

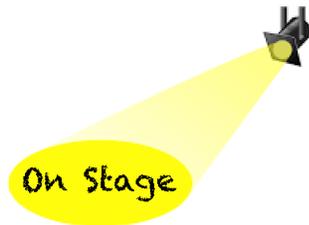
On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

Actually

MN Jewish Theatre Company, February 16 – March 10, 2019

Created by: Lucas Erickson

Fiscal Sponsor: Springboard for the Arts



On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

Mission: To make local theater relevant to younger and non-traditional audiences and to lay the groundwork for building future theater audiences

On Stage raises awareness of the theater offerings in the Twin Cities to academic classes and groups. It brings local actors to Twin Cities college classrooms and community settings to read scenes from a play in current local production. Participants then engage in a lively discussion of the play's themes, tying in current events, personal values and narratives to stimulate critical thinking. Subsequently attending the full play is encouraged.

ON STAGE: Actually – Discussion Schedule

1. Harding High School (St Paul) - 11th Grade Lit and Performance - CLASS 1- Ben Lathrop - Thursday February 21st, 7:30 - 8:22AM. 25 students. Michelle, Stuart, Miriam

* This quarter we are studying the poetry of Minneapolis poet/performing artist Bao Phi. Students are also reading a book they chose from four options, either a short story collection or a memoir.

2. Harding High School (St Paul) - 11th Grade Lit and Performance - CLASS 2- Ben Lathrop - Thursday February 21st, 8:27 - 9:14AM. 30 students. Michelle, Stuart, Miriam

* This quarter we are studying the poetry of Minneapolis poet/performing artist Bao Phi. Students are also reading a book they chose from four options, either a short story collection or a memoir.

3. Concordia - SOC 256: Intro to Criminal Justice - Beth Glynn Chambers - Monday February 25th, 11:35 - 12:40PM. 20 students. Michelle, JuCoby

* The course uses a sociological perspective to analyze the meaning of crime for a society, theories of criminal behavior and crime prevention. Emphasis is placed on understanding the law enforcement, judicial and corrections systems.

4. St. Cloud State - ENGL 191 - Introduction to Rhetorical and Analytical Writing - John Colburn - Wednesday February 27th, 2:00 - 3:00PM. 25 students. Stuart

* Analytical reading, writing, and critical reasoning in various rhetorical situations. Argumentative research project comprising analysis and interpretation of information, texts, and perspectives.

5. Metro State - WRIT 251: Introduction to Creative Writing – Melanie Richards - Wednesday February 27th, 6:00 - 7:00PM. 10 students. Michelle, Stuart

* This course introduces the elements of writing short fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. Students learn a variety of approaches to creative writing in a cooperative class environment.

6. MCAD - ES3875 – Human Factors - Arlene Birt - Thursday February 28th, 3:00 - 4:00PM. 4 students. Stuart

* Human behavior is at the center of all art, design, and business. This interdisciplinary experience combines physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects of the human animal.

7. Normandale - THTR 1118 - Twin Cities Theatre - Annie Cady - Thursday February 28th, 6:00 - 7:00PM. 15 students. Stuart, Harry

* Experience and respond to six to ten theatre productions and encounter a wide variety of styles, genres, and production forms from diverse cultural and ethnic traditions.

8. Hamline - EDU 3500: Diversity and Education - Basford, Letitia - Tuesday March 5th, 12:00 - 1:00PM. 20 students. Michelle, Miriam, JuCoby

* Students will examine how students' culture, religion, race, gender, class and abilities, as well as their interactions with teachers and peers, play important roles in shaping their achievement, adjustment and identity in schools.

9. Augsburg - COM 329: Intercultural Communication - Kristen Chamberlain, Jenna McNallie and EDC 210: Diversity in the School - Joseph Erickson - Tuesday March 5th, 2:30 - 3:30PM. 50 students. Stuart, Miriam, JuCoby

* Intercultural Communication Class: This course explores cultural differences and their implications for communication, including differences in values, norms, social interaction, and code systems; Diversity in Schools Class: Emphasis on the study of values, of communication techniques, and of the major minority groups in Minnesota for the development of interpersonal relations skills.

ON STAGE: Actually – Discussion Schedule Cont.

