screening of *Blazing Saddles* – about half of the audience were *It Came From Schenectady* regulars.

"Opening that door may lead people to look at Proctors for something more specific," Hughes says.

That's not to say there haven't been a few duds. A Samuel L. Jackson supershow featuring a showing of *Shaft* drew seven people. But that didn't deter Hughes and his colleagues, who have learned a few lessons along the way. Their insight applies to any presenter looking to step outside the tried-and-true: Be willing to embrace the odd, the authentic and the local. Build a following. Make it comfortable. And don't underestimate your audience's willingness to "go down the rabbit hole" to experience something new.

"You have to take a chance now and then," Hughes says. "Reach out and try to book things that people want to see – not the thing you want to see. Don't lose money. Keep at it. Be willing to try new things outside your comfort zone."

Like many good ideas, this one came from Schenectady. **17A**

COMPTON/CHRISTIAN DUNN

Astrid Hadad at
globalFEST

BY LINDA L. NELSON, BRENNA MCDUFFIE AND ALICIA ANSTEAD

MAKING IT HAPPEN

AT APAP|NYC 2016, ARTS LEADERS AND ARTISTS MAKE THE DEALS AND FOLLOW THE DREAMS. OUR REPORT OUTLINES HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONFERENCE AND INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD.

“Building community is hard as hell.” That’s from Bill T. Jones – dancer, choreographer and self-proclaimed “crusty curmudgeon.” He was a speaker at “Making the Arts Matter,” the Friday opening plenary session of APAP|NYC 2016, which took place Jan. 15-19 at the Hilton Midtown and Sheraton New York Times Square in the heart of Manhattan. Embracing the theme of “MAKERS,” Jones was the first speaker-artist to elicit a burst of applause from approximately 3,600 conference attendees during the annual five-day marathon conference.

Implicit in his comments were these questions: Are presenters a community? What responsibility do performing artists and presenters have to local communities in crisis?

These two framing ideas echoed from workshop to plenary session and back throughout this year’s conference.

Earlier, to open the session, Jones had emerged in silhouette against a blue stage, eliciting gasps from the audience. In interviews prior to the performance, audience members from Tennessee to Hawaii repeatedly referred to Jones as a legend and said he was the reason they were there that night. “Oh my god, he’s going to perform,” one whispered audibly at Jones’ dramatic entrance. As Jones moved downstage and began to speak, with his expressive body and words, a spontaneous standing ovation erupted from the back rows.

“Old age is like having AIDS,” Jones intoned midway through his “dancing lecture” called *Making and Doing*. “There ain’t no cure. The clock. Is ticking.”

ADAM KUSSICK/IFMIF

The performance, which was created exclusively for APAP|NYC, was immediately followed by a panel discussion moderated by Anna Deavere Smith and featuring Jones, Carla Dirlikov, founder, CEO and artistic director of The Canales Project, and Paula Kerger, president and CEO of PBS.

Jones's acerbic, emphatic statement – “Building community is hard as hell” – was a refreshing pause issued by the choreographer in response to Smith's establishment of the panel around the finale of President Obama's recent State of the Union address. “That's the America I know,” Deavere Smith quoted the president. “That's the country we love. Clear-eyed. Big-hearted. Undaunted by challenge. Optimistic that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word,” Deavere said. “Doesn't that sound like a call out to the arts?” Jones quickly interjected, that he knows the president means what he says, but artists have an additional reality. “You know how hard it is to get butts in seats,” said Jones.

As many of the speakers throughout the conference noted – and Kerger stated – the arts are “what makes us human.” Jones reminded us that being human isn't easy, and doesn't come without hard work.

The next day, approximately 150 people gathered in the Trianon Ballroom for “Making Points of Entry: Models for Nurturing Participation in Arts and Culture” – four models for how participation

in arts and culture is being nurtured internationally.

The undeniable star of the event was Ahmad Sarmast, survivor of a terrorist bombing and 2009 founder of Afghan National Music Institute that he launched to revive Afghan music and promote musical diversity. The institute sponsors orchestras, including the first all-female orchestra in Afghan history, offers music lessons and provides instruments for Afghan youths. It also works to revive dying Afghan musical forms and instruments.

The audience sat in amazement as Sarmast played a video of a young

Afghan woman conducting an extremely accomplished orchestra and chorus of young Afghans. The fierce survival of humanity in the worst possible circumstances was undeniably inspiring. An air of cynicism, which might have cloaked the room in a dank fog early on a New York City Saturday morning, never had a chance with this story in the room.

Sarmast proudest goal to create “resilience in the face of extremism” for entire communities, not only program participants.

“It is stemming the tide of young people leaving Afghanistan,” Sarmast claimed, while at the same time advancing the hope “that promoting art, music and culture should not be a sin in the Muslim world.”

“This is how you say no to violence in Afghanistan,” Sarmast said. “This is also the Afghanistan of tomorrow: an Afghanistan that embraces diversity and creates equal opportunity for all Afghans regardless of their religion, or

**SAVE
THE DATE:
APAP|NYC
January 6-10,
2017**



Rita Moreno at the Closing Plenary Session



Export NOLA at the Cutting Room



Maceo Parker's jazz group at Blue Note



Audience members watching Schoen Movement Company at Alley Studios



5 Minutes to Shine winner Liz Stover Rosenthal

political background. Boys and girls from all over Afghanistan, making and creating beauty."

That afternoon, the resonance of his message shifted into the question: How can the arts cultivate civility and celebrate the cultural traditions practiced in Muslim societies?

Approximately 25 people hiked across 53rd Street to the Sheraton, also a busy APAP venue, to find out.

The panel "Islamic World: Community-Engaged Programming and Intercultural Understanding" was a case study of the Islamic Worlds Festival at the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. The goal of the event is to promote understanding in a community of 30,000 students and 18,000 year-round residents.

Virginia Tech's Muslim Student Association has 100 members: fewer than 1 percent of the student body. There are two mosques in Blacksburg, and the college is 45 minutes from Roanoke, where another mosque serves a large refugee community.

At the college, many students have never met a Muslim. Those undergrads



Attendees dancing at showcase

who had often had only one point of contact with Islam.

The festival's organizers worked to create events that are places "to hear and approach rhetoric - some of which has been very damaging." They reported that the many activities helped to complicate the way the students were thinking.

They brought in musicians Ka'han Kahour and Brooklyn Rider, as well as a popular evening of comedy. "We wanted to break the stereotype that no one thinks Muslims are funny," said student Sana Rauf.

In conjunction with the festival, the college conducted a research project to measure its community impact, holding focus groups before, during and at several points after the festival. The focus groups themselves, venues for discussion, ended up being very meaningful for students. "It's clear they were wishing for more peer-to-peer dialogue on some of these topics," said Jonathan Catherwood-Ginn, associate director of programming at the college's Center for the Arts. Ultimately, the presenters found that the festival planners and artists experienced the greatest impact from the festival.

If artists can teach us one lesson, it's about being comfortable with not knowing what's next and trusting the process of art making to lead the way. That was the focus of the popular pecha kucha plenary session on Saturday. Five artists delivered rapid-fire presentations (6 minutes, 40 seconds each) addressing the session's theme "Making Art and the Evolutionary Process," and then joined Liz Lerman, artist and educator, onstage for a group discussion and audience Q&A.

