

INSIDE ARTS

SPRING 2019

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

WE ARE THE ONES

THE POWER OF WE INSPIRES REFLECTION,
PROVOCATION AND LEADERSHIP

A ROUNDUP OF
HIGHLIGHTS FROM
APAP|NYC 2019

A CHAT WITH LEGENDARY
DANCER CARMEN
DE LAVALLADE

KRISTIN CHENOWETH:
"GIVE IT YOUR ALL."

AMAZ ENTERTAINMENT 2019-2020 ROSTER

Jazz

LeeLee Robert

Cowgirl
Jazz



Country

MUSTANGS of the WEST

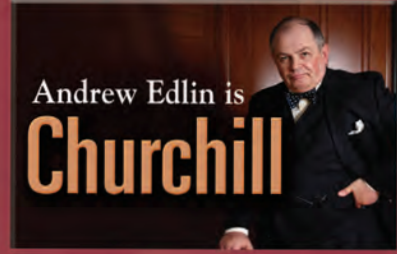


CALIFORNIA
COUNTRY

Theater

Andrew Edlin is

Churchill



Folk

Folk Legacy Trio



ART
PODELL



Tribute

PIEWOOD MASK



THOUGHT READER
BILL GLADWELL



Variety

Drew
Harrison
In the
Spirit of
LENNON



JACK WRIGHT'S TRIBUTE TO
NEIL DIAMOND



JIM CURRY
A TRIBUTE
TO THE MUSIC OF
JOHN DENVER



A “**must see**” production, the Acrobats of Hebei China are celebrating their 14th season touring the world. Trained from childhood, these athletes are marvels of what the human mind and body can accomplish. Combining ancient traditions and jaw-dropping acrobatics with a colorful kaleidoscope of costumes and props, the Acrobats of Hebei China are masters of agility and grace that have to be seen to be believed.

Acrobats of Hebei China



“The Chinese Acrobats delighted audiences in South Florida with their authentic costumes and their amazing routines. Looking forward to the next time!” – **NYK-RAPP ENTERPRISES, LLC**

“Both Shows SOLD OUT! Troupe was easy to work with. Audience loved them.” – **SOPAC, NJ**

“Wonderful! Our best attended concert this season.” – **Wellsboro, PA Concert Association**

“The troupe was fantastic. So professional.” – **Lake County Concert Assoc., Waukegan IL**

“It was wonderful. We ended our season on a high note.” – **Live! In Lexington, MO**



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An Evening With

Jim Messina & Karla Bonoff

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Ann Hampton Callaway & Susan Werner

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Ellis Paul

"The Hero In You"

"A Bayou Christmas"

BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet

INSIDE ARTS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2
SPRING 2019

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COVER: The Power of WE resonated with members throughout APAP | NYC.



Thank you for attending
APAP|NYC 2019!

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

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January 10-14**

**EARLY BIRD
REGISTRATION
OPENS MID-JUNE**



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INSIDE ARTS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

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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



It's always a pleasure to go to APAP|NYC, and many of us return charged up to jump back into our work with refreshed enthusiasm and intentionality. Our conference in January was no exception. Perhaps, like me, you found yourself wondering even more deeply this time: How can I take these important lessons, conversations, *hopefulness* back to work with me?

The good news is you have it with you, and your colleagues are only a phone call, email, text or, in some cases, a hallway away. Tap into the APAP|NYC spirit when you need it. It's there for you, and we are here for you.

You may also find yourself thinking, as I do, about the topic of leadership. Who gets to lead and why? And who are the next leaders, the new leaders? This was a topic that came up again and again at the conference.

ADAM KISSICK/APAP

At APAP, we are committed to keeping entry points to and broad definitions of leadership at the forefront of our thinking. We hope you noticed that in our programming for the conference, we had many new voices leading and contributing to discussions. Each new voice opened a door to experience and understanding and laid the groundwork for the “good to meet you” sensibility that lasted for all four days, particularly at plenary sessions and in overflowing affinity groups, professional development sessions and other meetings throughout the conference.

As an organization and convener — and as leaders, too — we are committed to focusing on Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – REDI. We know this has always been important, but our ongoing dedication to making sure it is part of the drinking water is part of what we had aimed for in our programming this year. We felt the impact. And we hope you did as well.

Please enjoy the stories in this issue of *Inside Arts*. They underscore my thoughts and touch upon the spirit that we always strive to send home with you.

Mario Garcia Durham, PRESIDENT & CEO

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Our annual Knowledge Issue collects reports, excerpts and articles curated by experts in the field. Keep up to date on studies, trends and best practices. A great summer read for arts professionals!

DakhaBrakha



Afro-Cuban All Stars



Paris Combo



Dakh Daughters



- Andy Narell
- Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino
- Hermeto Pascoal
- Huun Huur Tu w/Carmen Rizzo
- La Bottine Souriante
- Nachito Herrera
- Ndlovu Youth Choir
- Novalima
- Quetzal
- Riyaz Qawwali
- The Manganiyar Seduction
- Yossi Fine & Ben Aylon



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VOICE

A GIANT LEAP FOR THE ARTS IN HARLEM

Victoria
Theater
interior

Transformative expansion will allow historic Apollo Theater to extend its reach.

IT'S A GREAT DAY IN HARLEM.

Transformation has begun on the neighborhood's iconic Apollo Theater, which will expand its footprint and its programming as part of the adjacent Victoria Theater Redevelopment Project at 233 West 125th Street.

The addition of two modern, flexible performance spaces — one with 99 seats and the other with 199 seats — will be the first physical expansion of the Apollo in its nearly 85-year history. Slated to open in 2020, the new facility and offices will house the Classical Theatre of Harlem, Harlem Arts Alliance and Jazzmobile, enhancing Apollo's advocacy

for African American, African diasporic and Harlem-based artists and culture.

"The Apollo Theater is reaffirming its deep responsibility to our community and to the emerging and world-class artists with whom we work while simultaneously creating ways to offer even greater opportunities to artists, audiences, students and the community and safeguarding the spirit and cultural character of Harlem," says Apollo Theater president and CEO Jonelle Procopé. "At the heart of this endeavor and the future Apollo Performing Arts Center is the Apollo's desire to expand our many positive impacts. The Victoria

revitalization is the right moment to support the important work New York's cultural organizations are doing while expanding our programming and educational offerings, shepherding in the next generation of the creative workforce of color."

The mixed-use development includes residences (50 percent of which are designated as affordable housing), retail space and a hotel. Plans for the performance space call for a theater rental subsidy program for nonprofits. Apollo will manage the cultural spaces in the building, while separate developers will oversee commercial endeavors. The Victoria Theater Redevelopment Project is a part of

the revitalization of 125th Street by the state of New York.

Apollo's 25,000-square foot facility, designed by Kostow Greenwood Architects, will be located on the third and fourth floors of the building. The expanded venue will allow the Apollo to serve the needs of its artists, artistic partners, staff, audiences, the community and tourists who travel to Harlem every year.

Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for the neighborhood, the city and beyond. Although music is the organization's heart and soul, the Apollo stages dance, theater, spoken word and more, including such notable events as the first theatrical reading of Ta-Nehisi Coates's National Book Award-winning *Between the World and Me*; 100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella; the annual Africa Now! Festival; and the New York

premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*.

As a presenter, Apollo produces festivals and large-scale dance and music works that celebrate and refresh the organization's mission through a contemporary lens, including the Women of the World Festival and Breakin' Convention, along with multidisciplinary, collaborative special projects.

Since its first Amateur Night contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms. With a new facility in the works, the Apollo's leaders envision a future that builds on an 85-year-old legacy of innovation, inclusion and experimentation.

