

NETC News

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A Quarterly
Publication of the
New England Theater
Conference, Inc.

2003 Convention Theater The Essential Art

New England Theatre Conference looks forward with great excitement to its annual convention, November 6–9, 2003 in Providence, Rhode Island. The theme is “**Theatre: The Essential Art,**” a concept not be taken for granted as economic and cultural factors threaten to marginalize our vital art form. As mass media becomes more pervasive, as budget cuts threaten our programs, as the spirit of the age grows increasingly more defensive and conservative, it is more important than ever to focus on the living art that is essential to our quality of life as individuals and citizens.

We seek panels, papers, performances and workshops that highlight the essential, central role of theatre in our lives.

Some of us recall the words of Richard Schechner of New York University in his keynote address at NETC’s 1990 convention in Hartford. The rich possibilities of addressing “**how performances are used in politics, medicine, religion and everyday life**” informed a new way of doing and studying theatre that Schechner challenged us to create.

Let’s review the theatrical and social landscape in 2003:

- **Who** in New England are the theatre artists and educators who are breaching the barriers between theatre and sister disciplines?
- **How** has popular culture affected our perception and practice of “legitimate” theatre?
- **What** non-Western voices and rituals have enriched our American menu of performance possibilities?
- **Where** is theatre being created and shared outside theatre buildings?

It is in this spirit that NETC invites proposals for our 2003 convention. We seek panels, papers, performances and workshops that highlight the *essential*, central role of theatre in our lives. In addition to our traditional offerings in performance, research and design, we want to hear from all engaged in performance for **therapy, education,**

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AACT/Fest 03

A New England Theatre Experience

The national festival of the American Association of Community Theatre will be held in Torrington, Connecticut, June 25 through June 28, 2003, at the newly restored Warner Theatre. The Warner Theatre is a 1600 seat art deco performing arts center opened in 1931 as a Warner Brothers movie palace. The Warner was saved from demolition and reopened as a performing arts center in 1983. In 1990, Jim Fritch created the Warner Stage Company, a community theatre program that has become the “soul” of the Warner theatre organization. The Board of Directors of the Warner Theatre has a deep commitment to the creation and presentation of community theatre at the highest possible quality.

According to AACT Executive Vice President John Sullivan, of Sioux City, Iowa, “We are delighted to return the Festival to New England after a more than 30 year absence, and Torrington and the Warner Theatre will provide a wonderful site.” The last national festival held in New England was in 1971 at Bridgeport’s Polka Dot Theatre.

The national festival, held every two years, is the culmination of theatre competition on the state and regional levels. Eleven theatres chosen as the best in their states and regions compete at the national level.

Titled: “A New England Theatre Experience,” the 2003 national festival will feature Torrington and Northwest Connecticut as a cultural destination, with competitors and other participants encouraged to come early and stay after the festival to enjoy the culture and beauty of the area.

Here is what you can expect from AACT/Fest 2003:

- Eleven productions by America’s outstanding community theatres in one of the most beautiful performing arts centers in New England. Our New England entry, Theatre Company of Saugus, MA, will be performing on Wednesday, June 25 at 1 PM, presenting *Interview* by Jean-Claude van Itallie.
- Critiques following each show presented by three top adjudicators: Jack Phillips of Spokane, Washington; Annette Proconier of British Columbia, Canada; and Chuck Sheffield of Dallas, Texas.

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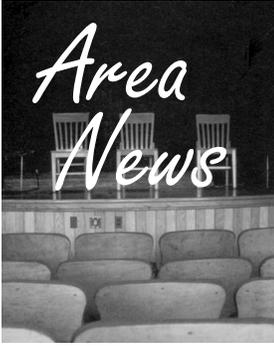
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new england
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theatre conference



Tony Montanaro: In Memory

Tony Montanaro, 75, mime, teacher, and director of the Celebration Theatre Ensemble passed away December 13th, 2002. He was known for a style of mime that combined



Tony Montanaro

acting, dance, physical theatre, and traditional mime. Mr. Montanaro was born in Paulsboro, NJ. He earned a degree in theatre from Columbia University and made his debut in theatre in summer stock. He studied mime with Marcel Marceau and Etienne Decroux and in the 1960's he was host of a Philadelphia-based nationally broadcast public TV program, "Pretendo." In 1971, Tony Montanaro moved to South Paris, Maine, where he founded and directed the Celebration Theatre Ensemble and taught his unique "brand" of mime at the Celebration Barn. Over the years, he taught hundreds of entertainers, including Sesame Street performers and many members of the New Vaudeville movement. He toured and performed in North America, Europe and Asia, and acted in films such as *The Clan of the Cave Bear*. In 1996, he co-wrote with his wife, ballet dancer and mime Karen Hurl Montanaro, the book *Mime Spoken Here*. After he was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2001, he continued to teach and perform sporadically. A memorial service attended by hundreds of nationally and internationally known performers (and former students), was held on January 31st in Portland, Maine.

