Auditioning in the Fall?
Show the ‘Scouts’ What You Do Best

SETC asked Joy Dewing, CSA, president of Joy Dewing Casting in New York City, to share auditioning tips for the Fall 2012 SETC Professional Auditions. Below is her advice.

In order to present a successful audition, you must be able to evaluate yourself honestly. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How can you highlight the former and downplay the latter?

Let’s say you’re a star college baseball player, the best pitcher the school has seen in years. You’re so good that your school invites Major League scouts to come watch you play. But when the scouts show up, you say, “Actually I’m gonna play third base today.” The baseball scouts don’t get to see you do what you do best, and there goes your career in Major League Baseball.

It’s the same thing with auditions: Why would you want to highlight your weakness, and miss the chance to show off a talent in which you really excel?

If you’re a good actor but not a good singer, show us your strength by doing an acting-only audition and don’t put your weakness on display by doing a singing and acting audition. Trust us to do our jobs, and if we really need to hear you sing, we will call you back! If you try to “cover all the bases” in your initial audition, you may end up embarrassing yourself. At best, we’ll simply turn over your page and start looking at the next person. At worst, you’ll crash and burn.

Trust me, we don’t want to have to keep looking. We want you to be the perfect person for the gig so we can go home to our families, our lives. You can make it easier on yourself and on us if you can look at yourself objectively and choose material that shows what you do best.

You can watch other performers and pick apart their weaknesses all day long. Are you strong enough to do the same for yourself?

Among the shows Dewing has cast is Troika Entertainment’s 2010 national tour of Legally Blonde. She found cast member Maggie Taylor (third from right) at the SETC Professional Auditions.
Travel on a Budget
See the World from Other People’s Couches (and Their Perspectives)

I was taught that theatre is a reflection of the human condition and the best way to train to do theatre as an actor/director is to study humans. A good theatre practitioner should be a life experient, actively involving yourself with a variety of cultures. However, since I teach in the arts to earn my living, and we all know salaries can be a little sad in many Southern states, I have to study the human condition as inexpensively as possible. I have developed some unusual resources to allow me to travel, interact with local culture and see theatre as I go.

The greatest resource that I have found to allow me to travel inexpensively and interact with local people is CouchSurfing (www.couchsurfing.org). It is a network of like-minded travelers whose purpose is to connect with each other and the world around them. The term couchsurfing means just that; you stay in people’s homes on couches or in their guest rooms, share (and/or cook) meals, listen to their stories and see their towns and cities from their perspectives. The purpose is not to have a free place to stay, but to connect with people who are proud of where they live. I couchsurfed through Mexico City and would not have seen that enormous and fabulous city the way I did if I had not connected with two locals who loved their city and really wanted to show it to me.

There are other Internet sites much like CouchSurfing that aim to involve you in the communities where you are staying, such as United States Servas (http://usservas.org). Some, such as World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (http://wwof.org), put you to work. Some offer cheaper stays for a minimal cost, such as www.hostelworld.com. You can find more options on travel blogs.

Is this mode of travel safe? Yes. Is it scary? Sometimes, a little. Is it always an adventure? Absolutely! Do you make new friends? Without question. The big advantage from my standpoint, though, is that I always come home with a new perspective on other people and cultures that informs what I do in the classroom and onstage.
Many roles: Actor, administrator, writer

Emily Warshaw is a company member and associate director at Storahtelling, a New York city organization that creates and performs Jewish Ritual Theatre. Emily plays the role of Rachel, a holocaust survivor, in Becoming Israel, and was part of the creative team that wrote and produced the play.

Emily began her involvement in SETC as a student in 1998. In 1999, she won Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Jack’s mother in Into the Woods at SETC’s High School Theatre Festival. She received her BFA in Acting from New York University and went on to explore the world of auditioning in New York before landing her current role at Storahtelling.

“When I went through SETC Auditions in 1998 and 1999, I had no idea of the exciting career paths that would open,” Emily says. “Although I was ready to take the acting world by storm, after much reflection, my career path has evolved into a combination of my administrative role at Storahtelling, along with the creative side of writing and acting in Jewish ritual theatre.”

How can you improve your audition?

Ken Davenport, Broadway producer of Godspell; The Awesome 80s Prom; Miss Abigail’s Guide to Dating, Mating, & Marriage; and other shows, recommends auditioning as often as possible.

“The best way to master auditioning is just like any other skill. Do it over and over. You’ll be able to be yourself and keep the butterflies under control. And you’ll get free practice! Go to dance calls (as allowed/requested) – learning a dance combination at an audition is a free dance class. And actors, view the chance to work on sides with directors during a callback as free coaching.”