"The Apollo is the soul of American culture, and the Apollo Performing Arts Center will allow us to share that culture with an even wider audience, not only with the Apollo's own

productions, but with other cultural institutions that will help us create and develop the kinds of resources that serve the creative community and audiences around the corner and around the world," said Apollo Theater executive producer Kamilah Forbes. "The new theaters will allow the Apollo to provide support for artists throughout their careers, especially emerging artists, and will provide an opportunity for us to grow our artistic programming as we continue to create a new, 21st-century performing arts canon and provide space to incubate, develop and collaborate on new works that speak directly to the needs of our community. This expansion will allow the Apollo to look to the future while protecting the heritage that makes Harlem such an indispensable part of New York City and the world."

For more information, visit apollotheater.org

THE ART OF BUSINESS

Arts Midwest has selected 12 Minnesota arts and cultural organizations for ArtsLab's Building Community and Adaptability cohort. During the first six months of 2019, organizations will explore what a healthy business model looks like for their organization; develop a compelling story about their identity and purpose; consider how to build greater equity and inclusion; and create a strategic road map to guide their work over the coming two to three years. The program includes three retreats and twice-monthly webinars facilitated by Arts Midwest staff,



Katha Dance Theatre

VOICE

Minnesota arts leaders and other advisers and is funded by the McKnight Foundation, the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundations, the Bigelow Foundation and the Mardag Foundation.

Participants include 113, which curates concerts, residencies, seminars and master classes throughout the Twin Cities; ANEW BAM, which works to advance the academic success of youth and families through culturally responsive arts education, social emotional learning and African American history and culture; COLLIDE Theatrical, which creates original Broadway-style jazz dance musicals, casting dancers of all shapes, sizes, genders, sexual

orientation and age, allowing artists to overcome challenges in a “gig-based” work economy; Exposed Brick Theatre, which is “dedicated to telling the untold story”; Kaddatz Galleries, which fosters visual arts education and appreciation; the social impact organization Kairos Alive!, which helps older adults people live more active, engaged and creative lives; Katha Dance Theatre, which creates, performs and educates through dance, music, poetry and storytelling rooted in Kathak, the classical dance style of North India; Minnesota Music Coalition, the mission of which is to connect and support Minnesota’s diverse community of musicians; Somali

Museum of Minnesota, devoted to preserving Somali culture and art; StoryArk, which empowers secondary students to tell their story through podcast, film and print media; The Show Gallery Lowertown, a gallery space seeking to create accessibility in the arts and unite artists of all abilities, backgrounds and walks of life; and Umbrella Collective, which collaborates with artists and audiences to create new works of theater that value representation of queer- and women-centric narratives, accessibility and inclusivity for artists and audiences and creative processes that encourage exploration, risk-taking and play.



Phil Wiggins & Friends

UPTOWN FOLK

For presenters looking to get the folk out (on the road, that is), Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and the National Council for the Traditional Arts have teamed up to create a new Folk and Traditional Arts Touring Network. FTAN is a regional, presenter-based membership network that aims to build public understanding of folk and traditional arts. FTAN

members are able to book tours featuring artists and practitioners who represent a range of living traditions and cultural backgrounds. The tours were selected to align with members’ interests and engagement goals. Inaugural tours and residencies include: *Country Blues and Dance* featuring Phil Wiggins’ Blues House Party and the Harris Brothers; *Lift Me Up! Gospel Masters* featuring the Legendary

Ingramettes with the Northern Kentucky Brotherhood Singers; and *Picker’s Paradise: From Balkans to Bluegrass* featuring Tamburaški Sastav Pono and Danny Knicely’s Next Generation. For the pilot, presenters include Augusta Heritage Center at Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia; Carnegie Hall, Lewisburg, West Virginia; Creative Alliance, Baltimore, Maryland; Flushing Town Hall in New York; Lake Placid Center for the Arts in New York; Miller Center for the Arts at Reading Area Community College in Pennsylvania; Salisbury University Cultural Affairs in Maryland; and Troy Savings Bank Music Hall in New York. New members will be selected in fall 2019 through a competitive selection process open to nonprofit presenters in the mid-Atlantic region. For more information about this program, visit midatlanticarts.org.



Kennedy Center

REACH FOR THE STARS

The REACH, the first major expansion in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' nearly 50-year history, is slated to open later this year. Guided by the vision of renowned architect Steven Holl, the REACH is designed to break down boundaries between audience and art by extending the facility — with opportunities for engagement and interaction — along the Potomac River. The REACH aims to “transform the campus from a traditional performing arts center into a living theater where the artist can be set free.” According to the Kennedy Center, the space is an

immersive learning center where communities can reach into the artistic process and discover what it means to make art. Visitors might come with a picnic blanket and friends to watch a simulcast and then linger to take pictures of an outdoor art installation. Parents might bring their children to attend an arts camp and on the way pass by a dance rehearsal in one of the REACH's windowed studios. The REACH is a public incubator where artists can reach for wherever their visions take them and visitors from all walks of life don't need a ticket to experience art. For more information, or to view a flyover video, visit kennedy-center.org.

STEPPING OUT AND STEPPING UP

Although the organization is best known for its efforts to sustain and build audiences for live theater — including the popular TKTS discount tickets booths — Theatre Development Foundation is stepping up its efforts to promote dance. As it heads into its 50th anniversary year, the nonprofit service organization is embarking on a research and development project to explore how to cultivate a broader audience for dance.

“While TDF already works to erase barriers related to cost and accessibility, our new dance initiative will target the lack of awareness and knowledge of dance

within communities at large,” says Victoria Bailey, TDF executive director.

Mary Madsen, a longtime performer in the New York City dance community, will head up the project, which is funded by a grant from the Howard Gilman Foundation. Collaborating with artists, presenters, current dance audiences and non-dance goers is essential to the success of this project. Through interviews and research across all these groups, TDF plans to develop new outreach programs that highlight dance as an approachable and attainable art form and, in turn, expand audiences for dance beyond the scope of current attendees. For more information, visit tdf.org.



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DANCE

HALAU HULA KA
NO'EAU
HALAU O KEKUIHI



OKAREKA DANCE
IN MANA WAHINE

TAIKO



KENNY ENDO

SPOKEN WORD

KATHY YOGI COLLINS
KEALOHA'S
"THE STORY OF
EVERYTHING"



KEALOHA

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for complete roster

Transitions



Marc Bamuthi Joseph

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has appointed **MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH** as vice president and artistic

director of social impact. In this newly created role, Joseph is charged with weaving together and advancing the center’s local and national community engagement initiatives. “Marc is a transformative force on stage and behind the scenes, and the Kennedy Center and our entire community will benefit immensely from the creativity, passion and dedication he brings to his craft and to the pivotal role that the arts play in shaping our social landscape,” says Kennedy Center president Deborah F. Rutter. “As we move towards the opening of the REACH in 2019 [see related story on page 19] and our 50th anniversary in 2021-2022, Marc will lead us in thinking through the role of the Kennedy Center in relation to our local community and to the arts community at large. We are so very thrilled to welcome him to Washington.” A working artist and noted speaker — including appearances at APAP | NYC — Joseph has served as chief of program and pedagogy at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco since 2012. In this role, he developed acclaimed artistic and community engagement programs, including the YBCA 100 and the YBCA Fellows. A dancer by training, he has created spoken word, dance, theater, hip-hop, opera and multimedia pieces that have received international critical

acclaim. His work often addresses the intersections and interplay between social issues and cultural identity, including race, gender and class. He came to national attention in 1999 as the National Poetry Slam champion, and in 2004, he appeared in episodes of *Def Poetry* on HBO.



