FIND YOUR GRADUATE SCHOOL AT

LiNK  
Nov. 13-15, 2015 • Atlanta, GA  
Walk-In Registration Available: $60

WHO WILL BE RECRUITING AT LiNK?

• Faculty and representatives from 50 colleges and universities

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE AT LiNK?

• Acting Auditions: Friday Morning, Nov. 13
• Directing, Management, Administration Interviews: Friday Afternoon, Nov. 13
• Design/Tech, Production Management Interviews: Saturday, Nov. 14
• Extended Interviews: Sunday, Nov. 15

Thanks to LiNK’s platinum sponsors: Focal Press and Routledge
6 Things to Know about Getting Around in Greensboro

1. You’ll find most convention activities under one roof in the Sheraton Greensboro/Koury Convention Center.

2. The Sheraton Hotel, which is connected to the Koury Convention Center, will fill up quickly, so be sure to make reservations early if you would like a room on-site. Other hotels in the area also are offering discounted rates. Hotel registration opens Nov. 9.

3. The off-site locations for the Community Theatre and High School Theatre Festivals are only 10 minutes’ drive from the Sheraton Koury Center: at Greensboro College and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

4. Gate City Boulevard is the main thoroughfare you will follow to the festival sites. Be aware that it may not show up on some mapping sites! The name of the road has been changed recently. You may find it listed on map software as High Point Road (in the vicinity of the Sheraton Koury Center) and Lee Street (closer to the campuses of the two colleges).

5. Greensboro’s center city is easily accessible via Gate City Boulevard as well. Explore dining opportunities, quaint shops, art galleries, and the International Civil Rights Museum, located in the Woolworth’s building where North Carolina A&T State University students helped launch the sit-in movement in the 1960s.

6. Just 100 steps from the Koury Convention Center’s door is the three-story Four Seasons Mall, with a food court and numerous shopping opportunities.
Pearl Cleage, an award-winning playwright and novelist, returns to the SETC Convention in 2016 to accept SETC’s Distinguished Career Award and share inspiration with SETC members in a Saturday keynote address.

Cleage currently is in production with Tell Me My Dream, a play written for middle schoolers and their families, which also is her first show for young audiences. It had its world premiere October 31 at the Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre, where Cleage is playwright in residence. The play takes the audience “back to the time before Instagram and ear buds, when friendship could build a bridge to freedom,” the Alliance says.

Cleage, who is based in Atlanta, has garnered wide acclaim for her work from audiences and critics alike. Her play Flyin’ West was the most produced new play in the country in 1994. She also is a best-selling author whose first novel, What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day, was an Oprah Book Club pick and spent nine weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. Her other works include the plays Blues for an Alabama Sky and A Song for Coretta and the books Seen It All and Done the Rest and Baby Brother’s Blues. A captivating speaker as well as a compelling writer, Cleage enthralled SETC members when she delivered a keynote address at the 2011 SETC Convention.

Look for more about the amazing Pearl Cleage as we get closer to the convention!
Join Us for the Small Producing Theatre Forum: ‘Building a Thriving Theatre’
9 a.m. - Noon, Saturday, March 5, 2016

Is your theatre stuck in a rut?
Are you having trouble determining the next step?
How can you get beyond your current economic plateau?
What does your theatre need to do to move to the next level?

These are just some of the questions that will be explored at the SETC Convention by a panel of producers from professional and community theatres that have managed to make the jump from small time, to “bigger” time, or even to multi-million dollar operational budgets.

Join them from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 5, 2016, to learn how these panelists have successfully built and sustained thriving theatres.

After their panel presentation, each of the producers will hold a roundtable discussion centering on a particular challenge that growing theatres face.

Current suggestions for these breakout sessions include:
- Capacity building: overused term or savvy strategy?
- Unusual fundraising methods that can pay off
- Dealing with restricted venues – or no venue
- Expanding your audience
- Managing quality while promoting growth

a topic for discussion at the forum!

What challenges does your theatre face? What subjects would you like to see discussed in roundtable breakout sessions? Send your topic suggestions to Susan Smith at ldsmith@comporium.net before Nov. 20.

More info: Email ldsmith@comporium.net
Bring YOUR Show to the SETC Fringe Festival

What Is It?
The SETC Fringe Festival provides a venue where SETC members and constituents can experiment and present theatrical works. Performances are held over two days (Friday and Saturday) during the annual SETC Convention. Shows include professional theatre performances, one-person shows, experimental theatre, theatre for youth productions and state festival runner-up performances.