AACT/Fest 03

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- Workshops and panel discussions led by some of this country's leading theatre professionals, with topics that will benefit performers, directors, producers, technicians, and theatre lovers at every stage of development.
- Opportunities to meet and network with theatres from across the USA and the world, sharing ideas, successes, war stories, and a love for theatre.
- A charming and welcoming small town atmosphere to enhance your theatre experience, with many wonderful sightseeing adventures to make your trip memorable.
- Exciting post-performance gatherings, and a 1930s theme Awards Gala and Dinner Dance.

You may be wondering about lodging options for AACT/Fest 03. The choices are many.

Yale School of Drama & New Dramatists Presented "New Works By Yale Playwrights"

Yale School of Drama and the 2001 Tony Award-Winning New Dramatists, the Manhattan-based center for American playwrights, presented the fifth-annual **Playreading Festival** on Friday, January 17th. The Festival, led by co-directors Mark Bly, Todd London, and Melissa Kievman ran all afternoon with a reception following. This year it showcased works written by Yale's graduating MFA class of 2003: Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, A. Rey Pamatmat, and Kathryn Walat.

In Aguirre-Sacasa's *The Filmmaker's Mystery*, directed by Connie Grappo, a horror movie director survives a terrible train wreck—only to be haunted by one of the passenger's who didn't survive. In Pamatmat's *New*, directed by Loy Arcenas, there is a disappearance, a return and a death—and four friends trying to rebuild their lives in the wake of disaster. In Walat's *A Book of Two*, directed by Leah Gardiner, a pair of roommates and a pair of samurai live by the codes of cramped East Village cohabitation and a powerful—but fun-loving—shogun.

Yale Playwrights at New Dramatists Program introduces Yale's playwriting students to a professional theater environment that serves the national theater community as an artistic home, theater research and development center, and writers' colony. The program is an extension of the student's training and coursework, and includes monthly playwriting workshops at New Dramatists in the student's second year, ongoing playwriting mentor relationships with members of New Dramatists, and professional readings before and audience of prominent artistic directors, dramaturges, and agents, as well as New Dramatists members.

You can stay in an historic inn, a quaint bed and breakfast, or an inexpensive motor inn, or be adventurous and rough it at a beautiful campsite. Many lodging opportunities are available. Those who arrive without an automobile will want to stay in one of the five local properties that will be on the AACT/Fest shuttle bus route. Book by May 1 and mention AACT to get the special Festival rates. Details are on the AACT web site www.aact.org.

Visit the Warner Theatre website at www.warnertheatre.org to learn more about the AACT/Fest host, and www.litchfieldhills.com or 860-567-4506 for information and regional travel, food, lodging, and attractions. Or contact the Warner Theatre at 860-489-7180 or at warner@cttel.net.

Community Theatre Drama Festival — Diamond Jubilee

The Eastern Massachusetts Annual Community Theatre Festival turns 50 years old this May. It's also the unchallenged oldest continuously operating festival in the country. The Festival dates back to May of 1954, when the Brainway Players of Braintree and Weymouth invited three groups of the then Little Theatre League (LTL), an association of Massachusetts community theatres, to participate in a one day competition. In 1961 with the demise of LTL, the Festival leadership passed to the Community Theatre Division of the New England Theatre Conference, which had been assisting and supporting the event. Through 1966 the Festival was held year to year at different locations. But in 1967 the hosting group, Hovey Players of Waltham, arranged to have the event on the campus of Brandeis University. The Spingold Arts Center became the subsequent venue, where it has continued to the present. Then in 1992 the newly emerging organization the Eastern Massachusetts Association of Community Theatre (EMACT) shared a transitioning year with NETC in Festival sponsorship, and in the next year proudly assumed full responsibility, returning the Festival full circle to its roots with a state level organization. NETC and the American Association of Community Theatres (AACT) recognize EMACT as the official eastern state theatre organization within AACT's New England Region One.

From a short one day afternoon event in 1954 the Festival has grown to an often five or six day 18 hour festival. Traditions were established 50 years ago that are still here today; such as the winning "Best of Festival" Company hosts the following year's Festival, and in the true spirit of amateur theatre, professional actors and directors may not participate in a professional capacity.

For years the Festival has had three respected individuals by panel select the annual competition winners. In 1968 the current structure was established. Two panelists select from preliminary rounds the four productions which go on to reprise their productions in a final round adjudicated by the third panelist. The third panelist does not see any of the preliminary rounds. Then in 1970, to make the Festival a better learning experience, a member of the Canadian Guild of Drama Adjudicators was invited to give public critiques of each preliminary performance and to select various awards. That popular move was adopted and became shared by both preliminary panelists. EMACT is happy to announce its three panelist for this year's 50th Anniversary Drama Festival.

