Atlanta Convention Wins Raves from Attendees

The 2011 SETC Convention, held March 3-7 in Atlanta, GA, earned great reviews from attendees who completed our post-convention survey. Here’s a sample of what we heard about speakers, workshops, location and more:

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:**
“I loved the keynote speakers! They were so inspiring! I think it was a good variety. They came from different backgrounds and focused on different elements of the theatre world, such as playwriting, performing and the future of the arts/non-profit theatre/why we do theatre.”

“Ben Cameron was amazing. I felt like I was watching an important moment in modern American theatre history take place right in front of me.”

“Pearl Cleage was inspirational.”

**WORKSHOPS:**
“The most pleasant surprise at SETC was the quality of the workshops overall. They were so helpful, and I have many things that will help me as an actress and as an individual.”

**MASTER CLASSES:**
“Patsy Rodenburg was the highlight of my trip!”

(See Atlanta, Page 8)

Touring: A New Revenue Generator for Regional Theatres?

Walnut Street Theatre, an SETC professional company member located in Philadelphia, PA, brought in an extra $82,000 in revenue this year by taking one of its productions on a six-week, 18-city tour. The play toured to college campuses and performing arts centers in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, Tennessee and West Virginia.

The success that the Walnut and another theatre, Bristol Riverside Theatre, enjoyed on the road led to a recent feature in the Philadelphia Inquirer pointing to touring as a possible new revenue-boosting trend at professional regional theatres in these tough economic times. SETC News recently interviewed Bernard Havard, producing artistic director, about the decision to tour.

**How did the tour come about?**
While celebrating the 200th anniversary of its opening in 2009, Walnut Street Theatre scored publicity across the country that “raised our profile nationally,” Havard said.

Havard, who had been approaching bookers about a tour for years, found new receptivity to the idea from Mark Baylin of Baylin Artists Management. Baylin’s chief reservation was that Walnut Street was “at the top of the food chain,” a well-known Equity theatre that would be too expensive to take on tour, Havard said.

But Havard had an idea: To make a show affordable on the road, Walnut Street Theatre would first produce the play on one of its own stages, recouping most production (See Touring, Page 2)

**Convention Statistics**

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RESERVE YOUR SPACE NOW!

Make sure your school is listed in the seventh annual SETC College/University/Training School Directory in Southern Theatre

More information: Contact Judi Rossabi in the SETC Central Office at judi@setc.org

Photo by Mark Garvin

Jillian Louis is Laura in Walnut Street Theatre’s production of The Glass Menagerie. The theatre netted $82,000 by taking the play on tour after its run at the Walnut.
LAND A ROLE!
Fall Professional Auditions
September 11-12, 2011
Atlanta, GA
Professional actors can apply online to audition for acting, singing and dancing roles at theatres across the nation for the upcoming season. (Sorry, but students cannot apply.)
Processing Fee: $35 by July 15 (early deadline); $45 by August 15 (deadline); $60 on audition day (walk-ins)
More info: www.setc.org/auditions

Touring
(Continued from Page 1)

WHAT DO AUDITIONEES SAY ABOUT GRADUATE SCHOOL AUDITIONS?

Jessi Tidwell, Mississippi University for Women
Spring 2011 Graduate School Auditionee
“I met a lot of interesting people, and applied to one of the graduate schools and was accepted! I even received a scholarship. This was my first SETC conference ever, and I was very impressed with the way it was organized. ... I would recommend the auditions/interviews for others. Actually, I already have recommended them and one of my friends will be auditioning fall 2011 with me.”

Ryan Long, Columbus, OH
Spring 2011 Graduate School Auditionee
“I had a very positive experience at the SETC Graduate Auditions.... I thought I received a lot of good feedback from the auditions, and I was able to meet some schools that I was not familiar with who had programs that interested me.”

Havard said. The design must not only be artistically engaging but also cost-effective to move via truck, Havard said. A good sound system is also crucial, because some venues have better acoustics than others.

What’s next for Walnut Street Theatre?
The theatre is planning a four-week tour of Proof in March 2012. Again, the show will be presented first at Walnut Street Theatre, then go on the road.

For more information:
Read the Inquirer story here. Visit the Walnut Street Theatre website here.