10. St. Thomas - ENGL 218: A Critical History of Women's Literature - Liz Wilkinson - Wednesday March 6th, 3:25 - 4:25PM. 20 students. *Miriam, JuCoby*

* This course aims to promote understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Sociological and anthropological perspectives will be used to examine sociocultural diversity and multiculturalism, the challenges and opportunities they present, and their importance in our dynamic contemporary world.

11. Augsburg - MUS 242: Jazz History - Kameron Markworth – Thursday December 6, 12:40 - 1:40PM. 20 students. *Ansa, Wendy, Rajané*

* What impact has women's writing had on important cultural and political movements such as abolition, suffrage, and environmentalism? In what ways has the writing of women been more radical than polite, more aggressive than demure, more confrontational than deferential?

12. Normandale - COMM 1131: Intercultural Communication - Willie Johnson - Thursday March 7th, 2:00 - 3:00PM. 25 students. *Stuart, JuCoby*

* The primary purposes of this course are to raise awareness of cultural values, beliefs, norms, and biases and address how culture affects communication choices on the interpersonal, group, cross-cultural and global levels.

ON STAGE: *Actually* – Total Tickets Purchased

Total Participants: 264

Total Tickets Purchased: 107

Note: The total tickets purchased was confirmed by the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company Box Office.

ON STAGE: Actually – Survey Results

1. Have you seen a play before?

94 YES (74%) 32 NO

2. Have you been to this specific theater before?

4 YES 122 NO (97%)

3. After our visit, do you feel more inclined to see the play?

102 YES (82%) 23 NO

4. Do you now feel more inclined to see other plays at this theater?

79 YES (64%) 44 NO

5. Do you think this program works well in college classes?

121 YES (96%) 5 NO

Note: This survey was issued to participants in six of the twelve discussions.

ON STAGE: Actually – Discussion Agenda/Topics

Lucas will welcome the class, introduce himself and say why we are there/what On Stage is.

Michelle/Stuart/JuCoby/Miriam/Harry will introduce themselves. Also mention that this is a sensitive subject and this is a safe space. **Michelle/Stuart/Harry** will ask who has seen a play before? Recently? Where/what have they seen? Have they seen a play at MN Jewish Theater Company? This is a play meant to spark conversation not strictly to entertain.

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will ask to discuss in small groups what consent and sexual assault is. Some share with class to create a “group definition.” Do we all agree? What are the grey lines? Verbal consent? What is the Title IX definition? Does it change from school to school? What have you been taught about sexual assault/consent in school? Is our society set up to follow this? How does American culture view sexuality? Other cultures? Different standard for men and women? Boys will be boys?

Miriam/JuCoby/Harry will give some background about the play/playwright and weigh in about their personal take on it and the process. **Miriam/JuCoby** can talk about how they prepared for their roles, etc.

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will ask students what are their first impressions/preconceptions of the allegation. Who do they side with? Why? More information needed? What information would be more helpful to know when determining who to believe?

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will set up the first scene (Pg. 36 – 39). Then **JuCoby/Miriam** (or others if they aren't there) will read/perform.

Ask audience what they heard/thought. Has your initial impression of the allegation changed? What other information would be helpful when determining who to believe?

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will lead a discussion about topics/themes covered in the scene including: Do you think the notions of sex, power and consent are changing on college campuses?; College experiences/what is adulthood/expectations; Cultural differences/race/privilege – how do these play into this story?

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will set up the second scene (Pg. 40 – 42). Then **JuCoby/Miriam** (or others if they aren't there) will read/perform.

Ask audience what they heard/thought. Has your initial impression of the allegation changed? What other information would be helpful when determining who to believe?

Michelle/Stuart/Harry will lead a discussion about topics/themes covered in the scene including: Can there be two truths? What would be a just outcome for this? Can your story change? Trauma/memory? How difficult it must be for her to tell this story, etc.

Lucas will remind everyone how to get \$14 tickets to *see the play*. Ask actors to plug work they are currently doing.

ON STAGE: Actually – Feedback

Hi Lucas, thank you so much for coming! I thought it was great and a great alternative learning experience. I think students were able to see some similarities to course work and the memoir they are reading. Thank you again. I really enjoyed having you in class today.