Many Festival-faithful will remember when Kent Brown adjudicated the 1990 Festival. The winner that year was a production of *K2* by the Arlington Friends of the Drama. Kent then adjudicated the following year at the National AACT/Fest in Overland Park, KS. Kent's career as an adjudicator began in 1975 with visits to several Oklahoma, Kansas, Alaska and New England community theatre festivals. He last served as an AACT national adjudicator in 1995. Kent has directed over eighty productions including the world premieres of *The Exception* by Olga Humphrey and *Sweet Talker* by Larry Atlas. As a playwright, his works have been widely produced throughout the US, Australia and Canada.

New to EMACT, but no stranger to Festivals nationwide, Bil Pfuderer will co-adjudicate. Bil is an actor, director, producer, scenic artist, costume designer, professor and photographer, all with professional credentials. He has acted in, directed, designed or produced over 800 productions here in the U.S., England, Italy, Germany, France and Russia. His broad range of experience covers Broadway, Off-Broadway, Radio, Film, Television and Regional Theatres. His current project is writing, producing and directing a tour for High Schools and Colleges, entitled, *Contrasts in Shakespeare*.

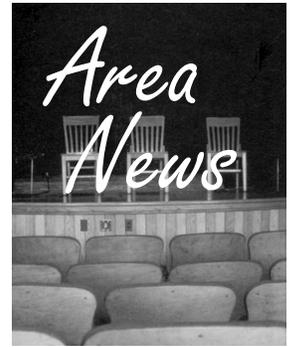
The Festival's third panelist and Finals Judge, is Linda Murphy. Linda is the current President of NETC and Associate Director for the Huntington Theater Company. This being the 50th anniversary of one of this nation's largest and most respected community theater festivals, it only seems fitting that a representative of NETC, where it all began, should be a part of this exciting event with EMACT.

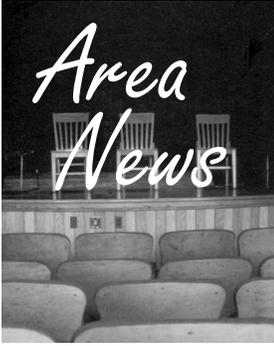
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community building, and social renewal. We hope to hear how theatre artists and educators have been working with other professionals in live performances. The voices of previously marginalized cultures and perspectives are invited to take center stage at our convention. We want NETC 2003 "Theatre: The Essential Art" to provide a time-capsule of theatre seizing the spirit of New England at the beginning of the 21st century.

In this issue you will find a proposal form for the 2003 convention. We await your return of the completed form (either electronically or by regular mail). See you in Providence!

The 2003 Convention co-chairs are, **Suzanne Ramczyk**, Bridgewater State College, **Frans Rijnbout**, Regis College, **Ann Marie Shea**, Worcester State College, **Luke Sutherland**, Community College of Rhode Island.





NETC a Strong Presence at Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival

At the Kennedy Center /American College Theatre Festival held at Keene State College January 29–February 1, NETC created a new visibility among college students and faculty.

College/University Division chair (and 2003 convention co-planner) **Ann Marie Shea** “worked the festival,” distributing requests for convention proposals and promoting membership.

Keynote speaker **Tina Packer** (Shakespeare and Company) re-affirmed for all present to continue in their dedication to theatre as a living art form, with its immediacy of performer/audience interaction, and rich tradition of dramatic literature chronicling the universal human experience. Note to all acting students—Tina eschewed use of microphone and with ease used her own remarkable voice to fill the large theatre. Yes, all those vocal drills your teachers share with you really do matter!

NETC/KCACTF Link!

Wil Kilroy of the University of Southern Maine stated, “It was terrific to see the presence of NETC at our Regional Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival this January, and we’d like to keep expanding this partnership.” Since KCACTF sends respondents throughout the New England region to college and university productions, Kilroy and KCACTF would like to create a list of respondents who’d also be willing to conduct workshops. These workshops would be offered to students participating in response sessions, many of whom belong to schools which are also members of NETC. Once a list of workshop leaders and their specialties is established, other NETC member organizations could also request workshops. The point is to ‘share the wealth!’ If host organizations offered the workshop leader an honorarium, that would make it more attractive. If not, the plan would be that someone from the hosting institution would offer an exchange . . . going to the workshop leader’s school/organization at a later date and conducting a workshop in their specialty. In an era of shrinking budgets, this would allow the New England region to freely exchange gifts of knowledge and talent without a costly fee. If you are interested in this program, please email me your information and list of possible workshops and Wil Kilroy to kilroy@usm.maine.edu and he will continue to pursue this idea.



David Ramsay (University of New Hampshire and Lakes Region Summer Theatre) and Lisa Antonecchia (Huntington Theatre Company) presenting the inside scoop on success at the NETC Auditions with Jennifer Champine, a theatre student from Keene State College. David and Lisa presented a workshop on surviving the NETC Auditions to a group of over 20 theatre students from throughout the New England region.