2011 STATISTICS
Undergraduate School Auditions & Interviews
AUDITIONS
Juniors: 152; Seniors: 60; Transfers: 33
DESIGN/TECH INTERVIEWS
Juniors: 11; Seniors: 10; Transfers: 9
19 Scholars Present Papers at SETC Theatre Symposium

ETC’s Theatre Symposium convened in Greenville, SC, April 15-17 to hear 19 scholars from all over the continent present papers on historical theatre audiences. Held on the campus of Furman University, this year’s Symposium was anchored by the University of Calgary’s Susan Bennett, PhD, author of Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception. Her keynote address, “Making Up the Audience: Spectatorship in Historical Context,” drew from her seminal work. Furman Professor Rhett Bryson also entertained us with his “Great Laugh Lecture,” a funny but important look at the way audiences respond and how actors should play the laughs.

This year’s Symposium papers covered a variety of subtopics including vaudeville, theatre fires, blackface minstrelsy, the groundbreaking run of Shuffle Along, early 20th century tent shows and theatre riots, to name a few. Among other things, I was interested (and saddened) to learn that the famous riots accompanying the premiere of Alfred Jarry’s Ubu Roi in Paris in fact never happened.

Many thanks are due to former editors Scott Phillips, J. K. Curry and Phil Hill. Hill in particular did a yeoman’s job making all the arrangements at Furman. Selected papers from this year’s event will be published in Theatre Symposium, Volume 20, “Gods and Groundlings,” due for publication in 2012.

- E. Bert Wallace, Editor

SETC Receives USITT’s Top Award

SETC was honored March 9 with the highest honor given by the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT). Executive Director Betsey Baun (above) accepted the USITT Award, given to SETC for celebrating and nurturing theatre for 62 years, at USITT’s annual conference in Charlotte, NC.

Where is the SETC Convention in 2012, 2013 and 2014?

The 2012 SETC Convention will be held in Chattanooga, TN, March 7-11. The 2013 SETC Convention will be held in Louisville, KY, March 6-10. Maybe you can help us pick where SETC goes in 2014! The site selection committee is currently scouting locations. Do you have a suggestion? E-mail betsey@setc.org or send an e-mail to our general mailbox at info@setc.org with the subject line “2014 SETC Convention Location.” Please note: Sites must have 1,000 hotel rooms and meet size requirements for banquet space, workshop rooms, auditions areas, festivals and more. An RFP is available for locations to review.

New Award Honors Tom Behm

A new SETC award named for children’s theatre pioneer Tom Behm was announced at the 2011 SETC Awards Banquet. The Tom Behm Award will provide professional development funds to people working in the Theatre for Youth field.

The award was begun with a contribution of $5,000 from John Spiegel, a professor at Piedmont College in Georgia, with the goal of raising $15,000 more by the 2012 SETC Convention. The plan is to grant the first award in 2012, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of Behm’s retirement from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where he was a professor and artistic director of the North Carolina Theatre for Young People.

Spiegel, a former student of Behm’s, initiated the award as a way of recognizing Behm’s tremendous impact as a teacher.

To contribute to the award, send donations to SETC, earmarked for the “Tom Behm Award.” For more information, e-mail Spiegel at jspiegel@piedmont.edu or SETC Executive Director Betsey Baun at betsey@setc.org.

Make Your 2012-13 SETC Nominations by July 15

Do you know someone who has the potential and the interest to become a leader in SETC? I encourage you to think about individuals you know who might be interested in taking take their service to the next level – and to consider nominating them for leadership positions.

Deadline is July 15 to submit names of nominees for SETC officers for 2012-13. Developing and nurturing future leaders is one of the most important ways that nonprofit organizations such as SETC can ensure sustainability and growth. Our nominations process gives all SETC members an opportunity to get involved in this process. If you would like to nominate someone, click here for the 2012 nomination form.

Please also take a moment on the same form to nominate someone who has provided distinguished service to SETC for the Suzanne M. Davis Award, SETC’s most prestigious award for one of its own.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at wohld@winthrop.edu.

- David Wohl, Nominations Committee Chair
2011 AWARD WINNERS

2011 Award Winners Announced at Banquet in Atlanta

Distinguished Career Award
Ben Cameron, Program Director, Arts Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Suzanne M. Davis Award
Denise Halbach, SETC Past President

Sara Spencer Child Drama Award
Betsy Bisson (right), South Carolina Children’s Theatre, with award chair Jeremy Kisling

Charles M. Getchell New Play Award
Eddie Zipperer (right), Milledgeville, GA, honored for Nicolas the Worm, with award chair Chris Hardin

High School New Play Award
Nick Meckalski (right), Madison, AL, honored for Eisegesis, with committee chair Nancy Gall-Clayton.