Johann Zietsman

After an international search, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County has named former APAP board member

JOHANN ZIETSMAN as its CEO and president. Zietsman succeeds John Richard, who stepped down at the end of 2018. “After a thorough and careful selection process, we’re delighted to have Johann lead the Arsht Center into a new era while conserving the center’s commitment for comprehensive community engagement,” said Ira D. Hall, chair of the center’s Trust Board of Directors. “Johann has built a reputation within the arts world as a fierce advocate of diversity and inclusion, from audiences to programming and staffing.” Zietsman joins the Arsht Center after nearly 10 years as CEO and president of the Arts Commons in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Under his leadership, the Arts Commons has become a resilient and sustainable values-led organization. “It’s an incredible opportunity to be able to lead an institution that values many of the same principles I’ve championed throughout my career, such as building access to the arts for all,” Zietsman said. “Although Miami and Calgary are two very different cities, they are similar in that they’re diverse and rich in culture — and

that’s what excites me the most about accepting this new role.” Zietsman’s appreciation for the arts began early on in his career in his homeland of South Africa, where he pioneered work in the arts and was recognized by Nelson Mandela’s government. As a volunteer, he launched and directed two community youth initiatives, which currently serve about 4,000 at-risk children in townships. He is the current chair of the Performing Arts Center Consortium and a member of the International Society for the Performing Arts.

Center for the Arts in Jackson, Wyoming, has selected **DAVID J. ROTHMAN** as president and chief executive officer. A prolific author, Rothman most recently served as program director and poetry concentration director for the



David J. Rothman

Graduate Program in Creative Writing at Western State Colorado University. He is also a resident poet for Colorado Public Radio, instructor for

the Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver and editor for *THINK: A Journal of Poetry, Criticism, and Reviews*. He has founded and led several nonprofit arts, educational, publishing and scholarly organizations, including Crested Butte Academy, the Western Slope Chamber Music Series, the Crested Butte Music Festival, the Western State Colorado University Symposium on Poetry Criticism, the Robinson Jeffers Association and Conundrum Press. In addition to consulting for public and nonprofit arts and educational organizations, Rothman has served

on national governing and advisory nonprofit boards, including the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, The Robinson Jeffers Association, The Association of Literary Scholars, Critics and Writers, The West Chester (Pennsylvania) University Poetry Center, Harvard Alumni for Global Action, Colorado Center for the Book and the Crested Butte Music Festival.

SHARP Dance Company founder and artistic director **DIANE SHARP-NACHSIN** has been named to the board of Pennsylvania Presenters.

"I'm excited to use this opportunity to speak for the artists who are currently working in the field," said Sharp-Nachsins, who is currently the only working artist on the board. "Their voices need to be reflected in meetings and decisions. This opportunity will help promote and grow the arts in Pennsylvania, and I hope to help foster relationships between presenters and artists." After suffering injuries that forced her to retire from performing, Sharp-Nachsins founded SHARP Dance Company in 2005. Her work has been selected for festivals and performances nationally and internationally, including Southern Vermont Dance Festival, Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts, The Living Garden Residency (Greece) and the BAU Institute Residency (Italy).

The **ANGELINA ARTS ALLIANCE** of Lufkin, Texas, has received a \$5,000 grant from the Moody Foundation to support a community concert by Black Violin at the local middle school. The arts alliance partnered with Impact Lufkin to present the concert in an effort to provide cultural experiences to community members who would not otherwise have the opportunity. As part of the grant, a limited number of complimentary tickets will be available

for qualifying adults and children. The members of Black Violin combine their classical training and hip-hop influences to create a distinctive multi-genre sound that is often described as "classical boom." "We are beyond grateful to the Moody Foundation for their generous support of our mission to provide access to the arts for everyone in our community. Black Violin delivers an inspiring message along with a world-class performance. We can't wait to share this event with everyone," says Jennifer Allen, executive director of the Angelina Arts Alliance.

INDIRA GOODWINE will join New England Foundation for the Arts in March as its new program director for dance. She will direct the NEFA National Dance Project and major dance initiatives in New England, as well as collaborate with other NEFA programs supporting the dance field. With



Indira Goodwine

a dual background in dance and arts administration, Goodwine most recently served as the managing director of Camille A. Brown & Dancers for the past two-and-a-half years and served as the company manager for several years prior. During her tenure, she shepherded the organization through the attainment of 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, established the organization's founding board of directors, enhanced institutional and individual fund-raising efforts, increased the budget by at least 30 percent per year since 2012 and provided oversight of the development, implementation and continued growth of the CABD dance engagement

program EVERY BODY MOVE. Under her management and in partnership with PMG Arts Management, CABD has toured extensively throughout the U.S. with support from NEFA's National Dance Project. Prior to her leadership role with CABD, Goodwine held positions at Harlem Stage, collaborating with operations, community partnerships, finance and programming of the annual dance program E-Moves. Originally from Queens, New York, she holds a BFA in dance performance from Florida State University and an MA in performing arts administration from New York University. "I am truly excited to join the team at NEFA," said Goodwine. "I have long admired NEFA's national philanthropic commitment to diversity, inclusivity and accessibility for performing artists, particularly its work with emerging and established choreographers in the nonprofit arts sector. NEFA continually strives to nurture extensive artistic and presenting partnerships that support the growth of creative communities across the nation. I look forward to embedding myself in the fabric of NEFA and advocating for the dance community through a nuanced framework that propels the field forward with a focus on activism, equity, creativity and engagement."



Candace L. Feldman

CANDACE L. FELDMAN

has joined the Disability Dance Works as managing director. Feldman has held leadership positions as director of programming at UA Presents in Tucson, Arizona, producing director of 651 ARTS in Brooklyn, New York, and a founding

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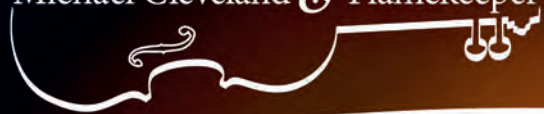
leader for the Next Generation National Arts Network, as well as roles at CBS Corp. in California and The Juilliard School in New York City. In her most recent position at the University of Arizona, Feldman programmed diverse music, dance and theater artists, helped double revenue and attracted audiences diverse in age, race and background. At DDW, a production company launched by dance artist, choreographer and disability arts innovator Alice Sheppard, Feldman joins a growing team of professionals from the arts, technology and social justice sectors working together to advance and expand the disability arts movement.

Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors presented the 2019 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards to three elected officials and three artists at The U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington, DC. The honorees have supported and promoted arts and culture in their communities, and include **GARY HERBERT**, governor of Utah, awarded the National Award for State Arts Leadership; **HILLARY SCHIEVE**, mayor of Reno, Nevada, awarded the National Award for Local Arts Leadership for cities with a population of 100,000 or more; and **JOHN HAMILTON**, mayor of Bloomington, Indiana, awarded the National Award for Local Arts Leadership for cities with a population of 100,000 or fewer. The Citizen Artist Award, presented to nationally renowned artists who have achieved outstanding success in their creative professional fields and who have made significant charitable contributions of their time and resources to advance humanitarian and educational causes, was presented to **MICHAEL L. BIVINS**, founding member of New Edition and Bell Biv DeVoe and founder of Bivfam Foundation; **JONATHAN GREEN**, professional painter and printmaker, considered one of the most important contemporary painters of the Southern experience; and Kate Raudenbush, a Burning Man-bred international artist and the longest running solo female artist at Burning Man.



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Lula Washington Dance Theatre invited audience members to join dancers on stage during their APAP | NYC showcase.

**STORY BY LINDA L. NELSON, JAKE STEPANSKY AND ALICIA ANSTEAD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM AND CHRISTY KISSICK**

Relationships are the foundation of the performing arts.

We know this in our work. The primary relationship is between performers and audiences. But also: relationships between performers, and between performers and directors. And also: relationships between audience members, strangers in the dark. And also: relationships between presenters and producers, between presenters

and agents, presenters and audiences, artists and funders.

In our work, *we are* the Power of WE.