Ann Marie Shea presents awards for excellence in acting to students Owen Provencher of Northern Essex Community College (Classical Acting) and Kevin Crowley of Salem State College (Comic Acting).

NETC Newsletter

The NETC Newsletter is written and published for members of NETC and is distributed free to all members as well as to other theatre organizations. The NETC Newsletter is published four times a year with deadlines on August 15th, November 1st, February 15th and May 1st. Issues include Cover Stories, Ovations, Opportunities, Area News, Special Features and Upcoming Events. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to submit articles for each issue. All articles should be submitted Microsoft Word or embedded in email to: PMarsh0613@aol.com.

To advertise you may contact NETC, Boston for dimensions and rates. Either write NETC, Inc., PMB 502, 198 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02116-4750, or call 617-851-8535 for advertising information.

Third Annual REPA Expo Job Fair Scheduled

On March 1, 2003, NETC teamed with USITT New England and StageSource to Co-Sponsor New England's third annual Regional Entertainment Production and Administration Job Expo (REPA Expo) at the Stratton Student Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This event is designed to help employers in the entertainment industry reach candidates to fill job openings in design, technical production, consulting and administration.

For a number of years, NETC has had a production and administrative element tied into the annual auditions, but due to limited staff and finances, has had to focus most of their energies on the often quite consuming performance aspects. About five years ago, StageSource started a similar job fair for the local theatre companies, but found, like NETC did, that it was difficult for their organization to effectively create and tackle the planning, financing, and marketing of such an event alone. USITT New England has been trying to become more involved in a number of regional activities, but top priority for members is a chance to network and find jobs.

Thus the stage was set for collaboration. Crystal Tiala, local scenic designer, assistant professor at Boston College, and chair of USITT NE, saw the diluted efforts, and started to initiate a meeting between the three organizations to unify their efforts. Clinton Campbell of NETC, Jeff Poulos of StageSource, and Tiala sat down and sketched out plans to pool their resources. With a three way division of labor and finances, and a threefold increase in mailing lists and marketing capability, the current format of the REPA Job Expo was under way. Tiala notes, "I think collaboration is a key element. There are so many theatrical groups of various kinds that we become spread way too thin. (USITT, StageSource, and NETC) all have our specialties. None of us can be all things to all people, but by working together we have seen how our groups can form a lovely symbiotic relationship."

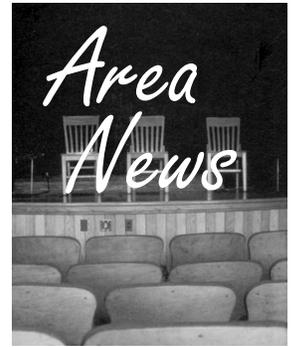
Even in its first year at Northeastern, REPA far exceeded the most optimistic expectations of the organizations. Over 50 producers from all around the region and nation booked booth space, and over 200 applicants came to browse the tables. In 2002 at MIT, REPA was able to increase the number of applicants to well over 300. Linda Murphy, current President of NETC, observed, "The incredible success of the REPA Job Fair in the two years that it has been offered is staggering. Not only has it allowed qualified, talented people to connect with producers and find work, but the social intermingling has created a strong community of theatrical artists across the Northeast and even beyond."

"This Job Expo has become the definitive opportunity for both job seekers and entertainment companies in New England. Not only do we attract employers such as the Boston Ballet and American Repertory Theatre, but we have had companies from all six New England states, New York, New Jersey, and even as far as Wisconsin. It's no wonder we had over 300 people in attendance last year! There is no other event in New England that helps production and administrative personnel connect so directly with the professional theatres," notes StageSource Executive Director Jeff Poulos.

Also having a presence at the Job Expo since its inception is the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 829, which displays New England designers' and scenic artists' work. Tiala noted, "the presence of USA has only enhanced what is shaping up to be the most important event of its kind in the region."

Stepping away from the job possibilities, the REPA Job Fair is a great place to connect with former colleagues. Karen Perlow, local lighting designer on the faculty for the theatre program for MIT, mentioned that, "it's a fun place to see old friends. Also, it's a great place to introduce students to professionals, and vice-versa."

The technical and administrative theatre community in New England is very small, and an event on this scale has been needed for a long time. It has not only served the theatre community, but it has helped to build a bridge between three strong organizations that have all gained from finding a common solution to a regional concern.



Professional Development Workshops on Both Sides of Massachusetts

Shakespeare & Company of Lennox, MA, has an award-winning education program that has again announced its popular professional development seminar for teachers and students, "Shakespeare in our Schools." The will be offered statewide in 2003. Workshop enrollment is available for March 6-9 at the Company's 70 Kemble Street home in Lennox Center, March 27-30 at the Cambridge School of Weston in Weston, and August 4-7 in Boston.

Shakespeare and Company has offered the four-day workshops since 1999, bringing Shakespeare's words to life in the classroom and in the minds and hearts of students. Applicants should call Candace Clift at (413) 637-1199 ext. 106 or request information by email at professional.development@shakespeare.org.