How Do I Apply?
For application and instructions, visit: www.setc.org/fringefestival

When Do I Apply?
Now! The application deadline is Nov. 15, 2015.

Questions?
Contact SETC VP of Programming Pat Gagliano at patrick@setc.org.

More info: www.setc.org/convention

Get VIP Treatment at the SETC Convention!

Would you like to fast-track Registration, sit closer to the keynote speakers and receive reserved banquet seating? Then you may want to purchase our Special Access Pass. We are offering a limited quantity of 50 passes, at a cost of $50 each. Sign up when you register at www.setc.org/register by Jan. 28, 2016.

What perks does the Special Access Pass offer?

- No-wait badge pickup at Registration
- Unique badge distinction
- Early seating at keynotes
- 2016 SETC T-shirt
- Social media shoutout
- Reserved seating for SETC meal functions (does not include cost)
- 2 free beverage tickets

Volunteer at the SETC Convention – and Attend Free!

Each year, more than 100 people volunteer their time at the SETC Convention. It’s fun – and you can earn free convention registration!

All you have to do is commit to volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours at assigned times during the 2016 SETC Convention in Greensboro, NC, and your registration is free.

Volunteers must be current SETC members at the time of the convention (Students: $44; Individuals: $77). Positions are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

To find out more about the opportunities and benefits of volunteering, visit www.setc.org/volunteer.

More info: www.setc.org/special-access-pass
11th ANNUAL TEACHERS INSTITUTE
The Power of Puppet Play:
Transformation for the Classroom and the Stage
Presenter: Aretta Baumgartner, Center for Puppetry Arts

9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Wednesday, March 2, 2016
Sheraton Greensboro/Koury Convention Center
Greensboro, NC

Pre-Registration Deadline:
Jan. 28, 2016

How can puppetry in the classroom help teachers educate students on global topics? What would puppetry add to your next stage production?

Join Aretta Baumgartner, Education Director of Atlanta’s renowned Center for Puppetry Arts, at the 2016 SETC Teachers Institute and learn how to open new doors to creativity through the use of puppets in the classroom and on stage.

The annual Teachers Institute, which takes place on the opening day of the SETC Convention, is a daylong seminar held separately from the convention. It is open to teachers at all levels, those studying to be teachers, and individuals working in any area of theatre. Registration is separate from the convention and includes a hot lunch.

More info and Teachers Institute registration: www.setc.org/teachers-institute-convention

Aretta Baumgartner: Special Presenter, SETC Convention

In addition to leading the Teachers Institute, Aretta Baumgartner (left) will explore the origins of puppetry and its timeless association with theatre in a special presentation open to all attendees at the 2016 SETC Convention. Don’t miss this special event at 7 p.m., Wednesday March 2, 2016.
Hiring through SETC: Bigfork Summer Playhouse

‘We feel that SETC has a well-run audition, and we know that we will always see exceptional talent there.’

- Brach Thomson, Associate Producer

SETC recently caught up with Brach Thomson, associate producer at Bigfork Summer Playhouse in Bigfork, MT. Below are excerpts from the interview.

When was your theatre founded? And what is your mission?

Our theatre was founded by Dr. Firman Bo Brown in 1960. Our mission is to produce the highest quality musical theatre entertainment and to have our company members feel like they learned something and would like to return for another season. We consider ourselves a training theatre and hope everyone who works with us learns more about themselves, along with being able to perform in any form of theatre after one summer with us. We are pleased to say that most of our “alums” go back to school, telling about their season with the Playhouse and making recommendations that their peers try out for Bigfork.

Tell us about the types of shows you produce.

We perform large-scale musicals. Last season, our shows included The Addams Family, Man of LaMancha, Annie, Footloose, Smokey Joe’s Café and a ‘50s-’60s revue. All of our shows are performed in a proscenium theatre with 435 seats.

Where do you find actors and crew? Are they all paid professionals?

All positions are paid positions. We find actors and crew through open auditions and through SETC, UPTA and MWTA.

How long have you been involved with SETC? And how does SETC assist you in your operations as a theatre?

We have been attending the SETC Convention for 25 years. The Professional Auditions and the Theatre Job Fair are where we get a lot of our acting and technical talent each season.

What is the most unusual and interesting fact about your theatre?