High School Theatre Festival
Best Production Winner: (left photo above) Ken Rusk is director of Independence, Pop. 301, West Orange High School (FL).
Best Production Runner-up: (middle photo above) Margie Timmons is director of 13, presented by Gulf Breeze (FL) High School.
Best Actress and Best Actor, sponsored by the William E. Wilson Endowment: Brooke Morris (top right photo) won for her role in Independence, Pop. 301, West Orange High School (FL); Jeremy Weiss (right) won for his role in Man of LaMancha, Albermarle High School (VA).

Community Theatre Festival
Best Production Winners: (left photo above) Two shows advance to the national AACT/Fest. Left is Tom Salter, director of Second Samuel, presented by Wetumpka Depot Players (AL). Right is Rick Kerby, director of Sunday in the Park with George, presented by Manatee Players (FL). Craig Pospisil (center) presented a cash award on behalf of Dramatists Play Service, Inc. Best Production Runner-Up: (top right photo) Lyle Tate is director of Dixie Swim Club, presented by Starkville Community Theatre (MS).
Best Actress: Dianne Dawson (not pictured), won for her role in Sunday in the Park with George, Manatee Players (FL).
Best Actor: Jonathan Conner (above) won for his role in Second Samuel, Wetumpka Depot Players (AL).

Scholarship Award Winners
(Left photo) Secondary School Scholarship: Sally Lindel (right), Mount Tabor High School, Winston-Salem, NC, with committee chair Jesse Bates. (Above photos, left to right) William E. Wilson Award: Chris Carter (right), University of Memphis, with committee chair David Giambroone; Polly Holliday Award: Savannah Harlan (right), Florence (AL) High School, with committee chair Gary Weatherly; Robert Porterfield Scholarship Award: Francesca Chilcote (right), College of William and Mary, with committee chair Pat Gagliano; Marian Smith Award: Kelsey Hunt (left), Triad Stage, Greensboro, NC, with committee member Freddy Clements. Leighton Ballew Award: No award given this year.
Ready for Work Award, Sponsored by Children's Theatre of Charlotte and SETC

Magdelaine Guichard (left), a graduate student in costume design at the Savannah College of Art and Design, and Kerry Chipman (right), a graduate student in scene design at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, received SETC's 2011 Ready for Work Award.

"The winners will get the chance of a lifetime and a kickstart to their careers," SETC Executive Director Betsey Baun said in presenting the award.

Children's Theatre of Charlotte, co-sponsor with SETC of the award this year, will provide both winners with an opportunity to design a mainstage show. Each winner also will receive $3,000.
Our next step is to ensure that our mission drives the work of our organization. Joe Kluger, associate principal of WolfBrown Consulting Group, emphasized the importance of that step in a recent speech to a group of arts organizations in Greensboro. (WolfBrown is a national firm that specializes in strategic planning, financial analysis, fundraising, leadership development and creative problem-solving for cultural nonprofits.)

SETC Has Defined Its Mission: What Happens Next?

**Important Questions to Answer**
Kluger shared a series of provocative questions that offer guidance to arts organizations in this changing economic climate. Whether you apply them to the Southeastern Theatre Conference, to your job or to other board commitments, I think you’ll find these are important questions to answer. All of the questions stress the importance of knowing, understanding and supporting the organization’s “mission.” (Questions were taken from meeting notes.)

**Mission:**
1. Does our mission still serve our needs and support our community?
2. What systems are in place to understand our relevance to our community?
3. Are there other organizations whose missions overlap that we can collaborate with?
4. How do we define and measure success in fulfilling our mission?

**Programs:**
1. Do all our programs serve our mission?
2. Which current programs are so important that we would create them if we didn’t already have them?
3. Which new programs are so innovative and compelling that we have to do them?
4. Are we able to reallocate funds to support them?
5. How do we attract customers whose budgets are shrinking?
6. How do we listen and react to audience feedback?

**Finance:**
1. How do we adjust fixed costs?
2. How do we maintain our market without cutting staff or services, with audiences eroding but fixed costs increasing?
3. Are there ways to share certain fixed costs with other organizations? (e.g., why does every organization have its own IT department?)
4. How do we build contingency into the budget?

**Now … what was that mission again?**

**The SETC Mission:**

“Connecting You to Opportunities in Theatre”

**How BSC Connects Students to ‘Opportunities in Theatre’**

Are you using SETC to connect your students to opportunities in theatre?