The Forum

by *Suzanne M. Ramczyk, Ph.D.*

Professor of Theatre Arts, Bridgewater State College and Chair of the NETC Long Range Planning Committee

The following offering by Dana Knox represents the third installment of this column, in which articles focused on topics germane to contemporary theatre are presented in short essay form. Again, it is our hope that readers whose interest may be peaked by any views expressed herein will be moved to respond by sending a brief response (anything up to 150 words) to sramczyk@bridgew.edu by April 25th. These responses will be printed in the subsequent edition of the *NETC News*. We encourage you to include your name and title, when appropriate. In this volume's column, Dana Knox, Design/Production Coordinator, Boston University Theatre, presents a very interesting and thought-provoking take on collaboration, as perhaps a necessary means towards the survival of professional theatre. This represents a discussion that must be happening not only

in New England, but also in the entirety of this country in these politically, socially, and economically unstable times. I encourage readers to continue this discussion in your own theatres and to keep the discussion alive within the NETC by emailing me your comments.

An apology for the previous edition of "The Forum" is in order due to mistakes in the layout. The actual essay addressing adjudication got buried among the responses to the first edition of "The Forum." Additionally, Ann Marie Shea was mistakenly cited as the author when, in fact, it was written by the editor of this column, Suzanne Ramczyk. Due to the confusion, any responses to the second edition will also be printed in the next *NETC News*. Finally, the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the NETC.

***In this edition of
The Forum:***

"Strengthening the New England Theatre Community Through Collaboration?" by *Dana Knox*

As long as I have been involved in theatre, I find that I have constantly been fighting battles to be able to present the shows that I want to in the manner they deserve. In fact, this very topic has been the subject of countless conversations with almost every theatre artist with whom I have worked. The recent economy and the arts budget cuts that have resulted have only served to make the point crystal clear once again. There are limited funds and limited audiences that the hundreds of performing arts organizations in New England are clamoring for, which prompts me to ask, "With all of this competition in the arts community, why are the streets not strewn with the bodies of theatre artists?"

The answer seemed to come to me easily enough; adaptability. Although we weary of the fights for funds and audiences, we are an amazingly adaptable community. Theatre artists have weathered worse times than these, and have emerged stronger than before. We are constantly seeking to build the better mousetrap, and most of the time, are quite successful.

One trend that has become a fairly standard practice in the regional and commercial theatre environment is the collaboration. The ties that bind us as a community are becoming tighter through co-productions and dually sponsored projects. However, are these tightening ties making the theatre community stronger or threatening to strangle organizations individual voices?

A colleague of mine posed that argument to me after being in a collaboration that turned sour when both sides felt their objectives and missions were diluted and even negated due to the compromises that needed to be made to get the show up. Whatever your position is, the fact remains that collaboration is becoming one of the only ways that we can take risks nowadays.

With all of this competition in the arts community, why are the streets not strewn with the bodies of theatre artists?

I personally maintain optimistic about the nature of the collaboration. I became involved in theatre because I enjoyed the sharing of ideas with other artists, even if (and almost especially if) they were foreign to my own. In my years of working in the Boston theatre community, I have mostly had a very positive experience with collaborations. I have seen the process of the design of two brand new theatres in the South End due to a collaboration of the Huntington Theatre Company, the Boston Center for the Arts, the City of Boston, and the Druker Group. I have worked to help create the Regional Entertainment Production and Administrative Job Fair with NETC, StageSource, and USITT NE. I was Production Manager of the Boston

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Theatre Arts Academic Evaluation

Do College Students Have a Reason to Fear the Gray Area Left by the Absence of Standard Academic Examinations?

by Lauren Ignaut, Boston University theater student

(The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of NETC)

Boston University stretches about a mile and a half down Commonwealth Avenue, running right along the Charles River. It's a busy, urban campus with about 28,000 students in both grad and undergrad programs. I don't feel like a number, but a good deal of the feeling of a comfortable niche comes from my enrollment in the College of Fine Arts, School of Theatre Arts.

At CFA, one quickly notices the difference from the rest of campus. Students hang out in the hallways, rehearsing and sketching. It's an interesting building that was once home to a car dealership, but is now filled with Shakespearean monologues and violin concertos. This is a different world from the environments created by frantic swarms of students in, for example, The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) or the School of Management. Once you've entered the building, you can feel the difference in the life a CFA student leads at Boston University—if only in the demeanor of students as they enter the building.

Theatre Arts studio classes include Alexander Technique, Movement, Acting, Directing, Choreography, Theatre Ensemble, Singing, Stage Combat, Voice and Speech, and a student here will be assigned a grade the same way for a Linklater course as a student in CAS after biology exams, labs and papers. Many students are less than happy with the gray area that they feel is inevitable in the evaluation of their artistic growth. However, most recognize that in accepting admission to a conservatory housed in a larger university, they accept the general grading policies.