There are several unusual facts about Bigfork. It originally started in a community hall. It has been run by one family for over 50 years. And we have an annual softball game, where alumni and the current company team up against the town of Bigfork.
Since earning her degree in musical theatre from Plymouth State University in 2008, Laura Cole has appeared in numerous shows, on national tours and in theme park revues. She now lives on the island of Maui in Hawaii, where she performs often in shows at Maui OnStage.

What types of shows do you like to do best?
Musicals! I love, love, love singing.

How has SETC assisted you as a theatre professional?
I participated in two SETC Professional Auditions – in 2009 and 2010. Through my involvement with SETC, I learned how to market myself and how to stand out, be myself, and choose material for ME that displays my strengths – not go in with something I felt was a struggle. And I got jobs!

Where do you work most often in theatre?
I have worked in tons of theme park revues and toured with national children’s theatre groups. I toured with Missoula Children’s Theatre from 2010 to 2011, performing in and directing Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pinocchio and The Frog Prince. In fall 2013, I toured with ArtsPower National Touring Theatre as Miss Clavel in Madeline and the Bad Hat. I also have performed for a theme park production company called Encore, International, based out of Indiana. Working for them, I sang in a holiday quartet at a Six Flags in upstate New York and was a singing and dancing witch in a Halloween pop revue show called Frightmares at a Six Flags in Maryland. I am also actively involved in a theatre/leadership skills summer camp called Camp CenterStage.

Where are you currently appearing on stage?
Since moving to Maui in January 2014, I have been performing with a company called Maui OnStage. I am currently in Elf. Also at Maui OnStage, I played Aunt Ev in The Miracle Worker, Vivienne in Legally Blonde, and Dolly Tate in Annie Get Your Gun.

What do you do when you’re not working in the theatre?
I nanny. I am an avid runner. And I snorkel! I also work as a skills trainer for a young girl with cerebral palsy.
Lexington Children’s Theatre Expands Artistic Spectrum with Ready for Work Winners

Joshua Winchester is one of two SETC Ready for Work Award winners chosen in 2015 by Lexington Children’s Theatre in Lexington, KY. He recently completed the costume design for The Adventures of Madeline (left). The second winner, Joscelyne Oktabetz, recently began costume design for the theatre’s world premiere of Puss in Boots. Below, Vivian Snipes, artistic director of Lexington Children’s Theatre, discusses the value of the Ready for Work Award and the qualities she seeks in choosing a winner at SETC’s Design Competition.

What has Joshua Winchester brought to the design for The Adventures of Madeline?
Joshua made a suggestion at our initial design meeting that we handle costumes in a very painterly manner, with wide brush strokes represented by color blocking. This became a key for scenic, lighting, properties and director alike. I freely admit that I fell in love with his final choices for the Spanish Ambassador, his wife, and their son Pepito, especially Pepito’s quick-change full torero costume (shown above left).

You have now worked with four SETC Ready for Work Awardees. What keeps you and Lexington Children’s Theatre coming back as a sponsor?
Talented designers are available aplenty in the Ready for Work competition. More importantly, as a values-based organization devoted to artistic discovery, Ready for Work fits our mission and vision statements to a tee. Guest designers, like those who join us through Ready for Work, allow LCT to share a wider spectrum of artistic perspectives and design styles with our audience.

What do you, as the artistic director of a Ready for Work company, look for as you evaluate entries in the Design Competition?
What I look for from each display varies and depends on the discipline from which we hope to select our guest designers. However, certain things are universal. I evaluate the overall artistry of the display – it speaks to how the designer will approach creating a world onstage. What details are included? Is the display utilitarian or artful? Is it focused and well thought out or last-minute and haphazard? Is there great attention to detail in layout and construction? Does it draw my eye in a logical progression? How much (or little) information was included? All of these things hint at what an artist will bring to the design process.

Read more of our interview with Vivian Snipes at www.setc.org/ready-for-work-lexington-childrens-theatre.
What IS the SETC Endowment?

by John F. Spiegel, Vice-President of Finance

Have you seen the tab on SETC’s website asking you to give to the Endowment? How about the Silent Auction table at the spring convention? Have you wondered what the SETC Endowment is?

I am glad that you asked. The SETC Endowment provides up-and-coming artists with support through our many scholarships. The money raised for the Endowment is not used for daily expenses or for capital expenditures. It is grown through investment to be given away to these deserving, developing artists. Each dollar raised for the Endowment is invested to raise even more. SETC earns roughly 5 percent per year on every dollar raised for the Endowment. A gift of $20 will grow to as much as $50 over 20 years. Your gift of even a dollar will raise money for the rest of the life of SETC. While SETC loves and appreciates our large donors, every single person and every single gift makes a difference.