At Birmingham Southern College (BSC), where I teach, the theatre program has a long tradition of students attending, auditioning and securing opportunities through SETC.

We prepare students to take advantage of everything that SETC offers by making the SETC audition/interview part of our culture. Each fall we make theatre students aware of the auditions and strongly encourage them to participate. My colleagues and I make ourselves available to assist students with audition preparation.

In addition, students in our Musical Theatre I class must prepare an SETC audition and present it to the class for a grade.

Those who are interested in working as technicians and in theatre administration are encouraged to participate in SETC’s Job Contact Service. Students who have secured summer work in the past are invaluable resources for us. They really talk up the importance of participating.

Gannon Love, a senior at BSC, is a great example of the opportunities our students find through SETC. This year he auditioned for summer and year-round work at the spring convention in Atlanta, receiving 10-plus callbacks and four interviews.

“I received offers from Theatre West Virginia, The Lost Colony, Wild Adventures theme park, Nebraska Theatre Caravan’s Midwest tour of A Christmas Carol, and an opportunity to attend the Stella Adler School’s Summer Conservatory for Acting,” he says. “I accepted both the Stella Adler and Nebraska Theatre Caravan offers.”

Gannon is excited about performing next winter and looking forward to honing his skills this summer in New York. We’re happy for him. It’s a great feeling—connecting a student to opportunities in theatre.
SETC 2012 Planning Has Begun: We Need Your Input!

How You Can Help

• Do you know someone who would be a great keynote speaker or guest artist?
• Do you have a suggestion for a master class presenter?
• Do you have a play you would like to bring to the Fringe Festival?
• Do you have a workshop you would like to present at SETC 2012?
• Do you have other convention programming suggestions?

Please e-mail Steve Bayless at steveb@setc.org to suggest ideas. For more information on submitting a workshop proposal, click here. Send your proposal in soon! The deadline is earlier this year than last year: September 30, 2011.

EXCOM NEWS
by President Alan Litsey

According to SETC rules, “The President shall include a report on the proceedings of the Executive Committee [ExCom] meetings to the general membership in the SETC Newsletter.” ExCom is composed of elected officers, a division representative and a state representative. The Board of Directors, composed of elected officers plus all division chairs and all state representatives, reviews ExCom actions and has authority to establish or revise rules.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee met in Atlanta on March 2 and March 6. The following action was taken by the Board (full minutes on SETC website):

• A motion was approved to allow commercial exhibitors whose exhibition fees are paid in full to present convention sessions following prescribed guidelines.

SETC ENDOWMENT NEWS

Thanks to all listed below, who supported our scholarship awards by contributing to the SETC Endowment. The Endowment receives revenue from individual contributions, Lifetime Memberships, sales of convention gear (T-shirts and other branded SETC items), the Silent Auction and interest earned. Contributors may earmark their donations for a specific award or scholarship. A special thanks goes out to Daryl Frank for a generous contribution to the KEAP Award Fund and to Distinguished Career Award recipient Ben Cameron, who was unable to accept his honorarium and instead designated it for the KEAP Award Fund.

For more info on contributing to the SETC Endowment: www.setc.org/endowment/index.php.

Contributors:

Daryl Frank Walter Shipley
Denise Halbach Ben Cameron
Don Loeffler (donation of honorarium)

Individuals who contributed when they registered for the convention:

Krista Amico  Billicia Hines
Jerry Bangham  Anna Kurtz
Jesse Bates  Russell Luke
Mary Lynn Bates  Elaine Malone
Stephen Bayless  Mike Murphy
Ricardo Beard  Bill Murray
Jacquelyn Bush  Greg Owen
Tom Clark  Chris Rich
Sandra Cockrell  Dean Slusser
Dave Davidson  Andrew Trego
Leslie Dellinger  Kathryn Trosan
Alexa Doggett  Sarah Vanfossen
Marie-Julie Elia  Andrea Washington
Tiza Garland  Dennis Wemm
Sheila Gordon  Donna White
Janet Gray  Heather Willis
Duke Guthrie  David Wohl
Anthony Haigh  George Younts
Linda Haston  Christopher Zink
Tonya Hays

2011 Silent Auction item contributors:

Austin Peay State University Department of Theatre and Dance; Freddy Clements; Chris Collins; Florida Theatre Conference; Georgia Theatre Conference; Ron Keller; Kentucky Theatre Association/Lexington Children’s Theatre; Jennifer Matthews; North Carolina Theatre Conference; Rich Robinson; St. Olaf Kelsey Theatre; Tom Tutino.