Carly Cioffi, a sophomore Theatre Studies major, comments, "I knew that I would be a student in a large university when I decided to come here, but this is about a lack of communication... Students in CAS have midterms. They take a test that can easily tell them how they stand..." Theatrical training doesn't test by answer bubbles and short answer questions and this is where the problem lies—in the necessary establishment of formulaic artistic evaluation. I was surprised to learn of the detail of such formulae.

Judith Chaffee, an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts at Boston University, described her elaborate point system for the evaluation of students in her movement and choreography courses and shed light on several educational issues of our time. Despite the example of

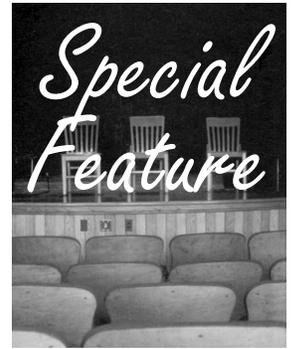
Chaffee's rather complex system, other professors of arts programs might be tempted to give all high grades in order to avoid the judgment of student performance. This problem exists in liberal arts programs as well, and this hesitancy to grade harshly is noted in several New England institutions.

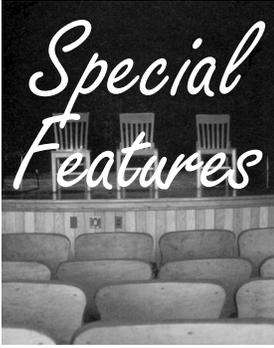
As recognized by Harvard's administration in 2001, grade inflation is a serious problem in many leading universities. BU's new Director of the School of Theatre Arts, Jim Petosa, is working to reaffirm a classic grading policy of "C" as average, "B" as average with moments of brilliance and "A" as consistently above given expectations. This is a movement within the Theatre Arts program. The greater BU community is another story.

Although BU's President, John Silber, believes that grade inflation is not as a serious a problem at BU, he does recognize that C is not average in the campus-wide grading policies. Silber commented in The BU Bridge community newspaper, "if Boston University were to go back to the point when a C was the average grade here, our graduates would be penalized by being in competition with students all over the country who are attending universities where A minus and B plus are the average grades".

One can easily see the problems with the grading policies that pervade the whole of Boston University's student body, but as a student of the Theatre Arts, I have to wonder where I am taking the equivalent of a CAS student's math test and how my "score" is being determined. Chaffee's grading policy is a rigid formula that leaves a student satisfied with an accurate assessment of their success throughout the semester, but she points out that a student will not completely understand their grade and the formula unless they make a point to meet with professors to discuss their performance. "If students don't ask about their grade, the assessment cannot be beneficial to them and may seem arbitrary". Students need to be proactive in their educational maturation, and, although this seems obvious, it is quickly forgotten by students in all fields. Chaffee continues, "Students think all they need to do is show up and do the work to get an A". This is a national trend. Students ask why they were not given an "A", not why they did not earn it.

For careers in which auditions are regularity, it is beneficial to need to learn to communicate and seek out complete understanding for personal growth. It may be





NETC Member Forum

On behalf of the executive board let me wish all of our members a happy and healthy 2003! We are excited by a new and revitalized energy within our board and in order to share that excitement with you, and continue in a surge of growth we are reaching out to all of you to help us better define what it is that you are looking to gain from being an NETC member.

Enclosed in this issue of the NETC Newsletter is a questionnaire that we are asking each of you to fill out and mail back to our attention. All results will be discussed at our next board meeting. It is imperative that you be honest in your answers, as you are our members, and we wish to help you grow in your theatrical endeavors.

Should you have any immediate questions or comments, email them to Lisa Antonecchia at lisanton@bu.edu directly and she will give the information to the board.

We thank you for your support and wish to make this next year one of growth for the entire organization.

Membership Drive

Do you have friends you would like us to contact with information regarding NETC Membership? If so, email their names, emails and phone numbers to us at mail@netconline.org. For each new member you bring us you will get a \$5 discount off your next membership renewal (up to three new renewals). You can save up to \$15! Please make sure to include your name address, email and phone number to insure your discount! So drop us a line and help us to strengthen the oldest theatrically based organization in all of New England!

The Forum

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Theatre Works half of *The Laramie Project*, which moved to Gloucester Stage. I acted in the co-production of *The Mikado* at both the Huntington and the North Shore Music Theatre. I am currently working on a dance show at Boston University that pools the resources of the School of Theatre Arts, The School of Music, the Dance Department of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, and professional dance troupes. These all have been successful collaborations, but all required compromises on the parts of each organization.

I think as a community, we need to embrace the idea of collaboration. We are all taking a big hit right now, and by standing together and working together we can weather these economic changes. We need to take comfort in those ties that bind us, because they are what will sustain us.