Want to see what you missed or revisit what you saw at APAP|NYC 2016? Watch videos of session highlights at apapnyc.org. Check out conference images at flickr.com/apapnyc.

"I don't know what I'm doing there," said Detroit-based artist Jessica Care Moore during the discussion. She was indicating that her background – reporter, poet, publisher, performer, educator, advocate, mother – might not easily fit definitions of what an "artist" is.

"We don't have to always know where we're going or what we are doing," responded Lerman.

"The majority of the time we don't know," added dancer John Michael Schert, who is artist in residence at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. "The best approach we can take is to embrace ambiguity. That's where innovation comes from. And we can better market ourselves as having that ability."

Singer/songwriter Somi called it "living in the liminal."

"Embracing the liminal, between definitions and identities," she riffed. "Commit to the storytelling. As artists we have the power to imagine our own space and culture and place of belonging. We all have something new to say, to challenge homogenized views of African identity."

Robert Farid Karimi, of ThePeoplesCook Project, put it this way: "I have water, and the glass is dependent on my partner. People say I'm not an artist any more. I'm a social worker. It's the same water; it's my



Calpulli Mexican Dance Company at New York City Center

water: What glass are we going to make together?"

"The compartmentalization that happens in the arts and between departments are so arbitrary. I think they went around and peed on the buildings," performance artist Michelle Ellsworth joked – but she was serious about the concept.

"I'm always searching for home," Karimi said. "How do I create myself? Who am I? Where do I fit? I'm looking for my missing piece, a la Shel Silverstein."

Schert summed up what many were thinking.

"One of the things I learned as a dancer is how to be present. To be home right here, right now in the moment,"

he said. "The sense of presence and being a balanced person. How can we help others realize this? How are you present?"

When the session ended, many rejoined with business colleagues and friends for the valuable networking that takes place during the conference, and many others to the EXPO Hall, one of the nation's busiest marketplaces for the arts.

On Sunday morning, the Women of Color in the Arts meeting took place in the Grand Ballroom lobby, where a vigorous conversation about social justice and the need for community organizing unfolded. The circle of chairs that was almost as large as the



YPCA performers Akropolis Reed Quintet



Emil Kang at the Cyber Cafe

SPRING 2016 INSIDE ARTS 15



Pecha Kucha-style Saturday Plenary Session

room itself. By the time the meeting commenced, the chairs were nearly full, and Kaisha S. Johnson, co-founder of WOCA, greeted the crowd.

“I’ll read our value statement to start the meeting, to help center us,” Johnson said. She

then delivered a list of missions and values that explained in detail WOCA’s efforts to create diversity and equity in the performing arts.

Perhaps the most relevant value for the day’s meeting, which was full of leaders and makers, was a statement that appeared in the middle of the



Dakha Brakha at Brooklyn Bowl

list: “We believe that increasing the opportunities for women of color to serve in decision-making positions only strengthens the field.”

Throughout the meeting, APAP volunteers had to bring more and more chairs into the room until an entire outer ring of women enveloped the

central circle. As women — members and nonmembers, veterans and first-timers — expressed their own desire to promote diversity, or shared their own accomplishments for women of color in the field, the sense of camaraderie was gripping. Johnson asked everyone to recognize just how important and special it was that members and friends of WOCA were together in this moment.

WOCA is a grassroots and member-driven organization, but the members are from all points in the nation. As Johnson reviewed WOCA’s accomplishments for the year, she pointed out that WOCA had organized several webinars to help drive conversation among members despite distance. The meeting was a rare opportunity for WOCA members and friends to be in the same room together.

“Now we are here, we are connected,” Johnson said. “The responsibility is yours. It is up to you to move this forward by going out on the road.”

The value of the gathering was felt by many, including Robin P. Hickman of Soul Touch Productions. “I need this. I need to be in this circle,” she said, and many applauded in robust agreement.

Throughout the day, panels and breakout sessions addressed concerns of social justice. A sampling: “Freedom of and Equality in Expression,” “How



16 INSIDE ARTS SPRING 2016

ORANGE IS THE NEW VOLUNTEER!

The artists, presenters and members that attend APAP|NYC are the bulk of the conference attendees, but one other group proves to be essential to the conference’s success: volunteers. Clad in orange APAP t-shirts this year, the volunteers were seemingly everywhere, greeting attendees, working registration, answering questions and delivering directions. Outside of the EXPO Hall, two student volunteers greeted those coming in and out of the hall with smiles and well wishes for the day.

Daniella Risi, a sophomore at the University of Central Florida, worked

shifts at APAP|NYC and managed a visit her family in the city. Having heard about the opportunities to network at the conference, Risi knew she had to attend. “I’m really interested in working at a talent agency for music when I graduate, so I thought this would be a great opportunity to network.” After her shift at the door, Risi planned to swing through the EXPO Hall to speak to agents and observe the business side of the field.

Interested in volunteering at APAP|NYC 2017? Go to students.apap365.org for more information.



Bill T. Jones performing at the Opening Plenary Session

Grantees Are Making a Difference in Their Communities,” “Diversity and the LGBT Community in Southeast Asia.”

One, “Making a World of Difference,” explored how to responsibly shed light on transnational issues as a presenter inviting international artists to perform at an institution. The panel featured Meiyin Wang, associate artistic producer of the Public Theater’s Under the Radar Festival, the annual showcase for cutting-edge, boundary pushing work by both U.S. and international artists. Naturally, this means that the curators and producers of UTR are constantly thinking about how to provide the proper context for audiences when presenting work that deals with international representation and cross-cultural issues. “It’s a question of responsibility, of what is the presenters responsibility to continue and expand these cultural conversations,” Wang said.

This question became particularly pressing for the Public when, in 2011, it invited the Belarus Free Theatre, a politically engaged theater troupe from the strictly authoritarian Belarusian state, to join the UTR festival. Two troupe members were arrested in Belarus prior to their departure to New York City, which made it necessary for



APAP|NYC EXPO Hall



Bartlett Sher at the Sunday Plenary Session

the rest of the actors to leave the country in quietly and in small groups as to go unnoticed.

“[The Public Theater’s] expertise as presenters was challenged. We thought, as the people who invited them, what’s our responsibility to what’s going to happen to the artists?” Wang said. “What’s our responsibility to their mission and how do we do that through the art?” The Public then decided to join the Belarusian Free Theater in organizing a peaceful protest outside the Belarus U.N. mission in NYC. “It fit perfectly with the mission [of the artists]: social justice, freedom of speech,” Wang said. “It was an organic response.”

The panelists also questioned the presenter’s responsibility to respect an artist’s desire not to engage with political or social issues. Shanta Thake, director of Joe’s Pub at the Public and co-producer of globalFEST, had to face this recently when a trans artist at Joe’s

Pub declined the Public’s request for her to speak out about trans activism on behalf of the Public. The artist was at the Public to share art and to work, not to speak about trans advocacy. Thake said this was an important lesson for a presenter to learn about responsibility. “You have to be careful about co-opting [an artist’s] platforms,” Thake said. “You need to make sure you’re not making someone a figurehead for their entire community or co-opting a story that’s not yours to tell.”