So how do you give to the SETC Endowment? There are some very simple ways:

• Go to the SETC website, scroll down the home page and click the “donate” button. Or just click here: www.setc.org/donate-options.
• Make a donation on your convention registration form.
• Sign up for Amazon Smile (it’s free), and click for SETC to be your charity. Every time you purchase through Smile, Amazon will donate a percentage to SETC.
• Come past the Silent Auction table at the SETC Convention in March and make a bid on a wonderful piece of theatre.

It really is that easy. Giving to the Endowment is not glamorous, sexy or fame-inducing. It is, however, the single best way to assure SETC’s future and help the next generation of theatre artists. I gave to the Endowment. Did you?

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SETC ENDOWMENT


More info: www.setc.org/about/endowment
The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee met in Greensboro on September 11 and 12, 2015. Actions taken by the Executive Committee or the Board include:

- Approved motion to amend the May 2015 ExCom Minutes.
- Approved motion to approve the Past Presidents Manual, the Personnel Advisory Committee Manual, the Publications Committee Manual, the Theatre Symposium Manual, the Vice-President of Programming Manual, the Stage Management Committee Manual, Scholarship Procedures Committee Manual, the Halbach Award Committee Manual and the Secondary Division Manual.
- Approved motion to suspend Rule I.9, allowing for the formation of two separate committees: Acting and Directing.
- Approved motion to amend Rule 2.11 to reflect the change from Acting & Directing Committee to Acting Committee.
- Approved the creation of a Rule 2.14 which acknowledges a Directing Committee.
- Approved motion to create a task force to explore SETC taking on the Institute of Outdoor Theatre.
- Approved motion to accept the audit.
- Approved motion to change Rule 1.18, Procedures for Updating Manuals.

Have you registered for SETC 2016?

Convention registration officially opened on Oct. 15. Here are additional dates to know:

- Hotel reservations open: Nov. 9, 2015
- Early-bird deadline: Dec. 18, 2015
- Pre-registration closes: Jan. 28, 2016
- Convention schedule available: February 2016
- Convention app available: February 2016
Play It Forward: Growing a Theatre-Going Audience

Did you watch this season’s premiere of NBC’s *Undateable* on Oct. 9? (Excuse me, I should call it by its full title, *Undateable Live.*) I didn’t either. I was in rehearsal when it aired. However, through the power of Hulu, I watched it the other day. I wanted to see what all the hype was about.

It is clear that the appeal is in the live aspect of the show. The *Friends*-like story about a group of people trying to navigate a social life is fairly common fare. The line-up of stand-up comics is fun, but is it worth all of the buzz? Maybe not.

What makes this worth viewing?
I posed that question to students in one of my classes. They said the draw of the show is the danger of the live performance: no second takes, no safety net if you break character, the raw energy of the live performance. It’s fascinating. These actors are doing their work right there in front of you, right NOW! I let the conversation continue until the irony of the situation hit the class like a ton of bricks: this feeling of here and now is the thrill of live theatre.

Two and a half million people watched the live season premiere of this show to see what would happen during a live episode. My question is: How do we get people – especially younger adults – to experience that live quality in person instead of in front of the TV? How do we get them into theatres, where they don’t have to settle for the statement, “It’s almost like you’re right there!” because they will, indeed, be right there? That is our challenge.

Are you doing something special at your theatre to attract audience members in their 20s? Has it been successful?

Send your ideas for building a younger theatre audience via email to tiza@setc.org. We’ll share some of the best ones in the next newsletter, along with a technique I am using with a class I teach at the University of Florida.

Share ideas for building a 20-something Audience
SETC Remains Financially Sound in Uncertain Economy

The 2014/2015 fiscal picture for SETC is strong.

Through excellent fiscal management by the organization’s leadership – Executive Director Betsey Horth and Past President Jack Benjamin, along with the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Finance Committee and Endowment Committee – as well as the Central Office staff, SETC has again remained fiscally sound during shaky financial times.

Recently, the Finance and Endowment Committees met with financial professionals who cautioned us to remain conservative with our Endowment and to be aware that a major market correction is coming. Having watched the markets in September swing wildly, we agreed that the professionals seem on target. SETC has moved the organizational investments to a very conservative posture.