APAP|NYC 2019 took the Power of WE as its theme for its annual conference January 4-8 at the New York Hilton Midtown and Sheraton New York Times Square. The focus was on ways to transfer elemental, embodied knowledge from our art forms to our leadership, from

the making and presenting of high quality performances to the continuous improvement of our organizations, business models and communities.

In doing so, the conference shined a spotlight on several emerging areas: the challenges and rewards of small and midsize presenters, often in rural areas; a shift away from purely transactional toward mission-driven models of

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of WE makes
an impact at
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2019.**

success; and new, less hierarchical, member-driven formats for plenary sessions and workshops that opened the conference to a greater number of diverse voices.

All of which was framed by an emphasis on giving and receiving welcome — and being thankful.

Gratitude was clear from the first moment of the opening plenary, when Tecumseh Caeser of the Matinecock tribe of the Lenape people led conference goers in an acknowledgment of the Indigenous land on which the conference is

held. Various speakers repeated some form of this acknowledgment throughout the conference, and while APAP|NYC conference planners have programmed these practices in the past, this year's gathering was more than ever about being vocal, deliberate, proactive and unafraid when tackling the challenge of building a more just and inclusive arts industry for our times.

Indeed, APAP|NYC 2019 itself proved a welcome balance to concurrent news and events in

the surrounding world. The U.S. government was shut down for two weeks with no end in sight at the time of the conference, and the stock market was on a giant year-end roller coaster of fear and uncertainty that was threatening philanthropic giving. With all that spinning in the news cycle, the high levels of business exchanges, spirits and innovation were in many ways remarkable. And at the end of the day, both faces of APAP — the transactional world of the EXPO Hall, showcases



From top: A scene from the Friday Plenary Session; the EXPO Hall; Red Baraat showcase at Brooklyn Bowl





Bria Skonberg showcase
at Zinc Bar

and private meetings and those seeking knowledge and inspiration through the plenary sessions and professional development workshops — met with success.

President and CEO Mario Garcia Durham opened the gathering Friday night by quoting artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph: “This is a time of push-pull: Some ways we have operated in the past are no longer acceptable. #MeToo is part of our world now. We are not going back.” Durham continued, “Who is in charge? How can we change old leadership patterns? I look upon our challenges as an opportunity in leadership. Does your organization lead? Do you lead? Does APAP lead?”

The questions had resonance.

“Really great leadership is highly dependent on the skills to bring people together,” keynote speaker Jane Chu, former chair of the

National Endowment for the Arts and now an advisor to PBS, pointed out, making the connection between these skills and those inherent to making performance. “You are already equipped to be the leaders in your communities.”

“The arts are not about this versus that. They are about both this and that,” Chu added, referencing a well-known improvisational technique.

Stephanie McKee, artistic director of Junebug Productions, echoed the theme of seeking out, inviting and holding multiple perspectives on Saturday as she prepared to lead the assembly in a collective singing of Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon’s tribute to South African women, *We Are the Ones We Been Waiting For*.

“The Power of WE is moving from a narrative of ‘us and them’ to

‘WE,’” said McKee. “‘We’ is about collective action. ‘We’ is about how we come together to create that collective action.”

Session presenters, too, focused on the need for new strategies and paradigms to take the industry to a place of welcome, inclusion and relevance for all communities. Although the conference’s general population has changed over the years and is more diverse than ever, more work awaits both APAP and the field. The demographics still lean toward white and male, the actuality of which surfaced time and time again during discussions. The glass ceiling, as documented in the session *Reconsidering the Glass Ceiling, 20 Years On (1999-2019)*, still exists. These realities present key challenges to performing arts professionals hoping to build audiences and strengthen communities.

And yet there was also a shift and a sign of that very hope. In response to changing demographics and power structures, some of the conference's most popular components included affinity groups for People of Color and small and mid-sized presenters as well as a town hall-style format for a central plenary session.

"The most memorable moment of the conference for me was singing together and talking at the WOCA session," said Shakara Wright, an arts management fellow from Pittsburgh, referring to the Women of Color in the Arts group. "It felt great to be together in a roomful of women of color in the arts. Very powerful."

Two plenary sessions stood out for their multiplicity of voices. On Saturday, 25 APAP Leadership Fellows offered their insights into the most pressing issues facing them — and all of us — as stewards of the field. [See sidebar.] On Sunday, the town hall session opened with a participatory performance that was many attendees' favorite. "Watching [hip-hop dancer] Jackie Lopez take a roomful of somewhat stodgy, tired arts professionals and get them to move and dance the way that we did. It was a really cool moment," said Jason Hodges, executive director of the Anchorage (Alaska) Concert Association, adding that the session caused him to reflect on the way his organization has "changed the way we think about community, and changed the way we think about opening doors into community." The 90-minute town hall represented another high point, a democratization of the APAP voice, turning topic selection, articulation and answers over to a plenary session of the members in a showcase of peer-to-peer learning. The forum was moderated by Boston-based radio

and TV journalist and commentator Callie Crossley, who opened with an important distinction and observation. "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance," she said, taking the floor after the Lopez dance party. "A lot of folks here have been invited, but they're not dancing yet."

As the conference unfolded, session after session emphasized the importance of integrating and invigorating conversations about racial equity, diversity and inclusion into daily practice — and a particular emphasis was placed on concrete action steps and takeaways. The panel discussion *Are You REDI? Thought Leaders on Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Performing Arts* tackled the topic head-on.

"We're in a very acronym-centric moment," explained Michele Kumi Baer, philanthropy project director at Race Forward, the mission of which is to build racial justice through transformative action. "We're swimming in concepts and trends right now, but we really want to get into practice."

"As a presenter, the work of a curator is a useful metaphor for work on racial equity," Kumi Baer continued. "The work that

presenters do in putting together seasons is not transactional, and it is not isolated. It's part of a story that you're constructing year after year. It's an investment of time, capital, and other resources, and it is a continual investigation. It's important not to think about racial equity as a special project, but rather as something that should be embedded in the day-to-day work that you do."

Many APAP|NYC attendees voiced a deep investment in making racial equity, diversity and inclusion a priority at their venues, but worried about engaging with board members and other staff who weren't present for these conversations. Panelist Maurine Knighton, program director for the arts at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, suggested turning our gaze to where possibilities are rather than where perceived barriers might be.

"Start where you are," she offered, "because taking a perspective of looking at what you lack can become a rationale for not acting."

At *Making Your Venue Trans-Friendly*, choreographer Sean Dorsey asked attendees on the spot to articulate one conversation they would have or step they would



Each year, participants in the 5 Minutes to Shine program, a collaboration between APAP and the Wallace Foundation, present stories at the conference about effective practices in the performing arts. The 2019 presenters included (from left) Homer Bryant, Charlie Robin, Emily Colin, Kirby Wirchenko, Shona McCullagh and Jim Leija.

take to actively encourage their presenting partners to make their venues trans-friendly. *Making Space: A Radical Rethinking of the Approach to Work/Life Integration in the Arts*, with Linsey Bostwick, Chanon Judson and Ryhna Thompson, provoked thoughtful discussion about the intersection of equity and work/life balance, using a plethora of discussion formats and techniques to generate concrete solutions that were later shared with the participants.

Artists as Activists featured a panel of artists — Donald Byrd, David Dorfman, Arturo O’Farrill and Michael Fox — whose careers are rich with work that rails against injustice. When asked about the

challenges of convincing presenters to present political work, moderator Kendra Whitlock Ingram, executive director of the Newman Center for the Performing Arts and a member of the APAP board of directors, responded: “We are seeing a lot of artists coming to the table expressing their social justice ideas through their art. Are we just not going to present people who are talking about these topics? It’s almost impossible not to.”