The question of responsibility, as it relates to audience and community also came up at Sunday’s large plenary session, “Making Big Ideas Come to Life,” with John Collins of Elevator Repair Service, actor/playwright Lisa Kron and Bartlett Sher of Lincoln Center Theater. Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, executive director at ASU Gammage, moderated the lively discussion about theater, both on- and off-Broadway.

Collins explained that because theater is about direct engagement with an audience, the accountability in theater is explicit and direct. "I've been thinking a lot lately about who is in each audience. I think that's one of the biggest responsibilities that we have," he said. "As soon as everybody files into the room, they sit down, we close the doors, you can look out and see who that is and you can see who you're reaching. The accountability for theater is completely built in."

Artists and presenters should also realize their responsibility to diversify that audience, he said: "It has to do

with how much tickets cost, with what schools we reach out to, what young people we introduce this to so that we don't end up something that is just a sort of upper tier special cultural experience for people who have been privileged."

Monday at the conference featured more sessions, more conversations, a busy EXPO Hall and both the Five Minutes to Shine competition and the annual APAP Awards Luncheon, which featured actor Ben Vereen in a preacher-like incantation about the arts and about the goals of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose national holiday coincided with

Monday's events. (See related awards stories on pages 20-22 and 30-31.)

Seven APAP members presented during the 5MTS event, which inspired by the Wallace Foundation initiative "Building Arts Audiences" and its publication *The Road to Results: Effective Practices for Building Arts Audiences*. Each participant choose one or more of the study's nine effective practices and delivered a five-minute slide presentation. A robust audience attended and voted for the winner: Liz Stover Rosenthal, association programming manager at the University

ARTS AS SOLUTION

BY LINDA L. NELSON

AN APAP|NYC FORUM ON COMMUNITIES IN CRISES LOOKS AT THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN CREATING A MORE HUMANE WORLD.

During a pre-conference forum Friday, January 15, more than 100 presenters, funders, artists, educators and administrators convened for an interactive session to define and discuss arts-led, solution-oriented strategies for communities in crisis.

"Even as we at APAP have been focused over the past few years on the misperceptions and misconceptions of Muslims in American communities, through our Building Bridges grant program, we also became aware of the growing number of our member organizations that are taking an active role in responding to a range of issues and events affecting the well being of their communities," said APAP vice president Scott Stoner in his introductory remarks.

"When Michael Orlove at the National Endowment of the Arts brought to our attention an effort of the British Council and Brandeis University to examine the role of the arts and culture in response to cycles of violence and community conflict, it made good sense to explore this very timely issue in the context of the arts presenting community."

The session's co-facilitator Ebony Golden, of Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative, and Michael Rohd, Sojourn Theater, caught the ball and ran with it in establishing the day's work. "Conflict transformation is durational performance art," Golden said. "What if performing arts communities were part of the social justice practice?"



Attendees of "Our Global Community" broke into lively discussions at APAP|NYC.

"Our Global Community: What Is the Role of the Arts Presenter in a Community in Crisis?" examined the nature of the conflicts, as defined by Cynthia Cohen of the Peacebuilding and the Arts program at Brandeis University. Conflicts are the same worldwide, said Cohen, and are "based on poverty and inequality, mass migration, dislocation and immigration to urban centers; alienation of young from old and women from men; unresolved legacies of violence and oppression."

The role of arts, of course, was the focus of the discussion, and it didn't take long for logic to kick in.

"There's a new recognition over the past 15 years that culture - best explored through the arts - has moved from the peripheries of the world to the center of the world," said Paul Smith, U.S. director of the British Council. "If culture is a primary cause of conflict and crisis, then let us assume that culture needs to be part of the solution, or at least an understanding of what that crisis is."

"Performing arts presenters are well positioned to take this on," Cohen added, "because you are rooted in particular institutions and communities: You stick around, you get to know people. You can help ensure that months after the

performances are over conversations continue and relationships are sustained."

"Culture is both a place but also a territory of experience - so it can go anywhere," offered Nick Slie, executive director of Mondo Bizarro. "Sometimes an institution is not permeable enough to meet a living culture. How can our institutions be more permeable to meet culture on its own terms?"

The day-long session featured presentations about six exemplary programs dedicated to crisis solving: Alternate ROOTS' Race Peace in Atlanta is an ongoing collaboration with performance group Mondo Bizarro to facilitate a performance project on issues of race and racism in the U.S.; the play *PLACAS: the Most Dangerous Tattoo*, based in Richmond, California, is an effort to confront gang violence; Ping Chong + Company's *Beyond Sacred: Voices of Muslim Identity* explores the voices of Muslims in New York City; the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance represented its work efforts during the 2015 Baltimore uprising; New Orleans based Mondo Bizarro's *Cry You One* addresses the crisis of the disappearing wetlands of the Gulf Coast; and Stronghold Society's skateboarding programs are an effort to stem the tide of Native youth suicides and create a healthy future for youth in Native and non-Native

Musical Society at the University of Michigan.

Rosenthal then advanced to represent her slide show – about the audience outreach and engagement, including during the homecoming game and at a local terminal care hospital during the New York Philharmonic residency at UMS. Rosenthal's energy and storytelling brought down the house at the annual luncheon.

The final event of the conference was a keynote speech by the incomparable Rita Moreno, who talked about the rugged stamina and personal principles required to make it as a Latino actor

with a mainstream career. "Hope," she said, "is an essential part of my DNA." But she proved that it took more than hope; it took guts to open the doors she pushed at for herself – and others.

Moreno, one of history's few EGOTs – she has won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony – charmed and charged the rapt audience. She danced. She sang. She joked – stopping after a cell phone randomly rang, setting her up to endear herself more to the audience: "I hope that cell phone is turned off because if I hear it again, you die."

The actor and author also spoke about Martin Luther King, Jr. Moreno

was with King the day of the famous "I Have a Dream" speech. "I heard Mahalia Jackson, the great opera singer, who was a friend of Dr. King's, call out to him: 'Martin, tell them about the dream.'" Moreno was 32 at the time. She's 84 now and, she said, the "struggle continues."

But if Moreno and APAP|NYC had a resounding message, it was be in the struggle. Find the grace, the humor, the fierceness, the community and the artists to keep making, to keep hoping and to follow the dream. **!!!**

communities. Presentations of exemplars were interspersed with roundtable discussions to ensure all attendees participated in the conversation.

"Many communities have always been in crisis," said Carlton Turner, executive director at Alternate ROOTS. "The founding of the country was built on creating a crisis for communities of color, and that crisis has never ended. This crisis has been created as a form of economic development and growth for a nation that touts itself as the strongest in the world, and what does it mean for us as individuals to participate in that?"

In discussing what he identified as "the state-sponsored displacement of thousands of African Americans from the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," Turner noted that artists "did not have a mechanism to have a conversation about what had just transpired due to the racialization of the environment into which we'd been born."

"Police have a relationship to property rights, not human rights," Turner continued. "So how do we think about safety and security outside of this? Criminal justice system is an economic engine we are feeding with young black and brown men. The moment you dial 911 you begin the process of that transaction."

"Finally we're having a dialogue around race," said Steve Hitt, managing director, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, during a break. "This is so important. It's nice to be sitting with it for a while. I value the dialogue as much as the performance itself."