With this said, SETC is well-supported through contingency funding as well as through the Endowment. The financial future of SETC is a bright one. We look forward to an excellent year.
‘As Good Luck Would Have It …’
Shakespeare Anniversary Leads to Convention Theme

Each SETC Convention creates its own sense of energy and programming. We don’t seek themes; we let them find us! And we keep the event open to more than one. This year, honoring the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death emerged as a potential theme. And with that, a new direction developed.

First, a Keynote
Jim Warren (right) of the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA, will present the first keynote of 2016 at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2. Thank you, Sarah McCarroll and the History, Literature and Criticism Committee for helping to make this possible.

Then, More Programming
This year’s SETC Convention also will feature a wide variety of Shakespeare-oriented workshops on topics ranging from scenic design to music construction. Here are just a few:

- Shakespeare Monologue Jam Session: Bring 10 lines!
- Devising Shakespeare: New Approaches to Staging the Bard
- “Where are we now?”: Scenic Design for Shakespeare
- Dissect the Text: Mining Meaning and Action in Shakespeare’s Bloody Captain
- Creating Songs from Shakespeare: Music Construction for Non-Composers
- Shakespeare in Motion

Some Playfulness, Too
This year’s SETC T-shirts will celebrate famous quotes from Shakespeare … the ones we are still saying today, like the quote at the top of this column! Look for the T-shirts at Convention Gear during the SETC Convention, and pick up your favorite to commemorate the Bard throughout the year.

And Another Theme Is Developing!
A second theme is building momentum as well. Check out Page 6 of this newsletter for a story on Teachers Institute and convention presentations by Aretta Baumgartner, Education Director of Atlanta’s Center for Puppetry Arts. Look for more on puppetry in the coming weeks!

More info: www.setc.org/convention
Beyond the ADA: Let’s Create a More Universal Theatre

Before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed 25 years ago, most street corners did not have slopes to accommodate wheelchairs. Public buildings didn’t have wheelchair ramps or automatic door openers. Most doorknobs weren’t levers. Today, many builders are going beyond ADA requirements to embrace a concept called “universal design,” the creation of products and spaces in a way that they can be used by the widest range of people possible.

After seeing Deaf West’s production of Spring Awakening on Broadway in October, I think that a more “universal theatre” is a possibility. This production seamlessly incorporates American Sign Language (ASL). It doesn’t detract at all from the experience for those, like me, without any hearing impairment. To quote one of the actors, when I questioned him at the stage door, “It opened up a whole new world for me.”

ADA regulations address some aspects of programmatic access, but typically the access is separate and marginalizes the people with disabilities. A sign interpreter off to the side of the stage is far different from ASL being part of a show. Similarly, audio description for people with visual impairment creates a separate experience for them. Also, accessible shows are usually on specific nights, not for the run of the show.

It is time for accommodations to stop being afterthoughts. It is time to do better than the minimum that the ADA requires. It is time for playwrights, producers and directors to add to their creative repertoire and, like Deaf West has done with Spring Awakening, create a more universal theatre.

More info: springawakeningthemusical.com
New Books


In Memoriam

Frankie Day, 59, died Thursday, Oct. 22, 2015, in Graham, NC, after a battle with stomach and ovarian cancer. She was a professor, theatre program director and executive director of the Paul Robeson Theatre at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, NC. After earning a theatre degree at South Carolina State University, she went on to earn an MFA in acting/directing from Southern Illinois University before launching a career as a model and an actress in Atlanta. After joining the A&T faculty more than 28 years ago, she became known on campus as “The Mother of the Theatre” for her nurturing attitude and dedication to her students. A longtime member of SETC, she was the current president of Alpha Psi Omega, the national theatre honor society, and a past board member of NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre).

Lara Brier St. Peter, 44, died Sept. 20, 2015, in Clemson, SC, after a long battle against Stage 4 breast cancer. Lara, who had an undergraduate degree in theatre from Christopher Newport University and an MFA in voice and speech from Virginia Commonwealth University, was known for her positive attitude, sense of humor and strong mentoring skills. She taught most recently at Anderson University, where she was named the university’s Best Adjunct of the Year in 2014. Lara and her husband, Rick St. Peter, were both SETC members and attended the 2015 SETC Convention in Chattanooga with their children, Olivia and Aidan. A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, at University Lutheran Church in Clemson. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to help offset costs of Lara’s treatment at www.gofundme.com/7isbg0.

HAVE A QUESTION FOR SETC CENTRAL OFFICE?
Find the right contact to answer your question

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