Byrd offered that “the pool of presenters that might be interested is a lot smaller than all the presenters in the universe. It’s about being persistent. Your agent really has to understand and be an advocate for what you’re doing

and believe in it. This work is like educating a child — and when you’re educating a child, you may not see the effects of that for many years, so you have to just be in a place of optimism and continue to do the work and keep putting it in front of people in the hope that we might be able to bring people around to it.”

O’Farrill, whose *Fandango at the Wall* gathered artists from the U.S. and Mexico to record an album at the Tijuana-San Diego border, recounted an unsettling story. The previous week, O’Farrill had been introducing a number at Birdland and had described the work as music that “calms my heart in these tough times.” A group of men took issue with this, and after they were

Nothing Without Joy

Editor’s note: The Saturday Plenary Session featured 25 members of the APAP Leadership Fellows Program offering provocations based on their exchanges with one another and their experiences. The following commentary is a reflection from one of our writers who was in the audience.

We are offered five provocations on arts leadership by the 25 members of the third cohort of APAP’s Leadership Fellows Program. They asked: Which provokes each of us the most?

I am provoked because this conversation — how to change the models of effective leadership, successful businesses and community engagement — needs to be moved beyond the walls of this ballroom.

Year after APAP year, I’m struck by the disparity between the conversations in these

packed plenary and workshop rooms, and those outside of the conference, sometimes no further away than the EXPO Hall. In my worst moments, it can seem to me almost as if the performing arts exist in our own self-imposed exile from the nation of which we are a part.

Then someone paraphrases a saying from dance artist and educator Liz Lerman: “When the going gets tough, turn reaction and judgment to wonder.”

The five provocations are excellent, and I love thinking and talking about them: leading from the middle (changing the hierarchical structures to which we are accustomed); redefining community engagement; how to live in the tension between capitalism and seeking equity; how disrupting organizational structures can help us reimagine how we work; and what work/life

integration looks like.

“I know there’s a space for all of us,” a young Indian classical dancer at my table says. “How do we create it? Who is my community, and where am I building this? Where do I fit in all this?”

We sit silently around the table pondering this for a moment. Sometimes it is easier to voice one’s beliefs than to actually ask the questions and do the difficult work.

“How do we create the uncomfortable partnerships that will make this work?” a woman from one of the nation’s Jewish Community Centers finally asks.

And from a collegiate presenter: “How do we create the work in which young people are interested, so they will show up? So they become part of our community?”

The communities in which I live have other conversations. My white rural community does

ejected from the venue, they began screaming “Heil, Hitler!”

“This isn’t art anymore,” mused O’Farrill grimly. “This is survival.”

During sessions in the lower level of the Hilton — whether affinity groups or programs such as *New Avenues for Community Engagement: Contemporary Circus and Outdoor Arts*, *New Paradigms for New Economic Realities of the Arts*, *Determining Your Organization’s Digital Marketing Priorities*, *How to Conduct Indigenous Land Acknowledgements* and many more — leaders in the field engaged in discussion about trends, the times, innovation and the daily work of arts professionals.

In particular, community-based

arts practitioners staged a quiet revolution again the traditional conference presenter-audience structure. These participants and facilitators, whose work around the country uses performance and gathering as a catalyst for story-sharing and increased civic dialogue, brought their practice into the sessions themselves. The rooms brimmed with electricity as attendees re-imagined the conference presentations as discussions and work sessions, restructuring the physical layouts of the rooms in the process. Often seated in circles or small groups, session leaders such as Junebug’s Stephanie McKee and Urban Bush Women’s Chanon Judson used dynamic

facilitation techniques to adjust the programming in real time.

In these gatherings, The Power of WE shined brightly, as representatives from organizations at the forefront of the community arts field — Junebug Productions, Urban Bush Women, Forklift Danceworks, Artichoke Dance Company, Fog Beast and many more — collaborated, challenged one another and coalesced into a group greater than the sum of its parts.

APAP also gave considerable time to small and midsize presenters in its midst, many of them serving rural populations. An overflow crowd of more than 70 attended the affinity group session on this topic facilitated by Joe Clifford

talk about taxes, a lot — property taxes especially, which fund local public education. At the same time, as they increase, they threaten our ability to call these special places along the coast of Maine home. My family and neighbors continue to talk about jobs, too, even though right now all are employed. But many are working two or even three full-time jobs to make ends meet. They talk about security in non-financial terms as well. And health insurance? Don’t even go there. There are a lot of real reasons why people beyond these walls are afraid.

We need the Power of WE, in all its multi-sectional glory, in a way that brings empathy and creativity into our communities, and not just our industry conversations. To take these conversations outside the APAP | NYC ballroom, our work needs to supplant — or at least co-exist with — the TV, movies and video games that occupy



Members of the APAP Leadership Fellows Program led the Saturday Plenary Session.

our neighbors’ imaginations, reinforcing white views of themselves, their communities, their pasts, their finances.

Are we the ones we’ve been waiting for? At my table talk, there was an awareness that we’ll only fill this bill if we act as bridges, as translators between the needs of our communities and the work we want to do.

“One of the speakers made a comment: Nothing without

joy,” said Shakirah Stephens, arts management fellow with the Alumni Theater Company in Pittsburgh. “And that has stuck with me because sometimes we get so wrapped up in work and getting projects done, getting budgets together, doing all these other different kinds of things, that ‘nothing without joy’ has really resonated with me.”

—Linda L. Nelson

Interview with Ara Fitzgerald, Artist

How many times have you been to APAP in the past?

This is my second APAP. I came for the first time last year, and it was the artist access reduction in price that allowed me to do it. I almost didn't do it this year because of the expense, but I'm really glad I did.

What were some highlights of your experience at APAP | NYC 2019?

Learning about how to market oneself and doing a showcase. Meeting people, networking in that way of actually meeting folks is really wonderful. I'm not sure that anything is going to come out of this in terms of bookings, but I've learned a lot, and I've met some amazing folks. I've been inspired by a lot of the sessions and the discussion about APAP as WE. This whole world, from the individual artist at the bottom of the economic ladder — that would be me — all the way up to Broadway houses, is here. It's pretty fascinating to see the world all brought together in this way.

What will you take away from the sessions and this conference?

The WE-ness. I'm proud of being a member of this world, our world as performers, that seeks inclusiveness and diversity and survives despite all, and the importance of our freedom of expression at this time in our world. It's a very, very serious time and our presence is needed more than ever before to keep speaking out.

—Jake Stepansky



Black Grace Dance Company offered a showcase at New York City Center.

of the Lebanon Opera House in New Hampshire. His town has a population of 13,500, a little over half the number of people who can be seated at Madison Square Garden. Another session *Small and Mid-Size Presenters and Building Audiences: A Report from the Field*, introduced the results of an APAP-commissioned pilot study of 19 small and mid-sized presenters. Additional workshops included topics such as programming small-cap venues, pocket commissions, and diversity and inclusion in rural presenting.

"We do come to APAP," said one attendee during the small and mid-sized presenters' affinity session. "We are always here, despite the barriers."

"We're all isolated in some way, all under-resourced in some way," noted another. "We all have infrastructure issues. We struggle with the urban lens viewing small and midsize venues as if forcing us to apologize. We offer no apologies for who we are or what we do."

The pilot study, conducted in

collaboration with the Western States Arts Alliance and Arts Midwest and supported by the Wallace Foundation Building Arts Audiences project, gives a first look at the major changes small and mid-sized presenters are weathering. The communities historically served by these organizations — many of which are the only performing arts groups in their communities or regions — were often homogenous and are now quickly becoming demographically diverse, with the populations themselves becoming less stable: either seasonally tourist-driven or impacted by migrant work patterns. Once stable farming communities outside of urban areas have become suburban bedroom communities for residents who are only home to sleep. Whole communities have been upended by the opioid crisis.