An overriding component of the day's conversations revolved around how to heal the trauma and pain in young community members. Paul Flores, the creator and writer of *PLACAS*, took this on directly in creating a program of tattoo removal for gang members, as did Walt Pourier of the Stronghold Society.

"No one wants to listen because no one wants to hear pain," Flores said. "Because it reminds you of your own pain. And you become isolated in that pain. We need to

develop a healing practice in communities for restorative justice, stopping the school-to-prison deportation pipeline."

"You're not a human on a spiritual journey; you're a spirit on a human journey," said Pourier.

"This is not something that has just started today. It is like a cancer creeping through our communities that is suddenly in crisis mode," added Kibibi Ajanku of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance.

Flores pointed out that *PLACAS*, funded in part by the National Performance Network, is "more of an activist art project connecting with policy makers and the health community. A lot of the arts people don't understand this stuff because aesthetically it doesn't register in their minds."

The question of aesthetics – or the excellence of the creative product – risk taking and the impact of process was warily circled throughout the day's conversations, as were the unique needs of the communities in which art presenters work and live.

"Change your damn narrative about what your role is in society, what you are doing art for," challenged Flores. "It's not easy. I'm holding people's lives in my play. Several of them are dead now ... You can't be expecting folks to come to a play who can't pay their light bill."

Flores was pointing out the need is to understand community partnerships over the long haul. He was asking: How do we leverage the power of the arts to do the most good and no reinjure people? The group noted there are dangers to "projectivism" – the weighting of observation over experience – and raised the question of whether the voices of those not at the table, such as indigenous peoples, can be brought to the table.

"The people most deeply impacted by crises are often those not at the table when decisions are being made," Slie pointed out.

In what ways can performance be part of a tool kit that responds to extreme violence in our communities? One that heals the wounds? "We came to a greater

understanding that the arts and culture community really needs to be at the table," said Jeannie Howe of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance.

"How can we shift our risk assessment to allow more projects like this to be funded?" asked Liz Alsina of the Andrew Mellon Foundation. "To supporting work that is about change vs. aesthetic excellence," added Cathy Edwards, executive director of the New England Foundation for the Arts and a co-chair of APAP 2016. "It's great to talk about how we want to own change rather than having change imposed on us by crisis."

In one of the day's small group work sessions, Zeyba Rahman, program director for the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, suggested that conflict transformation might be found in models for women-centered communities, such as ones in India and Indonesia. "Virginia Woolf said women do not start wars," she added.

"Out in the mainstream, you hear how there is no pipeline and concern about leaders of color," said Andrea Louie, executive director of Asian American Arts. "This demonstrated where the arts leaders of color are. We need to redefine the notion of arts leadership, and what leaders can bring. It's not just about who can raise the most money, but who can mobilize the most minds, hearts, and spirits."

"What we do as artists? We listen, and we see," said Slie. "We're looking for those in the room to have a certain kind of attention. And that attention is witnessing. We want to shake up the molecules in the room."

"Commitment is the ability to stay," Pourier said. "What goes with commitment is discipline, practice and dedication."

Linda L. Nelson is assistant director of the Maine Arts Commission. She was the founding executive director of Opera House Arts in Stonington, Maine, and is a theater maker, producer and writer.



Baba's beauty

AFRICAN DANCE AND CULTURAL LEADER CHARLES "CHUCK" DAVIS RECEIVED THE APAP AWARD OF MERIT, AND WHO DID HE CELEBRATE? THE AUDIENCE, OF COURSE.
BY OLIVIA MUNK

INSIDE ARTS SPRING



When I called Dr. Charles “Chuck” Davis in his Durham, North Carolina, home at 9 a.m. on a Monday morning after the holiday season, most people were still blearily preparing for the

week ahead. Davis, however, rises at 5:30 each morning, evidence of the inexhaustible energy that has characterized his prolific career in dance over almost five decades.

“Peace and blessings, good morning!” he said cheerily into the telephone, before he even knew who was calling. This infectious positivity and openness are hallmarks of his philosophy, which has carried him through the creation of two dance companies (The Chuck Davis Dance Company in 1968, and the African American Dance Company in 1984), the annual DanceAfrica Festival (currently in its 39th year), and 40 years of visits to Africa. His work is the embodiment of cultural exchange. One of the foremost leaders in bringing African dance to American audiences, Davis is known for leading chants of “Peace, love, respect for everybody!” at performances, has been awarded honorary doctorates from several universities and is affectionately referred to as “Baba Chuck,” an honorific that means “father.”

At APAP|NYC 2016, Davis received another honor to add to the list: APAP’s Award of Merit for Achievement in Performing Arts. He accepted the award dressed in a vibrant blue African robe and hat. He immediately got the audience on its feet to celebrate the moment in dance, chant and song. Only one word truly captures that experience: joyous.

In our conversation, I asked if there was a moment when he knew bringing African dance to America was revolutionary. He demurred. “There was never a point, because I’m not in the world of dance to receive awards,” he said. “I am a dancer because it is my way to reach out and engulf and embrace, to help everyone understand just how beautiful they are.”

Despite the widespread acclaim and respect he has achieved through his work, he has never wavered from his commitment to personal attention and connection. To work with Davis is about much more than the physical moves of the dance: It is about accepting who you are, and in turn, accepting everyone else around you, to promote the virtues of “peace, love, and respect.”

“I’m just Chuck,” he said. “I am a dancer, and I am about reaching out, engulfing and helping you know that you are the best person you will ever come across.”

THE THEME OF THE APAP|NYC 2016 CONFERENCE WAS “MAKERS.” WHAT DOES “MAKING ART” MEAN FOR YOU? HOW DO YOU BEGIN TO MAKE ART?

I rely on life. And by relying on life, that means that I follow the history of my chosen field, which is dance. Anytime I have an idea or wish to create something, I just think: rhythm. I think: dance. I think: life. How can what I do impact the development of each person’s creativity? Creativity is such a broad range.

WHEN YOU MAKE ART, SUCH AS DANCE, WHO ARE THE IMPORTANT MAKERS? THE ARTISTS, THE AGENTS, THE MANAGERS? WHO IS PART OF THE “MAKING” TEAM?

If you’re involved in the professional side, then that word is definitely it: team. You have to have a team, you have to be able to sit and look beyond the county line. As an artist – now, I’m speaking for myself, no one else – I wish to create, to be involved in whatever creativity it takes to bring the idea, the project or whatever we’re working on, to make it come alive, to make it come into fruition. It takes your manager, your executive director of your work, your lighting designers, your costume designers. It takes everyone working together for this to happen. So every aspect of a project is important. There’s no one above the other, because each one has a role to play in the production. Even our board meeting is a production. A meeting with the artists is the production. All of this is vitally important. The artist is as important as the executive director, as the grants writer, and on and on and on down the line, and our responsibility is to the audience.

BEFORE YOU CAME TO DANCE, YOU WERE TRAINED AS A NURSE IN THE NAVY. HOW HAS YOUR WORK IN THE MILITARY, AND AS A NURSE, INFLUENCED YOUR ART?

I would say discipline, and I would say the development of the ability to be aware of more than what is happening in front of you. You need to be aware of everything that is happening around you. I really put my nurse’s training into play there. I came to the realization that studying nursing was studying about the cure and how to take care. But the study of dance is the study of prevention. So I prefer being involved in the prevention – who are you, why are you, what is necessary to keep you on track? And that’s dance.