Source: www.theproducersperspective.com

SETC had an opportunity this past spring to catch up with Richard Garner, producing artistic director of Georgia Shakespeare, who shared information and a little history on the theatre, located in Atlanta, GA. Read excerpts of the interview below.

Tell us about your theatre.

Shakespeare, of course, is our primary work but we also do what we term “other classics,” and we apply a broad definition to that phrase. As our mission states: “the best writers and ideas of all eras.” Moliere is probably our second house playwright after Shakespeare, but we’ve also done the Greeks, Restoration, Chekhov and American classics – Williams, Miller, etc. We’ve also done quite a few original adaptations based on classic works – musical adaptations based on The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, Antigone, Oedipus – and non-musical adaptations of Hamlet and Odyssey.

We opened our first season in 1986 with The Taming of the Shrew and King Lear in rotating repertory. For our first 11 years, we were in a tent. Since 1997, our primary performing space is a 500-seat modified thrust house with vom entrances and a fully trapped stage. It’s called the Conant Performing Arts Center Stage and is on the campus of Oglethorpe University, where we are the Professional Theatre Company in Residence. For one week a year, we also produce Shakespeare in Atlanta’s Piedmont Park. This year we are moving to a new space in the park that will accommodate 2,000 patrons per night in an outdoor setting.

What is your mission?

Georgia Shakespeare creates thoughtful, bold and passionate interpretations of a diverse body of work rooted in Shakespeare and branching out to embrace the best writers and ideas of all eras. On the stage and through educational programming, we strive to entertain, ignite the imagination and creatively explore the human spirit’s journey.

Where do you find your actors and crew?

We are passionately committed to hiring most actors from the Atlanta market. We have a core group of associate artists who have been with us from 8 to 24 years, and we build our company around them each season. SETC is our primary source for finding acting interns and technicians. Our Equity auditions are held in Atlanta, and we hold one round of intern auditions here, but we have consistently hired most of our acting interns out of SETC each year.

More info: www.gashakespeare.org
Raising Funds for State and SETC

Fundraising for our first SETC/AACT show, Second Samuel, was relatively painless. School performances funded state travel expenses. After being passed on to SETC, the stakes got higher. The $1,500 we spent for state blossomed to a budget of $7,000 for regional. A phone call to our community foundation produced a $5,000 donation. Next we partnered with the other community foundation and produced a $5,000 donation. That put us over our goal.

Raising Funds for State and SETC

Don’t let the “fear of finance” keep you away from the process. You meet your community’s needs – let them help you meet yours.

- Kristy Meanor, kmeanor@wetumpkadepot.com, Chair, Community Theatre Division

SETC Scholarship Awareness Campaign

We also would like to connect more students to the many scholarship opportunities offered by SETC. The College and University Theatre Division will soon implement a scholarship informational outreach campaign. Spearheaded by Darren Michael (Austin Peay State University), the campaign will use direct contact methods to target college and university financial aid offices and theatre departments throughout the Southeast – getting their attention, giving them information, and directing them to more information at www.setc.org/scholarships-a-awards. Darren also hopes to enlist the help of Secondary School Theatre Division members.

- Karen Brewster, brewster@etsu.edu, Chair, College/University Theatre Division

Changes in Division Leadership

Chattanooga’s spring 2012 SETC Convention resulted in some natural and progressive changes in the leadership of our division. Lesley Preston (Presbyterian College) graduated from vice chair to chair, and I (East Tennessee State University) “graduated” from vice chair to chair. The constituents attending the spring convention meeting elected Paul Crook as vice chair.

Hope to see all of you in Louisville for the 2013 SETC Convention!

Karen Brewster, brewster@etsu.edu
Chair, College/University Theatre Division

Theatre for Youth Division

Suggest a Play, Workshop

The Theatre for Youth Division is alive and well with an exciting year ahead! How can you be a part of that?

Bring a Production to Louisville

The division is accepting applications now for performances at the 2013 Theatre for Youth Festival in Louisville. Each year we aim to find one professional theatre production, one college theatre production and one youth theatre production to present at the festival. Last year we had over 600 young people from Chattanooga join us to see work by The Ensemble Theatre of Chattanooga, Troy University and The Whole Backstage Theatre.

Do you know of a theatre or school doing innovative work for young people? Please encourage them to apply and share the great work they are doing with young people in Louisville!