The destabilizing nature of these changes greatly impacts small and midsize presenters' attempts to build relationships with new audiences. As a result, despite sweeping demographic change, their

audiences remain static: primarily older and white. These smaller presenters are struggling with how to program both for their base audience and for new populations, particularly with limited capacity to present diversified programming that is relevant to the various segments of their communities.

Like the study itself, the session concluded with participants noting the importance of partnerships to achieve needed change; the “small and mighty” nature of their section of the industry; the need for a better understanding of their particular financial and artistic needs by agents focused on larger markets and venues; their need for recognition by regional and national funders; and better financial support from APAP to participate in the annual conference.

Several conference goers pointed toward a conversation during the People of Color Affinity group as their conference takeaway. As Davaneel Duncan of Baruch College in New York recalled, “There’s no room to be tired. You have to roll up your sleeves and get out there.”

To which Joi Ware, one of APAP’s student volunteers and a dancer, separately added her own reflection of the same moment. “Don’t complain about anything. Just work,” she said. “When you find you are missing something, you find and make that for yourself. When you feel low, all those people that came before you are with you and helping you and lifting you up.” **IA**



Linda L. Nelson is the deputy director for Portland Ovations in Maine. She was the founding executive director for Opera House Arts at Maine’s 1912 Stonington Opera House for 17 years and most recently served as assistant director for the Maine Arts Commission. Her journalistic and new media roots date back to her 13-year tenure at Village Voice Media in New York City.



Jake Stepansky is a theater-maker and arts advocate based in Austin, Texas, where he is the operations manager of Forklift Danceworks. During his undergraduate years at Harvard University, Stepansky worked at the American Repertory Theater, directed several productions at A.R.T.’s second stage OBERON, student-produced the college’s annual ARTS FIRST festival and wrote for the Office for the Arts Harvard Arts Blog.



Alicia Anstead is editor of *Inside Arts* magazine and a co-producer of APAP | NYC. As a writer, her work has been published in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Scientific American* and other publications. Additionally, she is associate director for programming at the Office for the Arts at Harvard and an instructor in journalism for the writing program at Harvard University Extension School.

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Carmen de Lavallade

Wherever a door opens

Legendary dancer **Carmen de Lavallade** has inspired generations of dancers and other performing artists. “There’s no such thing as giving up in the arts,” she said when she received the 2019 APAP Award of Merit in January. **BY CAMERON MCKINNEY**

“Young people today are so lucky,” said Carmen de Lavallade after a resounding standing ovation by a packed room at the annual APAP|NYC Awards Luncheon on January 7. “When I was growing up, people of color were on their own. Now they are more included in things.”

While de Lavallade has spent her entire life surrounded by visionaries such as her high school friend Alvin Ailey and her late husband Geoffrey Holder, she is a more than a legend in her own right. A trailblazer for female dancers and actors, and especially for artists of color, de Lavallade received the 2019 APAP Award of Merit for Achievement in

the Performing Arts, a distinction reserved for luminaries whose “genius, energy and excellence have defined or redefined an art form for today’s audiences.”

At a town hall plenary session the day before, moderator Callie Crossley had quoted diversity and inclusion expert Vern Myers: “Diversity is being invited to the party, but inclusion is being invited to dance.” It had resonance for the day de Lavallade was at the conference: She has been invited to dance many times over in a career that has taken her from prestigious dance companies such as Lester Horton Dance Theater and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater to the Metropolitan Opera

to Broadway to the Yale Repertory Theatre. For countless artists around the world, seeing her in films and on stages — always larger than life — was the inspiration for continuing to fight for their craft and for their own truths to be heard.

In her brief acceptance speech, de Lavallade’s words and presence still stirred resilience. “There’s no such thing as giving up in the arts,” she said. “I’m 87 years old now.” She raised her right arm and flexed her muscles determinedly to thunderous applause. True to her word, de Lavallade was scheduled to perform a series of solos later in January at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Working with dancer Maggie Small, the *Life of a Legend* performance paid

homage to the many jazz artists, including Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong, who have inspired de Lavallade during her career.

When I spoke with de Lavallade before the conference, we covered many far-ranging moments in her career. “I hope this all makes sense to you,” she said with a laugh, about halfway through interview. “I call it monkey brain when I jump around a lot. Are you behind me on a tree? Because I can jump those branches.” She went on to discuss her hopes for today’s generation of artists and the endless curiosity that has formed that foundation of her life and extensive career. What follows is an edited version of our conversation.

You’re receiving the highest APAP award for your work. What do you want people to know about what it took for you to get here?

Curiosity. I didn’t stay with one particular thing. Wherever a door opens, I walk in. I like the experience, and you meet wonderful people, who offer you more experiences. You have to tread in areas you’re not sure about.

What does excellence mean/ look like to you? Has that idea changed for you over your artistic career?

That’s a very hard question. I don’t think I’ve changed much; I just opened other doors. People like Martha [Graham] and Alvin [Ailey] were very curious people. They were looking at different backgrounds, different cultures, different music, different writing — and going all over the place to find their ideas.

Where do your ideas and inspiration come from?

I’m a people watcher. Life feeds me. You can walk down the

Carmen de Lavallade with Alvin Ailey



De Lavallade with Duke Ellington



De Lavallade with Geoffrey Holder and son Leo



street and find so many ballets. We’re too insulated just looking at our cell phones. It points in one direction. You’ve got to be observant. People my age were all working with each other. They were experimenting, and the sky was the limit.

What turning point in your career was most important to you, and what happened? Was there a moment when fear took you but you pressed on anyway?

I think I really changed a lot when I went to Yale University and was working around actors. I look at what’s asked of actors in plays and movies, and I can see that it takes a lot of guts to put your life before other people’s eyes. They are just fearless. It was terrifying. You can’t read a line off and not know what you’re saying. They will question that and make up stories behind that line. It’s about break down, break down, break down. But anything new is scary. It isn’t comfortable all the time, but then what is? If you want comfort, then that becomes dull.

What did you learn from the actors at Yale Repertory Theatre?

I think my dancing became much richer. Dancing is almost like being in the military: It’s very structured. Acting is not because you’re dealing with the recreating of people and their lives. It takes courage to tread on that dangerous ground. What actors do is question, question, question. They break down characters and situations and talk forever. That way, when you’re making a piece, you’ve got a point. You can’t pull movement out of a hat. You have to have something underneath it. Know why you’re there and what

The 2019 APAP Award Recipients



THE SIDNEY R. YATES AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE PERFORMING ARTS: Kaisha Johnson, Co-Founder and Founding Director, Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA)

Kaisha Johnson (center), Co-Founder and Founding Director of Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA)



The Joyce Theater's Linda Shelton, Executive Director and Martin Weschler, Former Director of Programming (with Mario Garcia Durham)

THE WILLIAM DAWSON AWARD FOR PROGRAMMATIC EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINED ACHIEVEMENT IN PROGRAMMING: The Joyce Theater (Linda Shelton, Executive Director and Martin Weschler, Former Director of Programming)



David J. Fraher (center), President and CEO, Arts Midwest (with Omari Rush and Ken Fischer)

FAN TAYLOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO THE FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL PRESENTING David J. Fraher, President and CEO, Arts Midwest Presented by Laurel Canan, President of NAPAMA

North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents Awards



NAPAMA PRESENTER OF THE YEAR: Todd Wetzel, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Life at Purdue University and Executive Director of Purdue Convocations



Jerry Ross (center), President, Harmony Artists (with Laurel Canan and Mario Garcia Durham)

NAPAMA LIZ SILVERSTEIN AWARD FOR AGENT-MANAGER OF THE YEAR: Jerry Ross, President, Harmony Artists

Want to nominate someone for an APAP Award? Submit names to Sue Noseworthy, Membership Director, at snoseworthy@apap365.org. For more information, visit awards.apap365.org.

you're saying and try to say it with your body.

How do you see the dance field evolving in the next decade?