SOUNDS LIKE THE BEST PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE.

Yes, it is, because you become more aware of yourself. You make strides, and you do that by being more aware of who you are. In dance, you have the discipline that allows you to do that.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF THROUGH DANCE? WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME AWARE OF?

Oh, I’ve learned one billion and 147 things, but one of my main things is tolerance. I’ve learned to be more tolerant. I’ve learned to reach out and embrace. As I’m reaching and embracing, I’m doing it fully, being totally aware that we have to look at a person’s character. I have to allow myself to respect everyone until they force me to do otherwise.





Award of Merit winner Charles "Chuck" Davis invited the audience to dance as part of his acceptance speech at APAP|NYC.

WHEN YOU MADE THE CAREER SWITCH INTO DANCE, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE? WHAT DID YOUR FAMILY THINK OF YOU GOING INTO THE ARTS?

When my mom, God rest her soul, heard that I was going to be involved in nursing, she was beyond herself. This was the best thing. I came up in the era when, especially in my neighborhood, if you were black, you were successful if you were a teacher, an undertaker, a doctor, or a nurse. But the performing artists: oh, no. When my mom learned that I had decided to study dance and get involved in dance, I'm told by my neighbors that she screamed, and jumped, and hollered, and beat her breast. We are Baptists, and in our church, it is to say that when you're dancing, you cross your feet, and you're doing the devil's work. She just thought I was going straight to hell because I was dancing. That held for about 10 years, until she finally saw me in performance. Once she saw me in performance, then she became my strongest supporter. Even though she is one of the beautiful ones in the ancestral grounds, she is still sending me spiritual support.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOU LEARN TO BECOME A DANCE TEACHER? WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD DANCE TEACHER?

A good dance teacher should have good judgment. They should be able to accept responsibility. Naturally, they have to respect their charges, whether it's 2-to-3-year-olds in a toddler class, or our senior citizens; some, still at 90 or 100, are still dancing. They must have integrity. They must have the courage to move forward to unexplored areas. They must be really, really, really – getting back to the first thing we talked about – creative. And the most important thing is: You must not be afraid to say, "I don't know. Let's learn." You cannot go in pretending you know everything, because you do not and you will not.

YOU'VE TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY TO AFRICA. WHAT HAS INSPIRED YOU ABOUT THESE TRIPS? WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO YOU YEAR AFTER YEAR?

As a facilitator of Cultural Arts Safari, we do not hit the tourist trail. We go to areas where still, today, there is no electricity. We are in areas where, by our standards here, people are in extreme poverty. But they are extremely rich because they have their culture. They have their dance, and they have their music. I wish to be involved so I can learn more about who they are. This way, when I return, I'm working with my children and my students, then I can say, "In Madagascar, we learn this, we learn that, we learn the other. In the Gambia, we learn this, that and the other." Each time, we're reminded that it's as different as night and day. Even for countries that are right next to each other, their cultures and languages are vastly different. So I cannot say, oh, I'm doing "African dance." I can say I'm doing this dance now, which was born on the continent on Africa, and practiced by – and then I give the group. My interest in Africa is one 1,422 percent. But at the same time now, I'm looking at the diaspora, so I'm traveling back and forth to Cuba. I'm making the same discoveries with hands-on experience, because many of the dance styles that are popular in Cuba came through their African heritage.

WHAT ARE THREE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF DANCE THAT YOU'VE DISCOVERED ON YOUR JOURNEYS?

Three of the most important? I don't know which one to pick. With me, with dance, everything is important. From the research, to being involved in development of the body mind soul and spirit, to creating more avenues which will heighten the interest, and what I'm doing, understanding that I have the right to be. **1/1**

Olivia Munk is a senior at Harvard University. She is on the staff of the Harvard Arts Blog and the Harvard Crimson. She has also written for *Harvard Magazine* and *Inside Arts*.

ADAM KESSICK/APAP

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BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

FESTIVAL

TIME!

Directors share insights and lessons learned about one of the most popular and pop-up forms of the performing arts.

A

sk almost anyone who works in the festival realm to define what a festival is, and you're likely to encounter come-back questions rather than an answer. Music. Theater. Indoor.

Outdoor. Urban. Rural. Mixed arts. Ticketed. Free. Family-friendly with clowns. Adult-centered with booze. Supported by local-regional-federal funds. Supported by donors or a bucket brigade.

"Festival," it turns out, is a very flexible word – and format. If you go back to the Greeks, festivals were an integral part of worshipping the gods with poetry, music, athletics and drama. And in a way, that's still true. Sub in the word "community" for "god," and you've got a pretty good working definition of the event that more than 20 percent of Americans attend annually, according to the National Endowment for the Arts.

The NEA, grounded in a commitment to a broad community reach in the arts, is a good place to start thinking

about the festival phenomenon in this country. I went to Michael Orlove, whose title alone – director of presenting and multidisciplinary works, artist communities and international activities|multidisciplinary arts – reflects the multifaceted world of festival-making. When I asked him to tell me about the state of festivals in the 21st century, he referred me to the report *A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002-2012*, which was published in 2015 and is available online at nea.org. He also sent me the following comment on behalf of his NEA team, which includes Pepper Smith, artist communities and

presenting specialist, and Lara Allee, presenting and multidisciplinary works specialist.

"Festivals is such a widely used word now and has certainly expanded well beyond just music," Orlove submitted by email for the team. "Of course, you have your music, theater and film festivals, but our country is now also flush with food festivals, book festivals, fringe festivals, fire festivals – the list is endless. Just have a look at the [American Festivals Project] website, and you will find every imaginable celebration from lumberjack competitions, beard championships and, of course, the Oklahoma Noodling Festival. So what do all these have in common? In our





Rhythm of Rajasthan at !Globalquerque!

humble opinion, there is nothing quite like a festival as a means to connect people, bridge linguistic and cultural divides and provide an avenue for identity, expression and general camaraderie. Festivals can be a transformative experience or an educational opportunity, or, in some instances, can help a community heal and come together.”

This sweeping assessment was entirely in keeping with the festival directors I interviewed for this story. To a person, the focus was on “common ground,” “responsiveness,” “entrepreneurism,” “social engagement” and, at the base, an American hunger

for arts that are accessible, affordable and fun.

In a recent interview with Richard Florida, Jonathan Wynn, author of *Music/City: American Festivals and Placemaking in Austin, Nashville, and Newport* [see related story on page 29], says an interest in “concrete culture” – traditional exhibition and performance spaces – has waned, largely because festivals can be more fluid in terms of community life. “I propose that events like festivals, so long as they are sufficiently responsive to their communities, are much better investments due to their comparatively low cost and high malleability,” Wynn

tells Florida, and then proposes a viable next step. “One way to ensure this kind of responsiveness is significant public funding of the events, as they do in Canada and Europe.”

I had exchanges with several festival directors throughout the U.S. about their experiences developing, implementing and sustaining festivals in their communities. The selection that follows reflects the diversity of performing arts festivals – and the shared and similar experiences with the genre. Each speaker also relays insights that capture the spirit of festivals and offers tips to the field about success stories.