Elizabeth Chambers – Concordia University

Oh my word! It is I that needs to thank you. My students LOVED today. As did I. It was such a rich and interesting discussion and getting the actors themselves (somehow I didn't realize this would happen!) was just so great. I think they are all inspired to go see the show and to see more theater in general. The one comment I heard several say, while talking with one another, is that they wished THAT was how they learned about consent. Honestly, if that play could hit the ground touring campuses... with those actors... Please share my deepest gratitude to JuCoby and Miriam. It was a wonderful experience.

Best,

Letitia Basford – Hamline University

*Hi Lucas,
I thought it went really well -- I'm so appreciative of you all generously coming to campus and spending the time with my students. I know the subject matter is difficult, but it's so important.
Thank you!*

Liz Wilkinson – University of St. Thomas

*Lucas,
Thank you for coming. Overall, I think it went really well. It was nice to have Harry there though I did want to ask more questions about things like collaboration with the designers, specifically how the set design informed the play (we did talk about this after you all left). We ended up talking about the play for another 45 minutes even after Stuart left. Mostly about other aspects since the conversation you led was mostly about the themes, connection to audience, etc.... So we talked about the acting, designs, the space, the expectations entering the theatre, etc.... It was a good play to include in the class. I think that it is important for the content of this specific class to have someone who is involved with the production be part of the discussion. I know with it being a night class that makes it hard for actors to participate, but if there is a designer, the director, or someone else from the specific production, that is most beneficial for us.
Thanks again!*

Annie Cady – Normandale Community College

ON STAGE: Actually – Feedback Cont.

Hi Lucas,

Thanks to you and Stuart for coming in.

The program provided the students a framework to have discussions about human topics that I typically have difficulty introducing into the classroom. That first movement exercise was great. The students really enjoyed going in depth into such 'heavy' content and the thought process that was evoked. I think this particularly worked well being that we are a small group (in some of my classes of 18, the dynamic would definitely be different). Thanks so much, and I look forward to hearing from you again next year to incorporate another theater-connection experience into our class.

Arlene Brit – MCAD

Lucas,

Thanks for doing this. I thought it went really well and the students were engaged. They continued to talk about it for ten minutes after you left and three of them (at least) were making plans to see the play. Another student said she was really looking forward to your next visit as she had seen "Hedwig..." so she thought that would add to the experience. One of them suggested it would be interesting to use that same scenario but with the woman being black and the man being white. Next time there should be a full class of students. I think so many were out as it was the week before spring break.

Thanks again. My students and I really enjoyed your presentation.

Melanie Richards – Metro State University

Hey Lucas,

Thank you so much! The students were deeply enthralled by today's wonderful presentation and discussion! I could feel the palpable energy in the classroom and the students were really feeling and thinking in all areas of the variety of subject matter! I love discussions that go into unpredictable directions---that's what makes this education thing so exciting! The students will be writing a reflective paper about the experience and I will share some of their thoughts anonymously with you. I am looking forward to their thoughts and feelings too! Today some of the males voiced their thoughts for the first time, so that tells me that this event had a profound impact on them!

Take care!

Willie Johnson – Normandale Community College

ON STAGE: Actually – Financials

- **Michelle O’Neill (Facilitator) - \$980**
 - * 7 discussions (\$700), 1 planning meeting (\$100), facilitator prep-time (\$150) and parking expenses (\$30).
- **Stuart Gates (Facilitator) - \$1180**
 - * 9 discussions (\$900), 1 planning meeting (\$100), facilitator prep-time (\$150) and parking expenses (\$30).
- **Miriam Schwartz (Facilitator) - \$780**
 - * 6 discussions (\$600), facilitator prep-time (\$150) and parking expenses (\$30).
- **JuCoby Johnson (Facilitator) - \$780**
 - * 6 discussions (\$600), facilitator prep-fee (\$150) and parking expenses (\$30).
- **Harry Waters Jr. (Actor) - \$130**
 - * 1 discussion (\$100) and parking expenses (\$30).
- **Lucas Erickson (Project Manager) - \$640**
 - * Planning and coordination of all On Stage discussions (\$500), marketing and advertising (\$85), miscellaneous (\$25) and parking expenses (\$30).