You see it all the time. All the sudden people are using text, singing, all kinds of stuff. Everyone is able to do everything. You almost have to now. I think about Wayne Shorter and his view of the arts. His music is classical, jazz and wherever he takes it. He doesn't have any limitations; he goes anywhere he can take it.

What's next for you?

For my show at Jazz at Lincoln Center at the end of January, I'll have a dancer — my double so to speak — performing as well. It's a little hard to explain because I'm still working on it. I've got wonderful musicians. My director is one of my students from Yale. We talk characters. We're doing all that kind of work.

Are you feeling good about the process so far?

Well. I don't know yet. It's a new thing for me, and I'll see. We're not there yet but we keep working.

What advice would you give to younger generations?

I'd say get your nose out of that doggone phone. You're being drawn into one little point of light, and everything else is dark. I call it eye-and-ear garbage. When you're in the theater, it's about people and situations in life. You can't find it with your eyes pointing to that one dot. Phones are tools, not toys. You have to bring the audience into your work. I always say that dancing is a *pas de deux* with your audience. When you're sitting in the audience, you're really onstage with the dancers, or you're on stage with the actors in that play or the musicians in that orchestra. When Gustavo Dudamel is conducting, people

almost get out of their seats to dance, because he isn't playing for himself, and you can always tell the difference between someone playing for himself or someone playing so that everybody is included. You have to experience everything. They say: Curiosity killed the cat. Well, we wouldn't be on the moon if it weren't for curiosity. You wouldn't be driving a car if it weren't for curiosity. You have to do your own work. Are you going to be in charge of your own experience, or let someone else tell you? **///**



Cameron McKinney is the artistic director of Kizuna Dance in New York City. His choreography has been presented in 13 states and three countries. He's been commissioned by institutions and festivals such as the Japan Society in New York City and Performatica in Mexico. He is on faculty on Gibney Dance Center and graduated from Middlebury College, where he studied dance and Japanese, which he speaks fluently.

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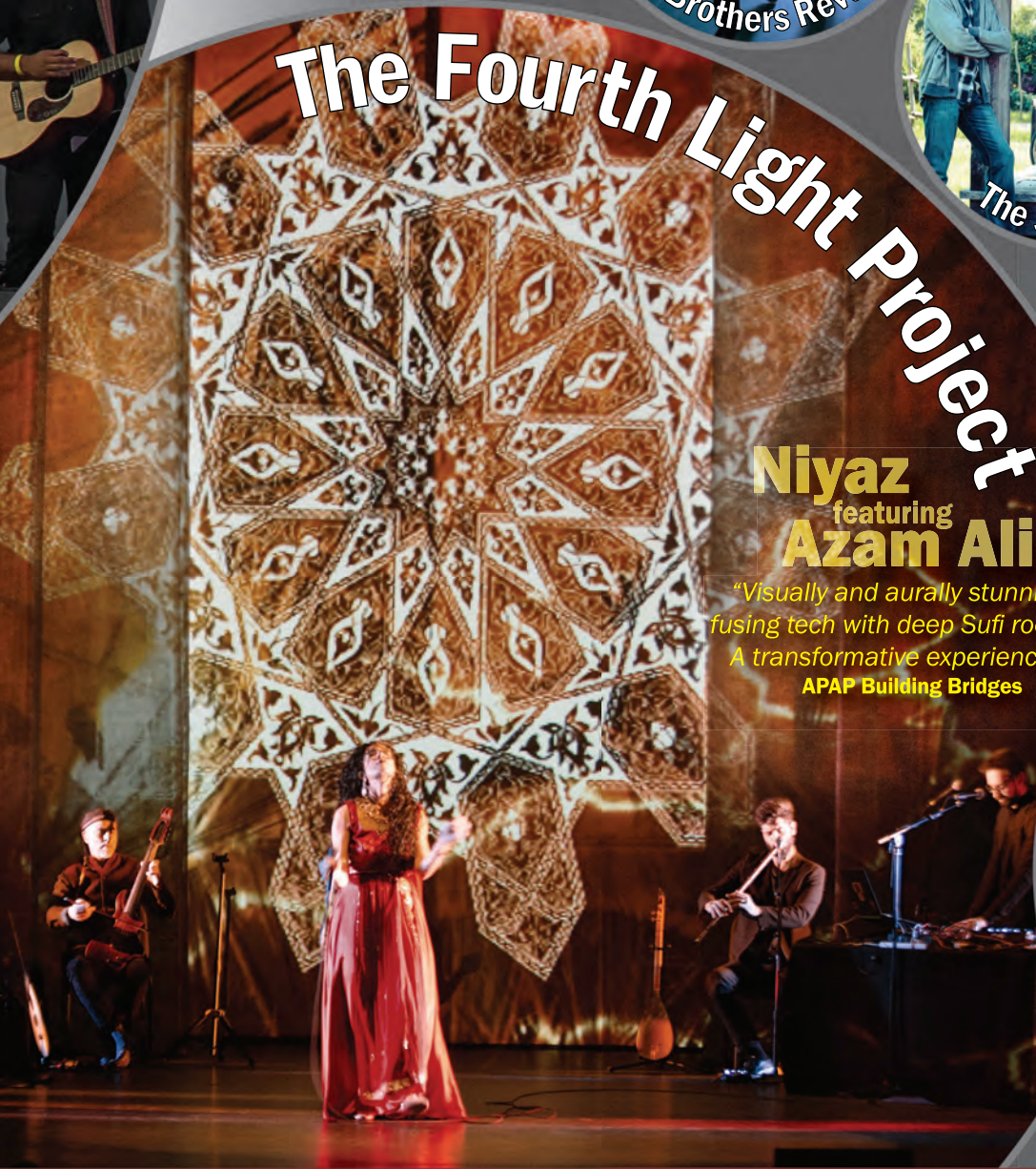
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go for it

KRISTIN CHENOWETH talks about the determination, luck and inspiration of a life in the arts. She was the keynote speaker at the APAP | NYC closing plenary session.

BY JAKE STEPANSKY

IT would be the understatement of the century to say that I was nervous before interviewing Kristin Chenoweth by phone. I got those nerves out by belting out various numbers from *Wicked* (to the chagrin of neighbors), having a

full-out dance party, receiving 20 minutes of emotional reassurance over the phone from a friend, and doing vocal warm-ups, operatic and otherwise.

I share this vaguely embarrassing imagery not (just) to paint myself as an adorably relatable goofball, but rather

to make it clear how important Chenoweth is to me, and I'm guessing many others. I'm a part of a massive and passionate generation of young people who fell in love with the theater because of one seismic Broadway show: *Wicked*. Yep, the one in which Chenoweth originated the iconic

role of Glinda the Good Witch. It's clear, too, that she understands how important that show was and continues to be to my generation and beyond.

As the speaker for the closing plenary session at APAP|NYC 2019, Chenoweth said the upcoming generation of artmakers and arts professionals give her hope about the future of the arts and the future of this country. Her roles in shows such as *Wicked* and *Glee* (the TV show that brought musical theater to the masses at home) have made her a visible role model for young artists — and she doesn't take that responsibility lightly.

"I want kids to see that this girl, who sounds like Betty Boop and can't see over the counter at the bank teller, can do anything," she said to APAP members at a packed Hilton ballroom on the last day of the conference. "I'll be saying that until my dying breath."

Best known for her work on Broadway (she received a Tony Award for *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and Tony nominations for *Wicked* and *On the Twentieth Century*) and TV (most notably appearing on *The West Wing*, *Glee* and *Pushing Daisies*), Chenoweth has tackled a singular breadth of genres and mediums over the course of her career. To name a few: She has released a plethora of solo and soundtrack recordings, published a memoir, performed in a slew of national and international concert tours, hosted the Tony Awards, dedicated her time, money and name to the Broken Arrow Performing Arts Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and founded the Kristin Chenoweth Arts & Education Fund, which is dedicated to "cultivating and celebrating young artistic expression by enriching

children's lives through the power of education, entertainment and experience."