LINDA LUCERO

Executive/Artistic Director
Yerba Buena Gardens Festival
San Francisco, CA

From spring through the fall, the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival presents nearly 100 free programs on three outdoor stages in Yerba Buena Gardens. Admission is free, and entertainment includes music, theater, dance, cultural events, educational and children's programs.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

"Admission-free outdoor festivals offer invaluable opportunities to create cross-cultural exchanges. We foster these in several ways. We may select a theme for a series or a program that resonates cross-culturally. For instance, for a Poetic Tuesday program, simple yet powerful concepts like 'love' or 'ghosts' would be perfect. Or we may do a monthly dance music series highlighting an instrument like the accordion - Tex-Mex, tango, klezmer, forró, polka, vallenato - with

a narrator tying the programs together. Besides hearing and learning about the music, dancing together outdoors in downtown San Francisco - the green grass underneath your feet and the sky above - is a cross-cultural communal experience. People feel it; artists feel it. Our annual Yerba Buena Children's Garden Series attracts a seriously engaged audience of kids between 6 and 10 with their caregivers to enjoy participatory music, dance and circus by some of the best art-makers in the Bay Area. Every Friday, we present a different group and a different genre. The artists and kids are culturally diverse and crazy fun. This series is our investment in audiences of tomorrow."

OUTSIDE THE BOX

"Everyone - regardless of circumstance or ability to pay - needs and deserves the joy, the spiritual sustenance, and the inspiration that live performance can bring. Admission-free programs in nontraditional spaces might be just the thing to keep your regular

audiences engaged and attract new fans. Research shows that parks and outdoor facilities are the most frequently attended venues for cultural events and arts performances. An informal setting offers people the opportunity to socialize while participating in a cultural experience. Because our festival is accessible - admission-free, close to public transit, ADA compliant, welcoming to audiences and artists, and without a two-drink minimum - it's quite easy to drop by on a whim and spend time with your BFF, the kiddies, grandma, college buddies, your future ex-boyfriend and catch your favorite gamelan ensemble or see why everyone's talking about that amazing hip-hop choreographer."

AUDIENCE BUILDING

"Just because programs are excellent and admission-free doesn't mean people will automatically come. Everyone on staff works hard at creating a welcoming space and fostering a Yerba Buena Gardens Festival community. Here, we have no curtain between artist and the audience. We don't have a backstage. The artist must thrive on this - in a way that a great standup comic riffs on an audience member who talks back - taking it and raising it to a higher level. 'Thank you for helping me keep my sobriety today' and 'Strong, Beautiful. Necessary' - actual survey quotes - this is the kind of feedback we thrive on. It means the art we present and commission at Yerba Buena Gardens Festival is significant to people's lives. If we are relevant, if people experience community with us, they will return."

LESSONS LEARNED

"Curate with intention. Surround yourself with the best: Artists. Staff. Board. Sound. Don't fret (too much) about the weather. There is absolutely nothing you can do about it."

TEAM QUALITIES

"The qualities I look for in festival staff: openness, big heart, keen eyes and ears, greatness of spirit, wit, integrity, common sense. I think this must be the same for any organization or business."

HALLIE MARTENSON

Communications Director
The Fringe Festival
Philadelphia, PA

The Fringe Festival, presented by FringeArts, is a 17-day city-wide celebration of contemporary performance. More than 1,000 performances take place in local neighborhoods, and a nightly party takes place on the waterfront.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

“By inviting artists from around the world to perform in a very brief period of time, sometimes simultaneously, we are creating a unique opportunity to see the world through the eyes of artists. Our festival, which also includes hundreds of entrepreneurial, self-producing artists, provides a platform for artists at all stages of their careers, from a wide array of cultural backgrounds, to share, research and challenge each others’ work.”

OUTSIDE THE BOX

“Time and time again, our audiences have surprised us with their adventurous spirit. Our most successful shows are nearly always in non-traditional venues – armories, abandoned buildings, the steps of a museum, traveling through the streets of Philadelphia. Culturally engaged audiences can sit in traditional theaters to see a show any time of the year. The Fringe Festival is a time to get out of that box, to seek out discomfort and excitement.”

KATTA HOKNER

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

“We try to provide the opportunity for social engagement outside of the shows, such as our traditional Festival Bar. We extend the invitation for people to talk about the shows they’ve seen, to share them with their friends over a drink at the end of the day. That’s the best kind of audience building: an authentic engagement with the art. It transforms our audiences into emissaries for the work the festival is doing.”

LESSONS LEARNED

“Planning is very important. We like to think strategically short-term, medium-term and long-term. But I think our strength is our adaptability, our ability to course-correct. We ask for help and intently listen to feedback all the time and adjust based on what we hear. It’s hard work, but it’s vital to our success.”

TEAM QUALITIES

“We like to identify a special kind of indefatigable. That’s an important quality for any performing arts organization, but the need becomes crystallized during the festival. They need to be willing to live and breathe the festival while it’s happening. They need to be self-driven and empowered to address and solve problems on their own. Most importantly, they need to have a sense of humor and to be able to find joy in the midst of all the hard work.”

SUSANNE THEIS

Programming Director
Discovery Green
Houston, TX

Discovery Green is a 12-acre, intensely programmed public park in downtown Houston. With Houston’s weather being what it is, the festival programming never really ends, except to slow down a bit in February, July and August.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

“Discovery. One might attend an event to hear a familiar performer and discover someone or some art form that’s entirely new. And common ground. One can enjoy a performance in a public space or within a festival that draws diverse audiences, creates moments in which people of different backgrounds share experiences.”

AUDIENCE ACTIVITY

“All our events are presented free to the public, so we don’t track ticket sales. We do track visitors, hits to our website and social media interactions, which are very robust due to the intensive programming. The audience supports Discovery Green by patronizing our two restaurants that generate income for the park, helping the park attract sponsors, volunteering for the park and donating to the conservancy, which is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.”

LESSONS LEARNED

“The mainstream public is hungry for a place to connect, to experience visual and performing arts and to share with their families. Think big and don’t



MARAVILLOSO at Discovery Green



Acrobatic Conundrum at SummerStage

underestimate the demand for art. Again, as an example, the fairly esoteric dance performance of a small and unknown troupe in their North American debut drew more than 15,000 people downtown over two nights.”

TEAM QUALITIES

“Respect the artist and the audience, be disciplined and careful planners while remaining flexible, possess technical, administrative and marketing skills but to be able to do it all outdoors. Our park is in the middle of a great building boom. More than \$650 million in new construction is taking place on our east and north borders. We’ve lost our loading dock, construction noises can be louder than our performers, and no one knows where to park. So our staff has really been tested. But the magic still happens.”

MONIQUE MARTIN

Programming Director
SummerStage
New York, NY

Supported by City Parks Foundation, a nonprofit organization that creates programs in parks through New York City’s five boroughs, SummerStage presents artists and genres that reflect diverse communities.

CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

“The atmosphere of most festivals is ‘come as you are and everyone is welcome.’ The open invitational tone allows for cross generational and cultural mash-ups that are not always experienced in traditional brick and mortar performing arts centers.”

OUTSIDE THE BOX

“Every space can be transformed into a festival-like atmosphere. We see this in

galas, in which theaters and lobbies are transformed into magical wonderlands. The same approach can be created in a performing center, such as a Mardi Gras program or contemporary circus preceding a performance or directly following.”