Lucky bidders in the Silent Auction, who generated $715 for our scholarships:

Amy Anderson; Vivian Bracewell; Freddy Clements; Chris Collins; William Gamble; David Hawkins; Sherry Harper-McCombs; Keith Hight; Heather Hogg; Russell Luke; Jennifer Matthews; Karen Ordonez; Doug Savitt; Dean Slusser; Diane and Lou Szari; Donna Thomas; Donna White.

1,000-plus buyers of T-shirts, tote bags, lanyards, lapel pins, coffee mugs and mousepads: You, too, were Endowment contributors, raising $7,108 through your purchases!
Jacquie Wheeler, professor of theatre at Valdosta State University in Georgia, is one of 10 recipients of the 2011 Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award, designed to publically recognize teachers by spotlighting their impact on students. Wheeler was nominated by Debra Fordham, now an Emmy-nominated television writer.

Marlene Johnson, an assistant professor of theatre at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, is one of six recipients of a National Teaching Artist Grant from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, which provides a $2,000 grant for professional development.

Keith T. Martin, managing director of the Richmond (VA) Ballet since 2005, is joining the faculty at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, as the John M. Blackburn Distinguished Professor of Theatre. Prior to his move to Virginia, Martin was managing director at Charlotte Repertory Theatre in North Carolina.

James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA, has opened the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts (below). The multi-level center includes a 450-seat proscenium theatre, a 200-seat dance theatre, and a 150-seat studio theatre.

Atlanta
(Continued from Page 1)
“Kat Conley was FANTASTIC!”

ATLANTA AS A LOCATION FOR THE CONVENTION:
89% of survey respondents recommended returning.
“Atlanta is a really strong location for this convention in terms of amenities and facilities.”
“It makes such a huge difference when all the auditions, workshops, meetings, and callbacks can be in one hotel/convention area.”
“I think that the convention should stay in Atlanta every year. It’s centrally located in the region, and it has the venues to be able to handle the size of the convention.”

CONVENTION PROGRAMMING:
“I had a wonderful experience at the conference and learned a lot from watching the performances and listening to the comments of the adjudicators. I would attend the conference again, without hesitation.”
“SETC was a great experience that I will remember. I am sure to come back next year and bring friends along!”

EDUCATION EXPO:
“All the colleges were very accommodating and knowledgeable, answered all questions that I had, and I now know where to go for grad school.”

PROFESSIONAL COMPANY COMMENTS:
“SETC’s [auditions] are the most effective way to see a large portion of talent not easily seen in any other way.” - Steven Peterson, Maine State Musical Theatre
“We saw the best dance talent at SETC!” - Franklyn Warfield, RWS & Associates Entertainment
“SETC is the most vital and the best organized event we attend during the year. Both September and March are so helpful to us in terms of knowing the talent outside of New York. SETC is rich with talent and energy.” - J. Steven White, Harold Clurman Lab Theatre/Stella Adler Studio of Acting

In Memoriam

Arthur Lessac, a highly regarded teacher of voice, speech, singing and movement whose teaching influenced countless numbers of performers, died April 7, 2011, at the age of 101. Robin Carr, SETC’s voice and speech committee chair, was with Lessac at a workshop he taught in Croatia (below) just a month before his passing. “Assisting Arthur in Croatia was a life-changing event,” Carr says. “His energy and love for the human voice was so apparent that everyone was filled with the joy of his work. He has been one of the most influential people in the theatre, and his work will continue to be taught through his master teachers, certified trainers and practitioners.” More information: www.lessacinstitute.com.

SETC 2012
Chattanooga, TN  March 7-11

NEED TO CONTACT SETC?
Our Addresses Have Changed

Postal Mail: SETC is no longer using a post office box to receive mail. All mail should be addressed to SETC at 1175 Revolution Mill Drive, Suite 14, Greensboro, NC 27405.
E-mail: We also have changed our general e-mail account. Please delete our previous general e-mail address, setc@setc.org, from your address book. Send all general e-mail inquiries to info@setc.org.

Where to Send News
SETC News is published bimonthly for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Deadline for the next issue is June 10.
Please send news items to:
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Phone: 336-272-3645
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Web site: www.setc.org