News of the Secondary Division

Linda Potter, Secondary division Chair, has been working for the past several months to insure that Professional Development Credits be awarded to teachers who attend the 2003 Convention in Providence. All state governments have been contacted and the approval process is being investigated. Each state has slightly different requirements for awarding credit to teachers who attend the Convention. Massachusetts has the most stringent requirements, requiring 10 full contact hours and an assessment at the end for credit to be offered. The convention chairs are planning to offer this 10 hour extended class in the 2003 convention.

The Secondary Division met with the four Convention Chairs to begin to flesh out the 2003 Olympiad. David Kaye who was one of the prime organizers of this wildly successful event for high school students has graciously agreed to work on the Olympiad again this year. Any teacher in the secondary division is invited to help plan and run this exciting Olympic style competition for high school students. If you didn't bring your students last year, make sure to plan for this year. It was an unforgettable experience for all! Please contact Linda Potter at 978 263 0173 or at lpotter@mail.ab.mec.edu or lpotter@boxboroughschool.org with questions or offers to help.

We need help in the secondary division! Secondary teachers, come help to plan your events for next year's convention!

Exciting new event for next year's Olympiad is Shakespeare and Company's Shakespearean Olympics! Don't miss it!

Academic Evaluation

continued from page 7

best for a student to get the most out of their education by seeking professors out in order to discuss their reviews. No hands are held and a student learns to take control of their path through conservatory training. This is the best preparation for the "real world", in my opinion. This is as it should be—a nurturing environment that requires a student to take an active role in his or her education.

Chaffee comments, "ultimately, the artistic work is not judged objectively. It shouldn't be". Such completely objectified evaluation of art takes the passion out of it, takes the life out of creating, observing and appreciating what we love.

North Shore Music Theatre Announces a Season of Distinct Musicals For 2003

North Shore Music Theatre's Artistic Director and Executive Producer, Jon Kimbell, has announced the line up of its 2003 musical subscription season. The season, sponsored in part by Delta Airlines, will include:

<i>Mame</i>	April 29–May 18
<i>Smokey Joe's Café</i>	June 3 –June 22
<i>Cats</i>	July 8–August 3
<i>Pacific Overtures</i>	August 26 – September 14
<i>Memphis</i> (World Premiere)	September 23–October 12
<i>West Side Story</i>	October 28 –November 23

“When we started making plans for 2003, we searched for stories that will change the way our audiences look at the world. We wanted stories that will open your mind as well as your heart. The result is a season that draws its strength from diversity—diversity in the nature and content of our shows, in the actors and other professionals who are bringing them to life, and in the audiences to which they are designed to appeal,” says Kimbell.

The season opens on April 29 with *Mame*, Jerry Herman's tribute to unconventional family values and individuality. Based on the famed novel by Patrick Dennis, *Mame* will play through May 18. *Mame* will be directed and choreographed by the Barry Ivan. Since 1995, Mr. Ivan has directed more than 15 productions at NSMT including such recent hits as *Chicago*, *Miss Saigon* and *Footloose*.

The unforgettable songs of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller will be featured in the next NSMT offering, the longest-running musical revue in Broadway history, *Smokey Joe's I*. In the 50's and 60's, the songs of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller helped to bridge the gap between black and white audiences. Directed by Stafford Arima, director of last season's acclaimed production of *Ragtime*, the electrifying evening of entertainment will feature 41 toe-tapping classics..

Following one Broadway record holder with another, at last, *Cats*, Broadway's longest running musical leaps onto NSMT's stage for a special four week run. NSMT

is among the first theatres in the country to produce this show. Based on T. S. Eliot's *Book of Practical Cats*, Webber's Tony Award-winning score features “Rum Tum Tugger,” “Mr. Mistoffelees,” and the popular standard, “Memory.” *Cats* will be directed by Richard Stafford, who has had a long association with the Broadway production and recently staged a national touring production of the show.

Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures* opened on Broadway in 1976. The *New York Post* called it an “exquisite, enchanting, touching, intelligent and altogether remarkable work.” *Pacific Overtures* will be a co-production between NSMT, Cincinnati Playhouse, and the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta. It will be directed by Kent Gash, the Associate Artistic Director of The Alliance Theatre Company. *Pacific Overtures* extends the boundaries of musical theater combining the musical majesty of Stephen Sondheim with the ancient Japanese arts of Kabuki, haiku, dance and masks.

The world premiere of the new musical, *Memphis*, is scheduled for a fall debut at NSMT. This story, inspired by the legendary Dewey Phillips, tells the story of a white Memphis DJ who decides to play African-American music to his white listeners in the 1940s, unknowingly giving birth to the music known as “Rock ‘n Roll.” This new musical from Joe DiPietro, the author of the long running Off-Broadway hit, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, features music and additional lyrics by David Bryan, of the rock band Bon Jovi. *Memphis* is a co-production with Theatreworks in Palo Alto, CA where the piece had its first staged reading in the spring of 2002. *Memphis*, in the tradition of Abyssinia, *HONK!* And *Dracula*, is part of NSMT's ongoing mission to nurture the development of new works and introduce them to New England audiences.

The 2003 Musical Season will conclude with the classic Leonard Bernstein-Stephen Sondheim-Arthur Laurents musical *West Side Story*. In this landmark American musical, Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* is transported to 20th century Manhattan. *West Side Story* will be directed and choreographed by Barry Ivan

To subscribe to the 2003 Musical Season, purchase tickets or for more information, contact the North Shore Music Theatre Box Office at (978) 232-7200, or go to the Box Office at 62 Dunham Road, Beverly, 01915, or visit the Web site at www.nsmo.org.



Please visit NETC on the web at
www.NETCOnline.org
to find out how you can get more involved in your community!



NETC Convention 2003 Vendor Alert!

The 2003 convention preparation work is already well under way! With that comes a cry to all Vendors and Colleges/Universities interested in being a part of this exciting convention! If you are a vendor or educator it is very important that you read this fully prior to filling out the enclosed Vendor Registration form, we have some wonderful ideas and are looking for you to help!

Lisa Antonecchia, Professional Theatre Division/Convention Vendor Coordinator, said, "The 2002 convention was an exciting one for me as I had the opportunity to talk to all the vendors and find out exactly what it was that you all needed to make a successful convention, and I am here to hopefully help do that, with a little help from you all as well! Many of your ideas are already being investigated, and we are diligently working to make them become a reality for the 2003 Convention at the Biltmore in Providence, RI."

SUGGESTIONS

1. NETC is looking to have a very special break during the convention where food and drinks will be served in the vendor area, allowing all vendors to interact and mingle with potential customers on a more personal level.
2. NETC is going to institute a College and University seminar, giving each college or University a platform to talk to all of the High School Students on Friday.

3. NETC will let the Colleges and Universities know which High Schools will be attending the **Theatre Olympiad** on Friday so that colleges and universities may network with the teachers, directors and instructors, prior to arriving at the convention.

4. NETC would like to have all vendors present a workshop on Saturday, in order to showcase products.

5. All vendors will be given a list of workshop presenters and their topics, so that vendors can tie displays into the convention.

6. NETC is very interested in any and all Vendor sponsors. All **sponsors** will either be given a **discount** on the registration fee, or **free** access to the convention, dependant upon what you are able to offer.

7. Vendors who provide the names of other vendors or educators, and those people register, will be given a \$20 discount off the registration fee.

8. Vendors may attend the convention on a one day or two day pass! You no longer have to attend for both days. This, **however**, is on an availability basis!

Contact Lisa at lisanton@bu.edu, and let her know your thoughts, questions and concerns. She will get back to you immediately, and work with you to make this convention a rewarding one! Vendors should be sure to ask about the early registration discount of July 31st! Final registration deadline will be September 30th.

President's Message

by **Linda Murphy, President, NETC Board of Directors**

Happy New Year . . . and along with this Winter/Spring edition of the NEWS, I would like to announce that NETC is beginning a new year by streamlining our day to day office administrative operations. Saying good-bye to our Executive Director, Tara McCarthy, was difficult, but the Board wished her great success on her decision to accept a position with a growing Boston corporation where she will direct a project on breast cancer awareness. Tara's departure made it possible for us to rethink and rework NETC's central office operations. In a unanimous vote, the Board of Directors approved a proposal to outsource NETC's management to Venture Comm Associates, Inc. which is headed by Hank Zappala and Leo Nickole. Those names, I am sure, are familiar to our NETC membership, as both Hank and Leo are long-time active members of NETC, served in a number of Board of Directors' positions and are members of NETC's College of Fellows. It is with the Board of Directors' greatest confidence that NETC's office operations will best be served in the knowledgeable and dependable hands of men who have a trusted and respected history

with NETC. It is also with the greatest energy that NETC begins its 51st year with exciting, significant and positive administrative change that promises to strengthen the growth of our entire organization.

Our new mailing address is:

The New England Theatre Conference
PMB 502, 198 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02116-4750

Our new telephone number is: 617-851-8535

I would like to bring our NETC membership's attention to the February issue of the national publication, *Stage Directions*, which contained the an article, "Fusing Arts and Foliage," on page 30, focusing on our 2002 Fall Convention. "With New Hampshire's charming rural landscape as its backdrop, the New England Theatre Conference holds its 51st annual event, scoring raves for its innovative youth oriented workshops and activities." The article goes on to say, "Set against the rustic beauty of Bedford, New Hampshire, the 51st annual NETC Conference was a tangy mix of fruitful networking, provocative performances and rousing edification." NETC is extremely proud and thanks *Stage Directions* for these kind words.

*Celebrating 50 years of
excellence in theatre!*



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Peter Marsh, *Vice President for Communication and Development, Mill River Union High School*
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Hank Zappala, *NETC Management, Venture Comm Associates, Inc.*

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