AUDIENCE BUILDING

“SummerStage strives to include the community through tabling opportunities, inviting local DJs to perform an opening set. We also listen to the community stakeholders who are a dynamic mix of long-term residents and newly arrived residents. SummerStage moves around the five boroughs of New York City in addition to our mainstage in Central Park, which requires a keen sense of the shifting demographics and an understanding of how to respond artistically.”

IN WITH THE NEW

“Contemporary Circus has been an exciting addition to our multi-genre festival. It is a form that incorporates acrobatics, juggling/manipulation, clowning and aerial with no fourth wall. Audiences find a myriad of entry points from dance, humor, physical theater, athleticism and the ‘wow’ factor of defying gravity. The U.S. has a long tradition of circus, and it is finding a resurgence with new innovative companies that are eager to perform on home soil. Many artists are trained abroad in France, Stockholm, Montreal, and work primarily in Europe where there is a robust [circus] scene and audience. The opportunities to perform in the U.S. are growing rapidly, which is quite exciting for the sector. Programming international and national companies instigates geographic understanding and diversity of form. I program dance and circus on a shared bill often, as there is a direct correlation in the language of the body. This also creates crosspollination of artistic communities and audiences.”

FESTIVALS BEYOND BORDERS Experience global festivals first-hand with the APAP Cultural Exchange Fund program. Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, CEF is a travel subsidy program that helps U.S.-based APAP members to build partnerships and collaborations internationally and to experience the work of artists around the globe in a cultural context. Deadline to apply is April 29, 2016 for July-December 2016 travel support. For more information, and to view our International Festivals Guide, visit culturalexchange.fund.apap365.org.

TOM FROUGE

Co-founder and co-producer

iGlobalquerque!

Albuquerque, NM

The two-day music festival takes place in September at the National Hispanic Cultural Center and offers concert performances in an intimate courtyard setting and the state of the art 692-seat Albuquerque Journal Theatre. Dance offerings take place outside on a plaza.

CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

"With its location in a state with its own very unique cultural make-up, iGlobalquerque! creates the possibility of myriad cross-cultural exchanges. By presenting music and culture from around the planet as well as the cultural richness of New Mexico, attendees, performers and artists are exposed to different ideas, views, traditions and to one another. As well as presenting evening performances, we also have day programming filled with music and cultural workshops and presentations, international dance lessons, film, hands-on activities for all ages, a free school mini-fiesta, etc. All these things come together to create two days of multiple cross-cultural and educational exchanges, including spontaneous collaborations with the performing artists."

OUTSIDE THE BOX

"Do not be afraid to present 'different' to your audience and community. Audiences are much more open and forward thinking than we sometimes give them credit for being. Contextualization goes a long way in helping audiences understand, enjoy and embrace artists from other cultures."

AUDIENCE BUILDING

"This is always a continuing and sometimes changing work-in-progress. Our experience has been if we can get them to the

festival, they will return. One of our marketing [strategies] is in rewarding those 'in the know' with early-bird ticket sales to our mailing list. Because we have multiple acts and a 'big tent' view of what world music is, we have the opportunity to massage the lineup and present an act that may attract those not already in our 'choir.' You need to build trust in the curation of the festival. Let's face it: Most of the acts are not going to be known quantities to the majority of even our most knowledgeable festivalgoers."

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

"Our goal has always been to not only 'bring the world to New Mexico' but to 'present New Mexico to the world.' With a world-class festival comes great community pride."

LESSONS LEARNED

"Keep cool and stay calm, particularly during the festival. Be nice and keep your sense of humor. Love and respect your audience, and always remember why you started this in the first place."

TEAM QUALITIES

"Coordinating all the parts of a festival with multiple acts, multiple stages, multiple crews, multiple vendors, multiple volunteers, caterers, etc., along with the multiple personalities that come with all that, is intense. Staffers must be able to weather all kinds of things from flight delays to ticket booth snafus to surprise fire marshal visits with professional aplomb and a smile." **IFA**

Alicia Anstead is the editor of *Inside Arts* magazine. She is also a co-producer at APAP|NYC and the founding editor of the Harvard Arts Blog, a student-driven project to create the next gen of arts journalists.



THE FESTIVALIZATION OF URBAN LIFE

As an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst, Jonathan Wynn thinks deeply about urban and cultural sociology. His book *Music/City: American Festivals and Placemaking in Austin, Nashville and Newport* is an analysis of three festivals: the Country Music Association Festival in Nashville, the "Dunkin' Donuts" Newport Folk Festival and South by Southwest in Austin. He looks at how city stakeholders have adopted "festivalization" as an urban cultural policy and the effects of city branding on locals and visitors, event organizers and participants. Here are his tips for creating and sustaining festivals.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP YOU HAVE FOR PRESENTERS ABOUT FESTIVALS?

Quite simply: A modicum of public funding to curb corporate branding, and extensive community consultation with accountability built in. In truth, it depends on the type of event. In the research, I identify three kinds of orientations for festivals: citadel (e.g., confined and restricted) core (e.g., activities varied in access and size), and confetti (e.g., many smaller and dispersed events). These are patterned dispositions toward physical and social space that can limit an event in some ways and afford opportunities in others.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A FESTIVAL BEYOND THE "ARTS"?

I would say that a strong commitment to what sociologists call the "place character" of the region, which elicits a commitment and sense of ownership from locals but also gives out-of-towners a sense of a place. I identify four kinds of assets festivals use, exploit and reinforce: physical (e.g., parks, stadia), social (e.g., human skills and community organizations), symbolic (e.g., brands and ideas) and economic (e.g., funding) resources. The best events should respect and reinforce these community assets. Logistically, it appears that a variety of scale is attractive to audiences: having main events but also smaller peripheral events that fill smaller physical spaces and niches in the schedule.

HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THE RISE IN FESTIVALS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?

First, municipalities are in an intense inter-city competition: for tourists, for business relocation, for new residents, etc. So there is an incentive for arts communities and city halls to develop and nurture "signature events" as a way to distinguish themselves. So many events organizers I've spoken to have seen barriers and limitations lifted in the last few years. Second, I mostly focus on music festivals, and I think that the digital age has, paradoxically, contributed to a newfound interest in live performances. Musicians cannot rely on album sales and need to perform to stay afloat, and audiences long for communal, effervescent experiences.

FAIR GROUND

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The annual APAP|NYC Awards Luncheon is always the Monday highlight during conference. In January, APAP was delighted to honor the work and vision of the following recipients. To see a list of previous recipients, visit apap365.org.



MK WEGMANN FAN TAYLOR AWARD WINNER

Every year, when the highly confidential Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award is announced at the annual APAP|NYC Awards luncheon, the packed Hilton Ballroom is breathless waiting to hear the name. In our industry, this is the award that indicates your work has been valued not only at a community level but by the very hearts and souls of other professionals in the performing arts field. Fan Taylor, whom the award honors, was the visionary behind APAP, its first executive director and a staunch arts advocate right up to her death

in 2008 at age 92. This year's Fan Taylor Award recipient was MK Wegmann, president and CEO of the National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network based in New Orleans. The broad reach of its cultural organizers and artists has set a borderless model for community engagement, partnership, leadership and creativity. Wegmann announced her retirement in 2015 - to return to independent work with artists and organizations. We asked her to share highlights, tips and hopes about the field.