Contribute to Tom Behm Award

The Theatre for Youth Division is working to raise funds for a new award, the Tom Behm Award, which honors a former professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. It will provide funding for...
DIVISION NEWS

Theatre for Youth

Fulfill Your Mission, and the Audiences Will Come

or the past decade, every theatre organization in the country has had to grapple with massive competition for the entertainment dollar and a crippling economic landscape. Many theatres have closed or gone to semi-professional status. Other companies have completely reinvented themselves in an attempt to create a new niche market for a new century, and to separate themselves from the pack. A great many theatres have hired new administrations in the hope that new blood would reinvigorate the artistic, and therefore the economic, bottom line. Theatre is after all, a business, and an expensive, labor-intensive one at that. We are all scrambling for both patrons and patron-saints. Overall, there seems to be a feeling of panic in the air.

Scanning the Season Lists: Safe, Similar

Each year, as Professional Theatre Division chair, I am eager to scan the season lists at the SETC Spring Auditions to determine the current artistic temperature. I also look forward to seeing the brave choices and unique combinations that define the wide variety of theatres represented at SETC. I was immediately struck in 2012 by the safety and similarity of the seasons. It makes perfect sense, as we are all trying to come up with the perfect SRO season. However, it has provided hours of contemplation for me at Trustus Theatre in Columbia, SC, where I am moving from associate artistic director to artistic director in August.

Having just planned the 28th season, I have been grappling with major philosophical questions:

• What shows will guarantee an audience?
• Who comes to our shows?
• What do they want to see?
• What kind of programming garners corporate sponsorship?

I was immediately struck in 2012 by the variety of theatres represented at SETC. The expansion that allowed each state to have its top two shows (instead of just the top show) has helped our division grow substantially in numbers. I know that we all grow in the knowledge of our craft each year by participating in SETC. We also grow our friendship circle by attending SETC.

There are a few areas that I find to be often-missed opportunities:

Nominate a Student for the KEAP Award

There are many students who would like to attend the SETC Convention, but are held back due to financial concerns. Secondary school theatre teachers can help those students by nominating them for SETC’s Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award. This award gives students full access to the convention, an opportunity to meet keynote speakers and an opening to learn more about their craft and this organization. I encourage you to think today of which students you have that could benefit as a KEAP winner.

Performing at Trustus Theatre in Columbia, SC, where I am moving from associate artistic director to artistic director in August.

The goal of this day is give you a full day of interactive workshops. The goal of this day is to enrich your knowledge of theatre, give you some tools that will enhance your teaching skills and provide tangible resources for you to take back into your classrooms. This year’s presenter is Eric Booth. See Betsey Baun’s column on page 6 for details.

Are You Missing Opportunities for Students, Yourself?

We have seen tremendous growth over the past several years in the Secondary School Theatre Division. The expansion that allowed each state to send its top two shows (instead of just the top show) has helped our division grow substantially in numbers. I know that we all grow in the knowledge of our craft each year by participating in SETC. We also grow our friendship circle by attending SETC.

Are You Missing Opportunities for Students, Yourself?

There are many students who would like to attend the SETC Convention, but are held back due to financial concerns. Secondary school theatre teachers can help those students by nominating them for SETC’s Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award. This award gives students full access to the convention, an opportunity to meet keynote speakers and an opening to learn more about their craft and this organization. I encourage you to think today of which students you have that could benefit as a KEAP winner.

The application is found at www.setc.org/keynote-emerging-artists-of-promise-keap-awards.

ATTEND THE SETC TEACHERS INSTITUTE

Are you, as a theatre teacher, attending our Teachers Institute? This is your opportunity to learn and grow each year. Often, we don’t have time during the convention to get to the many workshops offered each day because of our duties chaperoning our students and presenting our plays. The Teachers Institute, held the Wednesday of SETC Convention week, is designed to give you a full day of interactive workshops. The goal of this day is to enrich your knowledge of theatre, give you some tools that will enhance your teaching skills and provide tangible resources for you to take back into your classrooms. This year’s presenter is Eric Booth. See Betsey Baun’s column on page 6 for details.

ATTEND THE SETC TEACHERS INSTITUTE

Are you, as a theatre teacher, attending our Teachers Institute? This is your opportunity to learn and grow each year. Often, we don’t have time during the convention to get to the many workshops offered each day because of our duties chaperoning our students and presenting our plays. The Teachers Institute, held the Wednesday of SETC Convention week, is designed to give you a full day of interactive workshops. The goal of this day is to enrich your knowledge of theatre, give you some tools that will enhance your teaching skills and provide tangible resources for you to take back into your classrooms. This year’s presenter is Eric Booth. See Betsey Baun’s column on page 6 for details.

Are You Missing Opportunities for Students, Yourself?