It's a hefty résumé that underscores Chenoweth's dedication to her craft and to her philanthropic work. She is also deeply gracious and generous — and funny. (At the plenary session, Chenoweth quipped: "I always ask students: Do you want to become famous or do you want to become an artist? Because if you want to be famous, just go make a sex tape!")

Suffice it to say that my nerves were fully assuaged the minute our phone conversation began. An edited version of that

"I want kids to see that this girl, who sounds like Betty Boop and can't see over the counter at the bank teller, can do anything. I'll be saying that until my dying breath."

exchange follows. Our back-and-forth highlights that at her core, Chenoweth sees the Power of WE as the power of the arts to heal and inspire and bring folks together — and to inspire a generation of young artists to be in the theater world.

Where do you think the arts are in our country right now? What is the role of the arts and the artist today?

I could talk about this all day because it *is* a crazy time to be alive. We've had cuts in our schools for the arts all over the country. It's a struggle. If I hadn't had choir and drama or an artistic outlet growing up, I don't know what I would be doing with my life. This is all I see for myself: I'm an artist. I was born that way, so doggone, that's the way I am. I think the important aspect, believe it or

not, starts with education. I know a lot of presenters, especially at the theater that bears my name, have arts programs for our youth because it begins then. That way, the Lin-Manuel Mirandas of the world, when it's not happening for them as an actor, can say: OK, I'm going to write my own stuff. It's such a great example of how the arts can thrive. Lin is an actor and singer who wasn't getting the parts that he should have been getting, and that inspired him to write *In the Heights*, which then brought us *Hamilton*. It starts with our hometowns, our theater arts schools and performance halls. It's

not only because of the cards we've been dealt with budget cuts, but it's almost our responsibility to hone and get these young artists ready. When we talk about the theme of the conference — the Power of WE — that *is* the Power of WE: education in the arts.

With your experience touring and traveling so widely, what do you want agents, presenters, and producers to know? What are some best practices for touring?

Most artists that I speak with — those are my favorite types of people to talk with, because they're doing what I want to do and I'm doing what they do — want the presenters to know that — and it sounds a little Pollyanna-ish to say — that a lot of us don't want to be what we call "park and bark-ers." We really want

to learn and understand what the community is crying out for. When I go to each place, I want to make it special and specific for them. I don't do the same show twice. I really want presenters to understand that there are artists out there who want to make it special and make it unique. That is how we get butts in the seats, and that's how we get returning butts in the seats. Not only have I been encouraged by others, but I want to be an encouragement to these presenters to go with their gut. Be a risk taker. Even if the arts funding is cut and everything feels like a risk, that means we have to work harder, and it requires more of our attention and care. I have so much faith and so much respect for the people in these positions. I really take notice when I come into a theater. I ask questions: What are you doing here? What is going on? How are you getting the people here? What does your season look like? How are you prepared to make up for those that are not or acts that are not "mainstream"?

How should presenters think about risk and balance when programming their season?

I go back to the original thought — which is that we want to inspire. I know presenters want to inspire. I want to encourage them to continue down the path that I see so many of them doing. And so many of them are taking a risk in doing what we would call a "new work" in their touring season, when you bring in a show like *Bridges of Madison County*, which wasn't necessarily a hit on Broadway, but deserves to be seen. Something inside my heart sings when I see a presenter taking a risk. And I know the risks and the costs emotionally and financially are scary. But I see them doing it, and it encourages me to then take a risk as an artist. It really is so simple. I keep going back to the Power of WE: If I expect to be inspired by what these presenters are doing, then I need to inspire.

What's unique about your career is how deeply successful you are across just about every single medium: TV, stage, film. How did you make the decision

to expand beyond musical theater and how should other people approach that?

I was told, "Well, you can't play Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* because you don't fit the box or in a category." Even with albums I make, if you look at them, they're all very different. Some would say it's been a curse for me that way because I don't fit in a box. I would say that that is correct, I don't — which has forced me to look at my career as an open field instead of boxes that I don't fit into. I think it's important to free your mind and keep yourself open. Of course I wanted to be in the chorus of any Broadway show, but my height, I'm sure, had something to do with that not ever happening. I really didn't fit in the box. Yes, I could play Laurey in *Oklahoma!*, but I could also play Ado Annie. It would confuse people, and it caused me to take on roles that haven't been done in a very long time and also create roles and not be afraid of that, and not be afraid of the rules. There are so many rules thrust upon us all the time. I also have to say that it was a little part of knowing what I didn't know. When you're younger, you have no fear — or I didn't. I just went for it. If I didn't get this, OK, I'll do that! I didn't put any parameters. I think I upset people when I left the theater for a while to go do a TV show — but I looked at it as expansion and a new experience. I think that's what presenters can understand and have even come to appreciate about my career: I'm not afraid to expand, even today, at this point in my career. I look at artistic ventures and say: Go for it! What's the worst thing that can happen? It doesn't work. If it feels true and it rings true in my heart and mind and spirit, then I'm going to go for it. It's



not always a “hit” or a “smash,” but without risk there’s no great reward. I live and die by that.

What advice do you have for young people or anyone trying to get a footing in the arts?

I’m not naïve. I know I’ve been given so many opportunities — but with these opportunities, I have thought to myself: Give it your all, Kristin. You don’t get freebies. It’s a combo platter of: going for it, putting everything in it and taking every opportunity *not* lightly. Every decision I make is made with a lot of care. I remember a director telling me: “Not everything is a big decision. You can just make it and see what happens.” I agreed with him a little, but I think that every decision requires more. In my case, I am a prayer person, so I pray about it. I live with it for a while and see what I’m hearing. I have to listen to my gut. When I haven’t listened to my gut, I have been regretful. But when I have been able to hear — cut out all the white noise and really hear what my gut thinks and how I’m being led, it’s been the right decision.

What do you notice that has changed for the better in the arts?

What I love so much is how even with budget cuts, and even with our schools cutting programs, there are more kids wanting to be in the arts than ever before. I think I’d like to hearken it to what we’re doing onstage around the country, off-Broadway and on Broadway. I’d like to hearken it to people like Robert Greenblatt of NBC, who put live musicals on TV. I’d like to hearken it to TV shows that have not been afraid to put music at the center, like *Glee*. When I see these kids, our youth, and that more of them want to do arts, it’s almost like these cuts have backfired. More of them want to take the road less traveled. It’s been an amazing thing to watch and be a part of and to see growth in this area. I’m so very inspired by not only who’s come before me, but who’s coming behind me. **IAA**



Jake Stepansky is a theater-maker and arts advocate based in Austin, Texas, where he is the general manager of Forklift Danceworks. During his undergraduate years at Harvard University, Stepansky worked at the American Repertory Theater, directed several productions at

ART’s Club OBERON, student-produced the college’s annual ARTS FIRST festival and wrote for the Office for the Arts Harvard Arts Blog.

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Attendees dancing at the Sunday Plenary Session



A scene from the EXPO Hall



YPCA performer Reuben Rengel and accompanist Baden Goyo



APAP | NYC co-chairs Lynn Fisher, Beatrice Thomas and Shanta Thake (Not pictured: Martin Wollesen)



APAP Town Hall moderator and journalist Callie Crossley

POWER PLAY

APAP | NYC is known for its transactional exchanges: deals, networking, contracts, programming, professional development. APAP | NYC is also one of the most community-building events of the year. The collage of images on this page captures moments of connection from this year's gathering. We look forward to seeing you next year at APAP | NYC Jan. 10-14, 2020.

ADAM KESSICK/APAP



An elegant moment of connection during the Hilton showcase of PUSH Dance Company



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