—Alicia Anstead

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY FOR KEEPING ONE'S VISION STRONG IN THE FACE OF CHANGE AND HARD WORK?

Patience and persistence. Showing up and speaking out.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU SEE FACING THE ARTS WORLD RIGHT NOW, AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DONE ABOUT IT?

A big challenge is reclaiming artistic practice as a public value and creating cultural equity for everyone - counteracting the privatization of culture and restoring robust support for artists at all levels of government, especially the federal level.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR EMERGING ARTS LEADERS ENTERING THE FIELD, PARTICULARLY ON THE BUSINESS END?

Keep an artist-focused perspective. Understand the interconnected relationship and reciprocity that exists between artists and community/audience. Don't be afraid to

take risks. Challenge the status quo - and deeply understand the money. And most of all, don't forget to take time to play. Work hard. Play hard.

YOU'RE ABOUT TO RETIRE. WHAT MAKES YOU MOST PROUD IN THE WORK YOU'VE DONE OVER THE YEARS?

I am proud that I have been able to stay and work in my home community of New Orleans throughout and, because of the presence of National Performance Network here, we were able to contribute to the city's recovery after Hurricane Katrina. I am particularly proud of our persistent commitment to work for racial justice and cultural equity.

WHAT IS THE MOST PENETRATING LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM ARTISTS?

That life and art are not separate realities, that the combination of a rigorous exploration of ideas and artistic process can change lives and contribute to the public good. **IFA**



"We in the arts have a collective power to change the world and impact public policy. Join your local arts advocacy organization and add your voice to the choir. Together we can accomplish anything."
- Sheila Smith, with APAP|NYC speaker Ben Vereen



Charles "Chuck" Davis. See related story on page 20.

APAP AWARDS

SIDNEY R. YATES ADVOCACY AWARD for outstanding advocacy on behalf of the performing arts by an individual, or an organization, for a particular advocacy effort or for a sustained advocacy campaign at the national, state or local level that has had a significant impact on the performing arts.

Sheila Smith
Executive Director
Minnesota Citizens for the Arts

WILLIAM DAWSON AWARD FOR PROGRAMMATIC EXCELLENCE for sustained achievement in programming by an individual or organization for the quality, innovation and vision of program design, audience building and community involvement efforts.

Jedediah Wheeler
Executive Director for Arts and Cultural Programming
Montclair State University

AWARD OF MERIT for achievement in the performing arts by an individual whose genius, energy and excellence have defined or redefined an art form for today's audiences.

Charles "Chuck" Davis
Founder and Artistic Director
African American Dance Ensemble
DanceAfrica America
See feature story on page 20.

HALSEY AND ALICE NORTH BOARD ALUMNI AWARD for committed excellence and service to the field of arts presenting by an former APAP board member.

Kenneth Fischer
President
University Musical Society
University of Michigan

NAPAMA AWARDS

NAPAMA AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

Steve Duchrow
Director of Performing Arts
Elgin Community College Arts Center

NAPAMA AGENT/MANAGER AWARD

Harold Norris
Director of Booking
Pentacle Presented



"Exemplary boards of directors have members who know, understand and advocate for the mission of the organization. They clearly understand their role, actively participate in the organization's programs, generously give and help raise funds, and support the CEO. Diversity in life experience, whether by age, sex, race, sexual orientation, geography or other factors, enriches the quality of perspectives that can inform the board's decisions."
- Kenneth Fischer



"Intuition is the most important element of my work. It is elusive. But it is why I say 'yes' to the inexplicable."
- Jedediah Wheeler

ADO

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

BY BRENNA MCDUFFIE

Mario Garcia Durham makes the rounds at APAP|NYC.

At 8:30 a.m. on day two of APAP|NYC, Mario Garcia Durham was ready for the day. The first panels would begin at 9, but the full tables at the third floor Cyber Cafe indicated that attendees were already ready to rock. Some leaned over their schedules pencil-marking the events they wanted to attend, others were engaging in round-table type discussions with fellow members, and many were guzzling down their morning cups of coffee with urgency. It was early, and the day would be long.

Durham, too, was already going at full speed. I met him in the Hilton's penthouse suite where he was well into his first event of the day: breakfast with the APAP and NAPAMA boards. While board members laughed and mingled, Durham quickly excused himself and ran towards the suite's kitchen. He emerged moments later with a glass and a butter-knife and climbed the suite's spiral staircase to sound the glassy interruption. As Durham addressed the crowd, he applauded both organizations' accomplishments for the year and expressed his gratitude for a shared mission of supporting and developing the performing arts.

After a few more remarks and a group photo, it was time for Durham to roll. He grabbed his briefcase and piped into a few more conversations en route to the elevator. Margaret Stevens, director of executive affairs and Durham's aide de camp, turned to me: "He has a tendency to wander. You'll have to keep him in line." Indeed, as I accompanied Durham to his next event, he would stop to greet nearly every member he encountered.

In line with this year's conference theme "MAKERS," Durham is and has always been a maker in his own right. His career as an arts presenter has surpassed 20 years, and before his inauguration at APAP in 2011, he was a regular attendee of the conference. "I've been coming to this conference for 23 years," Durham



told me, and he said that he continues to come away from it with fresh knowledge and insight, which to him signifies that the conference has been a success. "If I walk out with two or three new ideas, then I'm happy."

Durham explained that though he and most members attend APAP|NYC primarily to see the artists, to hear the speakers and to network, each year's theme serves as a reminder of the greater implications of everyone's work beyond the conference walls. "I think we always really want to reaffirm for everyone that we're all creative; we're all makers in one sense or another," Durham said.

The theme also helps center the APAP|NYC attendees as they take advantage of the many opportunities that the conference has to offer. Still, Durham and the conference organizers want to prevent anyone from feeling overwhelmed. The staggering number of events per day – pre-conference forums, organizational meetings, plenary sessions, professional sessions, EXPO Hall hours, showcases and many, many off-the-grid meetings – start early and may run well into the post-midnight hours. In terms of its scope, Durham likened APAP|NYC to a large university. "[At] very large universities you need to know where you are going when you arrive, because there are so many things," Durham said. "We want to make sure

that for whatever path attendees are on, that the experiences and professionals they encounter are the very best. I want to set up that vehicle for people to get the best that they can out of the conference."

At this point, Durham knows the conference like the back of his hand, but as we walked, he assured me that he continues to be surprised by the timely conversations the conference fosters. "What's really resonating right now is the idea that arts organizations, artists and presenters have got to be involved with community," Durham said.

He explained that this message comes up time and again, but that it is always relevant, and the dialogue around community involvement in the arts is especially energetic given the current global issues. "The conversation is going on even more now because of issues with civil rights, with injustice, with the political discussions, and with all of the concerns that people have. There's such great fear in this country right now, and we as presenters need to look at that," Durham said.

Before Durham and I parted ways, he pointed out that as artists, the members of APAP and attendees of the conference hold a special tool, and that they have a responsibility to use it. "Our great strength is that we are dealing in the performing arts. Those are the cards we have to play, but we have to play. We can't just sit back and say, 'Oh this thing will pass. As arts organizations, it behooves us to dive into those conversations, open them up, let people talk, let artists talk beyond the language of dialogue. That has resonated at APAP, and I'm really happy about that."

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