Nominate a Student for the KEAP Award

There are many students who would like to attend the SETC Convention, but are held back due to financial concerns. Secondary school theatre teachers can help those students by nominating them for SETC’s Keynote Emerging Artist of Promise (KEAP) Award. This award gives students full access to the convention, an opportunity to meet keynote speakers and an opening to learn more about their craft and this organization. I encourage you to think today of which students you have that could benefit as a KEAP winner.

The application is found at www.setc.org/keynote-emerging-artists-of-promise-keap-awards.

ATTEND THE SETC TEACHERS INSTITUTE

Are you, as a theatre teacher, attending our Teachers Institute? This is your opportunity to learn and grow each year. Often, we don’t have time during the convention to get to the many workshops offered each day because of our duties chaperoning our students and presenting our plays. The Teachers Institute, held the Wednesday of SETC Convention week, is designed to give you a full day of interactive workshops. The goal of this day is to enrich your knowledge of theatre, give you some tools that will enhance your teaching skills and provide tangible resources for you to take back into your classrooms. This year’s presenter is Eric Booth. See Betsey Baun’s column on page 6 for details.

ATTEND THE SETC TEACHERS INSTITUTE

Are you, as a theatre teacher, attending our Teachers Institute? This is your opportunity to learn and grow each year. Often, we don’t have time during the convention to get to the many workshops offered each day because of our duties chaperoning our students and presenting our plays. The Teachers Institute, held the Wednesday of SETC Convention week, is designed to give you a full day of interactive workshops. The goal of this day is to enrich your knowledge of theatre, give you some tools that will enhance your teaching skills and provide tangible resources for you to take back into your classrooms. This year’s presenter is Eric Booth. See Betsey Baun’s column on page 6 for details.
ull out your calendar. Find March 6, 2013. Write: “Go a day early to SETC so I don’t miss Eric Booth!”

Seriously, open your calendars and mark them now. The guru of arts in education, whose schedule includes international travel and recognition, will be the 2013 SETC Teachers Institute presenter. Trust me! You won’t want to miss him. By Thursday, he is gone – off to Europe.

This is your chance to work one-on-one with the world’s leading teaching artist. A teacher, author, speaker, consultant, actor, and musician, Eric Booth delivers a message with firsthand knowledge and experience, passion and compassion. Eric began his career as a classical actor, performing for over 20 years on Broadway, Off-Broadway and at regional theatres across the country.

He is recognized internationally as one of our nation’s most creative teachers and is frequently referred to as the father of the teaching artist profession. This spring he received an honorary doctorate in music (perhaps the first one anywhere for a teaching artist) from the New England Conservatory after delivering the commencement speech.

Eric is no stranger to SETC; he delivered a keynote address at the SETC Convention in 2004. This time he will work hands-on and focus on the how-to’s in the intimate setting of our Teachers Institute, a day-long seminar designed to provide in-depth learning for teachers who teach the arts or teach other subjects using arts-based techniques.

We will be opening registration for the 2013 Teachers Institute on October 15. Until then, check out the websites listed in the box above to learn more about our presenter – and stay tuned. We’ll be telling you a lot more about Eric Booth. So mark your calendars now. You don’t want to miss him. He will fill our artistic souls and help us find ways to influence others, whether we are teaching, advocating or producing art.

Eric Booth, 2013 Teachers Institute Presenter

To learn more about Eric Booth, visit:

www.everydayarts.info
Eric Booth’s website and the title of one of his five books
http://necmusic.edu/eric-booth-2012-commencement-speech
Eric Booth’s May 20, 2012 Commencement Address at the New England Conservatory
www.ifacca.org/events/2012/08/29/first-international-teaching-artist-conference
First international teaching artist conference

The 2013 Teachers Institute is a pre-convention seminar designed to engage, challenge and invigorate those who teach the arts as well as those who teach through the arts. The public, as well as convention attendees, can register for this daylong program.

From Onstage to Online: Opportunities on the Internet

ike the rest of the world in the 21st century, theatre is making waves online. If you are interested in the possibilities for theatre on the Internet, be sure to check out the websites below, which were recommended to me as “cutting-edge” by SETC staffers Judi Rossabi and Quiana Clark-Roland.

Livestream, a website/service, proclaims it is “a… live streaming video platform that allows users to view and broadcast video content using a camera and a computer through the Internet.” This is a wide-ranging service. Go to http://new.livestream.com and get familiar with its offerings.