TOTAL: \$4,490

Notes: 1 discussion (1 hour in length) is \$100, 1 rehearsal (2 hours in length) is \$100, 1 extra discussion (1 hour in length) is \$100, prep-time for the facilitator is \$150, and the coordination stipend is \$500. These fees are based on a similar program that was used at the Guthrie Theater (Creating Dialogue) and Project SUCCESS (fiscal sponsor pilot program). The program emphasizes education and is not a performance piece. The discussions will take place in college classrooms and community spaces (i.e. library room, public meeting room, etc.).

ON STAGE: Actually – Sample Contract

PROJECT CONTRACT

On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

This Agreement is made effective as of **10/15/16** by and between **On Stage**, and the following individual ("Actor")

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

1. **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES AND PAYMENT.** Actor will receive compensation for providing the following services/expenses including but not limited to: 6 discussions (\$600), 4 planning meetings (\$200), facilitator prep time (\$150), and parking expenses (\$20).
2. **TOTAL PAYMENT.** On Stage will pay total compensation for services in the amount of **\$970**. Payment will be sent directly to the Actor from On Stage at the address listed above at a date postmarked on or before **11/14/16**.
3. **TERM/TERMINATION.** This Agreement shall terminate automatically on **11/14/16**.
4. **RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES.** It is understood by the parties that the Actor is an independent contractor with respect to On Stage, and not an employee or contractor of On Stage.
5. **WORK PRODUCT OWNERSHIP.** Any copyrightable works, ideas, discoveries, inventions, patents, products, or other information (collectively, the "Work Product") developed in whole or in part in connection with the Services Rendered shall be the exclusive property of On Stage.
6. **NAME AND LIKENESS.** Actor agrees to allow On Stage full use of their name, likeness, voice, testimonial, and/or portrayal in whole or in part, severally or in conjunction with other material, for any documentation and marketing purposes at any time including after determination of this agreement.
7. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties, and there are no other promises or conditions in any other agreement whether oral or written. The actor waves any liability against On Stage.
9. **SEVERABILITY.** If any provision of this Agreement shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the remaining provisions shall continue to be valid and enforceable. If a court finds that any provision of this Agreement is invalid or unenforceable, but that by limiting such provision it would become valid and enforceable, then such provision shall be deemed to be written, construed, and enforced as so limited.
10. **APPLICABLE LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.

This Project Contract is executed and agreed to by:

ACTOR

ON STAGE

(Printed Name) _____

(Printed Name) _____ (Project Manager)

(Date Signed) _____

(Date Signed) _____

(Signature) _____

(Signature) _____

ON STAGE: *Actually* – News Coverage

A&E

FRIDAY,
MARCH 8, 2019



Theater outreach program On Stage visits Augsburg

JEN KOCHAVER, FEATURES EDITOR

There are many benefits to Augsburg's location in the heart of Minneapolis. We're able to experience a rich and diverse community, we have many opportunities for learning and working outside of the classroom and we have plenty of fun available to us on the weekend.

Though many college students in the Twin Cities take advantage of access to concerts and movies, it's much less common for younger people to think to head to the theater and catch a play; yet, we live in an area with one of the most thriving theatre scenes in the country, and Augsburg happens to be within walking distance from four phenomenal theaters. On Stage, a theatre outreach program based in the Twin Cities, is working to change our perception of theatre and its place in our lives as young people.

I had the chance to sit in on On Stage's visit to Augsburg this past Tuesday, where students had gathered to discuss "Actually," a play by Anna Ziegler, running through March 10 at the Highland Park Community Center, put on by the Minnesota Jewish Theater

company, which focuses on two Princeton students, one a white Jewish woman and one a Black man, recounting a night they spent together to a university panel tasked with determining whether or not a sexual assault took place.

On Stage states on their website that their goal is to "enhance in-class learning, to make local theater relevant to younger and non-traditional audiences and to lay the groundwork for building future theater attendance." In one-hour sessions held in classrooms at Twin Cities universities, high schools and community centers, On Stage brings plays directly to the people by bringing actors into the space to perform two scenes from their play. The audience is given all the necessary backstory to understand the scenes as these sessions are intended to be accessible to those who've never seen the play. In fact, the discussion is intended to encourage attendees to go on to see the full play after the session, and On Stage provides a ticket discount code to make seeing the full play easier.

On the On Stage panel were Stuart Gates, actor and teacher at the Guthrie; Miriam

Schwartz and JuCoby Johnson, actors in the play we'd gathered to discuss; and Lucas Erickson, the program manager of On Stage. Schwartz and Johnson began by describing the theater space to us, helping us visualize the atmosphere of a typical performance. In "Actually," Schwartz and Johnson are the only actors, portraying characters Amber and Tom, and spend much of the play speaking directly to the audience, who sometimes serves as a stand-in for the University panel and sometimes as a confidant for the characters. Add in that the show is performed with a 120-seat house, and you get a highly intimate show.

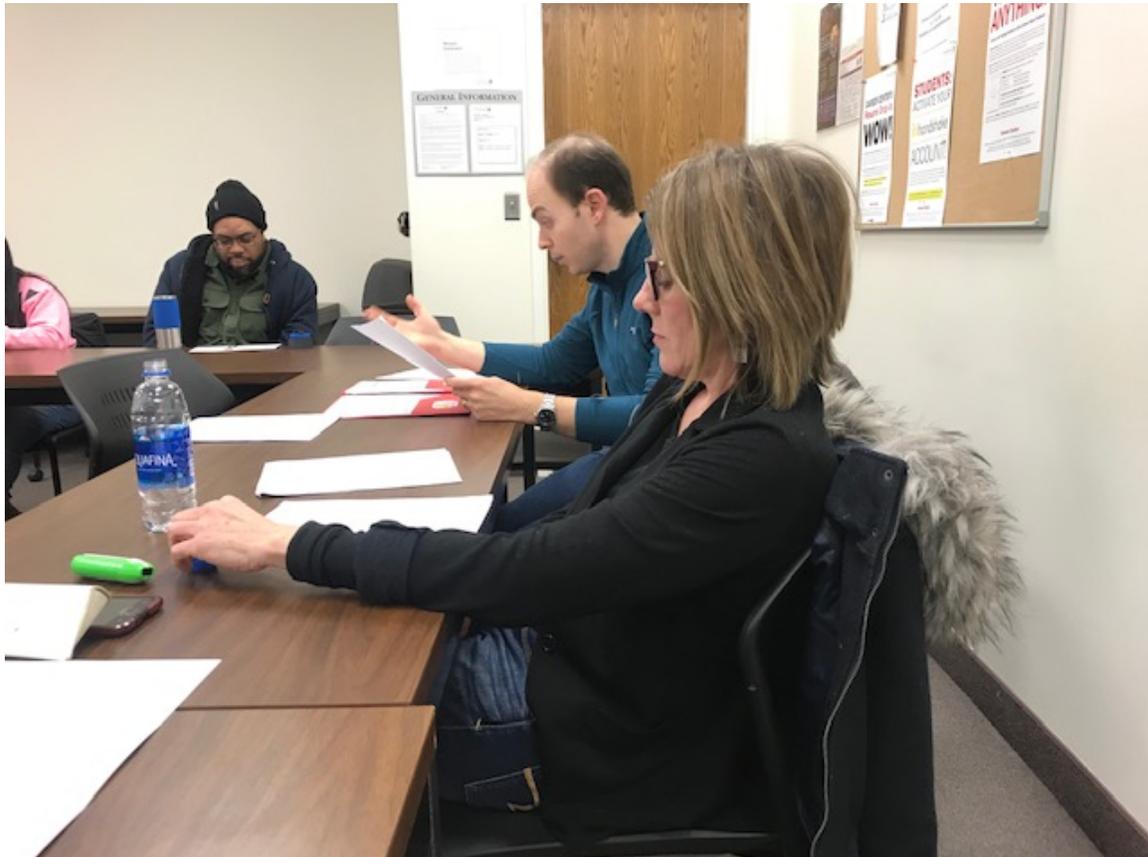
Next, we were read two scenes from "Actually." They first explored Amber and Tom's differing experiences of the night the alleged assault took place. Tom focused on his attraction to Amber, his blurry memory of the night and his hope that Amber had enjoyed their sexual encounter; Amber focused on how excited she was to be out with such an attractive and cool guy, how carefree she'd felt during their night out together and how she's never felt comfortable in her life saying no,

especially to sex. The second scene dove more into their struggles to recount the specifics of their sexual encounter, the differences in their stories and the separate pressures they each felt to tell a certain kind of narrative.

The remainder of the event was spent in group discussion on our impressions of the characters and their attitudes towards sex and consent, our own attitudes towards sex and consent and the cultural opinions towards and implications of cases like Amber's and Tom's. The group, with guidance from the panel, dove into discussions on affirmative consent and the importance on clear communication throughout any sexual encounter (including and perhaps especially casual ones), the internalized pressure on women to be silent, and the history of false accusations of rape against Black men by white women.

Through their hour with us, the On Stage panel helped bring the essence of "Actually" into our discussion room and opened up difficult dialogues about sex, rape, consent and race.

ON STAGE: *Actually* – Photos



ON STAGE: *Actually* – Photos



ON STAGE: Total Outreach

An Octoroon (Mixed Blood Theater – Fiscal Sponsor: Project SUCCESS)

Total Participants: **196**

Total Tickets Purchased: **115**

A Raisin in the Sun (Park Square Theater)

Total Participants: **190**

Total Tickets Purchased: **100**

Anna in the Tropics (Jungle Theater)

Total Participants: **142**

Total Tickets Purchased: **73**

We are the Levinsons (MN Jewish Theatre Co.)

Total Participants: **128**

Total Tickets Purchased: **30**

Pike St. (Pillsbury House Theatre)

Total Participants: **163**

Total Tickets Purchased: **25**

Revolt. She said. Revolt again. (Frank Theatre)

Total Participants: **296**

Total Tickets Purchased: **100**

Collected Stories (MN Jewish Theatre Co.)

Total Participants: **199**

Total Tickets Purchased: **42**

The Lorax (Children's Theatre Co.)

Total Participants: **483**

Total Tickets Purchased: **55**

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (Jungle Theater)

Total Participants: **155**

Total Tickets Purchased: **28**

West of Central (Pillsbury House Theatre)

Total Participants: **399**

Total Tickets Purchased: **150**

Marie and Rosetta (Park Square Theatre)

Total Participants: **313**

Total Tickets Purchased: **140**

Actually (MN Jewish Theatre Co.)

Total Participants: **264**

Total Tickets Purchased: **107**

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 2,928

TOTAL TICKETS PURCHASED: 965

*** 33% OF THE STUDENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS WE HAVE VISITED SAW THE PLAY THAT WE DISCUSSED.**

The Need For A Younger Theater Audience

NEA 2012 Survey: The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is the largest and most comprehensive survey of U.S. arts participation, with a total sample size exceeding 37,000 adults, ages 18 and over.

- Adults who attended performing arts or visited museums as children were three to four times as likely to see shows or visit museums as adults. Exposure to the arts in childhood turns out to be a stronger predictor of adult arts participation than education, gender, age, or income.
- Technology is a great enabler of arts creation and participation. In 2012, nearly three-quarters of American adults—about 167 million people—used electronic media to view or listen to art.
- 12.3 percent of adults in 2002 said they had attended a non-musical play in the past year; only 8.3 percent of adults in 2012 could say the same.
- The average age of those attending classical music performances, the ballet, jazz concerts and plays is increasing. This is not just because the median age of the general population is creeping up as well; it is the result of one generation of audience members not being adequately replaced by the next.
- The average age of the theatergoer for touring Broadway is 52 (according to The Broadway League).

June 17, 2012, Boston Globe:

“The Boston area is home to an estimated 250,000 college students from September to June. In other words, there is a huge population of 18-to-22-year-olds at more than 65 colleges and universities, quite a few of whom are eager, even desperate, for something to do off-campus on the weekends. Many who go to college here settle down in the area after graduation; they are the logical foundation of Boston theater’s future. So, theoretically, Boston should be the perfect laboratory for experiments in how to attract young adults to the theater, right? ... Intellectual curiosity and a spirit of cultural adventure are, or should be, cornerstones of higher education” (Don Aucoin).