# NEWPLAY TV declares it is “…an international, shared resource for live events and performances relevant to new works in the theatre field.” The Arena Stage in Washington, DC, and HowlRound, “A Journal of the Theater Commons,” at Emerson College in Boston, are helping develop #NEWPLAY TV and offer information on their websites. Many theatres are broadcasting new works, including San Francisco’s One-Minute Play Festival, Dramatists Guild and Tennessee Rep, to name a few. Explore NEWPLAY at www.livestream.com/newplay. You can also access it through Twitter using the hashtag #newplay.

Creative Commons deals with copyrights. It’s the place to go if you want to make your work accessible universally. At its website, http://creativecommons.org, you’ll get information about its licensing services. If you were to present a new work via NEWPLAY and want others to perform the play royalty-free, Creative Commons will help you license your work.

These sites are deeply complex, and I can barely get my head around them. Therefore, I’m going to encourage you to visit their websites where you can explore to your heart’s content. Happy hunting!

Don Wolfe is professor emeritus at Wake Forest University and a former SETC President. He can be reached at wolfe@wfu.edu.

I will be graduating from college in spring 2013. How would it help me to participate in the Fall 2012 Graduate School Auditions?

SETC’s Fall Grad School Auditions & Design-Tech Interviews offer you an opportunity to have your audition seen by multiple schools in a single location – early in the school year! That can help you get on the radar of institutions that interest you well in advance of the spring crunch. More information: visit www.setc.org/fall-grad-school.
Governance Task Force Makes Recommendations

ETC has been examining its long-range goals and purpose for the last decade. In 2009, President Glen Gourley authorized the formal study of SETC by a panel known as the 20/20 committee, which examined all facets of the organization and had in-depth discussions about our future.

This past March, I appointed a governance task force to review data collected over the past 10 years and to make recommendations at the Executive Committee’s May 2012 meeting.

Alan Litsey, chair of the governance task force, brought this group together for an invigorating day of discussion in Charlotte. In all my time with SETC, I have never witnessed a more exciting and thought-provoking day. Everyone in the room was fully engaged in looking at SETC’s governance structure from all vantage points. Through the day’s discussions, the task force built a partnership of thought for a governance structure that holds to SETC’s values yet brings us into the 21st century.

In May, Alan brought their suggestions to the Executive Committee. We spent the better part of our meeting time discussing and refining the suggestions from Alan’s group. The proposed structure (when completed) will enable all members of the organization to have an individual who will speak for them and their concerns.

At this point, a sub-committee of the Executive Committee is refining the proposal into a document that will be disseminated to the board in August. The board will be asked to review the document and submit questions to any ExCom member for a more thorough discussion at our meetings in Atlanta this September.

Following our discussions in September, the Executive Committee will review the proposal, along with any changes that have occurred, and present the updated concept to the Board and to the membership next March at the 2013 SETC Convention in Louisville.

I believe that SETC is on the verge of some exciting changes that will enable all members to have a better voice in all that we do now and what we hope to do in the future.

From the President
Jack Benjamin


*Contracts: Do You Have the Authority to Sign?*

Who are you? Maybe you are the executive director or the artistic director of a theatre. Maybe you are an actor or a playwright working at or with an established theatre. Maybe you’re a board member at a theatre. Or maybe you are simply a group of actors and musicians that have decided to put on a musical in a barn this summer.

No matter what the scenario, numerous contracts are formed anytime a play is being produced. Whether those contracts are written or oral, intentional or implied, who in your theatre production is authorized to enter into contracts and obligate the group?

“Actual authority” is a function of your operating bylaws and any other standing rules or resolutions that the board has enacted. Often, in formal written contracts, there is a signature line for the president and a signature line for the corporate secretary to attest to the authority of the president to sign/obligate the corporation.

Having the actual authority to enter a contract is important in three ways:

- If you don’t have authority to enter a contract, it can be voidable by the other party.
- Without authority to enter a contract, you might become personally obligated on that contract.
- From a practical perspective, unauthorized contracts can wreak havoc with a budget and an operational plan.

Whenever a group works together, whether or not they are a formalized entity, they should clarify the procedure for entering contracts. Even without “actual authority,” a person can still obligate the group if they have “apparent authority.” If, under the circumstances, the “other party” could reasonably believe that you had authority, then the other party may be able to enforce the contract.

The question of authority works in both directions. When you enter a contract and the other party is an entity of some sort, make sure that the person signing on behalf of the other party has authority.

Dan Ellison is a Durham, NC-based attorney who has concentrated on arts-related law and nonprofit law for 20 years and teaches a Legal Issues for the Performing Arts course at Duke University. He can be reached at artandmuseumlaw@aol.com. Note: The contents of this column are intended for general information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstance.