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Your Connection to Advanced Theatre Degrees

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Walk-In Registration Available: $75

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More info: www.setc.org/link
From an early age, Alice Ripley knew she wanted to be a performer. “You just know it’s your destiny, that you will die without mastering your expression and finding your stage, so you go for it with everything you’ve got,” she says.

That’s exactly what Ripley did, scoring her first Broadway role in 1993 as one of the original cast members of The Who’s Tommy, just seven years after earning a BFA in musical theatre from Kent State University in Ohio. Since then, Ripley has worked in regional theatre, Off-Broadway and on Broadway, winning a Tony nomination for her portrayal of a conjoined twin in the Broadway show Side Show and a Tony Award for her portrayal of Diana in Next to Normal. In addition, she is a singer and songwriter and has appeared in a number of films and television shows, including a 2013 appearance as herself on the hit TV show 30 Rock, where she takes a fake Tony Award away from series star Jane Krakowski. “On 30 Rock, it was fun to play myself and be the butt of the joke,” she says.

She just finished filming an episode of a new Netflix series Girlboss, in which she plays the mother of the series star. It will premiere in April, shortly after the SETC Convention. In addition, Ripley recently won two acting awards for her work in Sugar!, an indie movie that is currently touring the festival circuit. Ripley plays the wife of a Senate candidate who secretly pursues her dream of being a rock-and-roll singer.

In her SETC Convention keynote, Ripley will provide advice for actors from the acting book she is writing, The 3 Courageous Cs of Masterful Acting (Community, Craft, Commitment). In addition to the recommendations she will share from her book, Ripley offers the following words of encouragement to aspiring musical theatre performers: “Never give up on your wildest dreams, even if no one supports you. Eventually they will.”
If you watched the goons and the newspaper boys duke it out in Newsies or saw the musical version of Disney’s Aladdin currently playing on Broadway, then you have witnessed the impressive fight direction skills of J. Allen Suddeth.

Suddeth, ranked as one of 16 recognized Fight Masters in the United States by the Society of American Fight Directors, directed the fight scenes for both of those productions, along with a long list of other Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theatre shows and more than 750 television programs.

He will bring his passion for stage combat to the 2017 SETC Convention in Lexington, KY, where he will deliver a Friday keynote presentation on the rise of stage combat in American theatre and in actor training programs.

“I have a unique perspective, having been part of it and watching it grow from a small group of interested parties into a nationwide movement specialty,” Suddeth says.

After graduating from Ohio University in 1974 with a BFA in acting, Suddeth set out to be an actor. He soon was performing in New York, in regional theatre and on TV. But after he delved into fight direction, he found his niche – and the offers for fight direction work began outpacing the ones for acting jobs.

“People were fighting for my [stage combat] services, both in theatre and television,” Suddeth says. “When I was about 30 years old, I made the choice to brand myself full-time as a fight director and withdrew honorably from Equity. I never looked back.”

READ MORE from Suddeth, including his take on the challenges of fight direction in Newsies and Aladdin, in an online Q&A here.
Experience Toy Theatre with Guest Artist Robert Kallos

Learn how to use toy theatre as a teaching tool in the classroom at SETC’s 2017 Teachers Institute. Robert Kallos (left), a Dallas-based technical theatre teacher, will take participants on a “speed theatre” excursion into the toy theatre process he uses to inspire understanding of theatre in students.

Toy theatre, or figurative theatre, is an art form dating to the 1800s that involves creating miniature stages, with actors and all the design elements. It has broad applications for teaching middle and high school students about theatre, Kallos says.

Here’s how toy theatre is used in Kallos’ classroom

First, Kallos says, the students create a miniature theatre. “I really do not worry about the exact scale – I just want the students engaged in the thinking about how to build the environment for a story and how to execute it. They are required to perform for first graders to get feedback from an audience and then perform for their peers. Doing several performances helps them to learn, to make changes, and to grow with the performance. The ability to engage their design as actors also helps them to understand the consequences of their choices. When the students have completed their performances and demonstrate the skills for technical theatre, then I begin to work with them to design to scale.”

The value of toy theatre, Kallos says, is that it provides a way to “teach tech students the whole design experience from conception to build in ways they can accomplish it. Students learn how to make artistic choices, and then they see the consequences of their choices.”

Here’s what your ‘speed theatre’ experience will be like

Teachers Institute participants will write scripts based on fairy or folk tales, create story boards, design the sets, lights and costumes, rehearse and perform their plays – all in 90 minutes. Kallos says teachers will learn how to use toy theatre in the classroom and gain an understanding that “all students have the ability to make good choices given the opportunity to have a hands-on project with feedback. Students need to experience what it takes to support the narrative.”

More info: setc.org/teachers-institute-convention
OSHA Training for Entertainment Industry Offered at SETC Convention

Do you or members of your staff need OSHA training specific to the live entertainment industry? You can get the training you need by coming early to the 2017 SETC Convention.

The OSHA 10-Hour General Training for the Entertainment Industry course will be offered Tuesday, Feb. 28 and Wednesday, March 1 at the site of the SETC Convention in Lexington, KY. The training sessions are from noon to 9 p.m. on Tuesday and from 8 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday.

This program provides training for workers and employers on the recognition, avoidance, abatement and prevention of safety and health hazards in workplaces. The program also provides information on workers’ rights, employer responsibilities and how to file a complaint. The modules have been formatted for the live entertainment industry by members of the ICAP (IATSE Craft Advancement Committee) as a part of the OSHA/USITT/IATSE Alliance.

What is the cost?
$30, which covers the OSHA Training booklet and OSHA membership card.

How do I register?
If you are an SETC member attending the 2017 SETC Convention, you should register for this training session online with your SETC account. If you would like to attend this training without signing up for the convention, please call the SETC office at 336-272-3645. The deadline to pre-register is Jan. 27, 2017.
SETC Convention: Want to Go in Style? Or on the Cheap?

Most SETC members pay the normal registration fees so they can enjoy the traditional SETC Convention experience. But some are looking for a little more – and are happy to pay extra to go in style. Still more are looking for a way to attend on the cheap. We have options for them, too!

► PAY $50 EXTRA, AND YOU’RE A CONVENTION VIP!

For $50, you can purchase a special access pass which gives you a long list of perks at the 2017 SETC Convention. But hurry! Only 50 of these passes are available. Perks include:

• Special VIP badge pickup at Registration (no waiting in long lines!)
• Unique badge distinction
• Early seating in reserved section for keynote speakers
• Reserved seating for Friday luncheon and/or Saturday banquet dinner (does not include the price of admission)
• 2017 SETC T-shirt
• Two free beverage tickets usable at SETC-sponsored events
• Social media shout-out

More info: www.setc.org/special-access-pass

► VOLUNTEER – AND GET FREE REGISTRATION!

Commit to volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours at assigned times during the 2017 SETC Convention, and your registration is free! To qualify, you must be a current SETC member at the time of the convention (Students: $44; Individuals: $77; Seniors: $55). If you are interested, don’t delay. Positions are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Each year, more than 100 people volunteer their time at the SETC Convention.

More info: www.setc.org/volunteer

More info: www.setc.org/convention
Hiring through SETC: Prather Entertainment

‘SETC consistently runs a very organized and professional audition. We have always found great talent at the SETC Professional Auditions, and I hire many actors from these auditions.’  - Brian Enzman, Artistic Producer

SETC recently caught up with Brian Enzman, artistic producer at Prather Entertainment. Below are excerpts from the interview.

When was your theatre founded? And what is your mission?
Prather Entertainment’s first theatre, the Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre, opened in 1987 in Lancaster, PA. It was followed by the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, in Fort Myers, FL, in 1993. In 2007, we added a national touring division. Our mission is to provide quality, live theatre at an affordable price to our guests in Pennsylvania, Florida and across the country.

Tell us about the types of shows you produce.
We produce mainly musicals, with plays presented occasionally. We also produce four children’s theatre musicals each year. At our Florida location, we also produce small musicals and comedies in a black box space called The Off Broadway Palm.

What types of theatres/stages do you have?
All stages are proscenium. The Dutch Apple seats 330, Broadway Palm seats 450 and The Off Broadway Palm seats 100.

What are you currently producing?
Anything Goes at Dutch Apple, Evita at Broadway Palm and The Nerd at The Off Broadway Palm. The 2017 national tour of Pippin will hit the road in January.

What other opportunities for work and development do you provide?
If positions are available, actors are able to work in the box office, serve as hosts or hostesses, serve in the dining room, or work on the tech crew during changeovers when not performing.

How long have you been involved with SETC?
The patriarch of the company, Tom Prather, started attending SETC auditions in the early 1990s. I have attended the fall SETC auditions for over 20 years, and I occasionally attend the spring auditions. We have been very grateful to find fantastic talent at both.
Stephen Charles Turner has worked professionally as an actor since 1999. In addition to winning roles at numerous theatres in Colorado, he has performed with Prather Entertainment as well as in national tours. This was his first year attending the SETC Fall Professional Auditions.

What types of shows do you like to do best?
I prefer musicals of all styles.

Where do you work most often in theatre?
I got my first gig at Boulder’s Dinner Theatre in 1999. Over the next seven years, I worked in Colorado only. In 2006, I started working for Prather Entertainment around the country. I moved my base to Phoenix in 2007 and stayed there until 2011, when I booked the North American tour of Fiddler on the Roof with Troika. When the tour closed in 2012, I moved back to Colorado and have based myself here ever since.

Did you get a job at SETC’s Fall Auditions?
I got two callbacks. It may be that I’m booked by companies in Colorado before any companies that called me back at SETC hire me. It’s all about who offers what first. But what SETC has done for me is lifted that feeling that if I’m not hired in Colorado, I’ll have to get a regular job or sit on unemployment for an extended period. It has made me feel more secure in the larger market.

One thing that I really liked about SETC’s auditions was the “The Stage is Yours!” event [a social gathering where auditionees also can display their talent onstage]. If I were to come again, I would use that time to showcase special skills that I wouldn’t plan on utilizing in my official audition. Those of us who didn’t take advantage were missing out on other opportunities, I believe.

Where are you currently appearing on stage?
I just started rehearsals for A Christmas Story at the Midtown Arts Center in Fort Collins, CO. I’ll be playing Bad Santa and Schwartz’s mother.

More info: www.setc.org/auditions
Need Work? Need Employees?
Visit SETC’s New, Improved Job Board

SETC has just launched a new, streamlined Theatre Job Board. This easy-to-navigate online job listing includes offstage, backstage, front-of-house, box office, technical, creative, administrative and educational job openings, as well as audition notices.

All SETC members have access to the job board and receive emails alerting them to new Theatre Job Board postings. Jobs can be posted by theatre organizations from around the world, creating a large pool of available jobs in one location. SETC member organizations benefit from discounted rates on their job postings.

**Employers can:**
- Post jobs
- Search and contact candidates
- View resumes
- Receive discounts as SETC organizational members
- Upgrade from a standard listing to a featured listing for greater exposure
- Easily add their logos to listings by upgrading to a featured ad

**Job candidates can**
- View jobs
- Apply for jobs
- Search for jobs by area, category and employer
- Create resumes
- Bookmark listings
- Post photos, resumes, videos and website links

If you haven’t visited the Theatre Job Board recently, take a minute now to peruse the opportunities at theatrejobboard.setc.org.

More info: theatrejobboard.setc.org
Meet Clay Thornton, SETC’s New Marketing Manager

Strong marketing expertise and an easy familiarity with the world of theatre. Those are two of the key attributes that Clay Thornton brings to his new job as marketing manager at SETC.

Since joining the organization on Sept. 1, Clay has leaped in feet first, attending SETC’s Fall Auditions and Board Meetings soon after arriving and more recently visiting the annual conference of the Institute of Outdoor Theatre, which SETC will acquire in 2017.

“I look forward to learning all that I can about our constituents so that we can provide them with the resources they need and so we can encourage as many avenues of participation as possible,” Clay says.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?
No doubt it is the subject matter that I enjoy and appreciate most here at SETC. Theatre is ultimately storytelling at its core and so, as the primary SETC marketer, I get to tell SETC’s story. It makes for great job satisfaction.

What drew you to SETC and this job?
At the beginning of my career, I worked for over a decade at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as the art director in their public relations office, and I really enjoyed the theatre-centric and educational aspects of the position. I learned about the SETC organization while working at UNCSA. When I heard recently about the opening at SETC, I was interested in delving back into marketing the theatre arts.

What did you do prior to joining SETC?
I have been involved with marketing products and services for 30 years. Over that time, I have worked with companies, ad agencies and organizations to promote everything from tree care products to ERP software.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
I enjoy working and playing in the great outdoors with a camera in tow. My wife Amy and I also love to travel and spend time with our two grown daughters.
New Award Offered for Design-Tech Students

Are you an undergrad or graduate student in design or technical direction? Would you like some extra money to further your skills? Then you may want to apply for SETC’s newest award, the John Spiegel Award, which provides $1,000 for a design student to spend on tools or supplies to aid in the study of their craft. The award was made possible by an SETC Endowment donation from John Spiegel (above), an assistant professor of theatre at Piedmont College in Georgia, who created the award in honor of his father, also named John Spiegel.

Summary of Actions Taken by ExCom, Board of Directors

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee met in Atlanta on September 9 and 10, 2016. Actions taken by the Executive Committee or the Board include:

- Approved motion to accept ExCom Minutes from May 2016.
- Approved motion recommending that the Board approve changes to Article X, Section 4.
- Approved motion recommending the Board’s ratification of the Institute of Outdoor Theatre Transfer Agreement.
- Approved motion to change the Arts Administration Interest Group to an Ad Hoc Committee.
- Approved motion to create the Women in Theatre Interest Group.
- Approved motion to amend Rule 4.9, Davis Award.
- Approved motion to amend Article X, Section 6; Article XI, Section 5, Part 2; and Article XII, Section 2, Part 5 of the Bylaws. These changes will be voted on at the Business Meeting in March.
- Approved motion to accept audit.
- Approved motion to accept the amended FY2017 budget.
- Approved motion to transfer $50,000 from operating reserves to our general unallocated budget.
- Approved motion to approve Board of Directors meeting minutes from March 2016.

See full minutes on the SETC website at www.setc.org/leadership/minutes-archives
Theatre: It’s Not Just Great Preparation for Other Careers

Why do we have to defend a life in theatre? Last spring a discussion erupted in my class about the choice to major in theatre. Many of my students admitted that they feel a need to defend or explain their choice to pursue theatre as a career.

My advice to them? Stop making excuses for your choice. Pre-law students don’t feel a need to defend their choice of major. In fact, many people will go out of their way to praise the choice of the pre-law, pre-med, business or even forestry student.

Yes, theatre students have marketable skills . . .
At the high school level, an interest in theatre is often defended by stating that participation in theatre will help in nearly every other job or field. It’s noted that people involved in theatre understand true collaboration, know how to be flexible or adaptable, are often quick studies, have a lot of experience in creative problem-solving, are able to take critiques and improve or change a project or situation, know how to work within a budget, and can be depended upon to meet deadlines. (After all, we are not in the business of postponing opening night!)

But why make that the point of getting a theatre degree?
I wonder why we feel the need to excuse the choice to go into theatre by stating that it supports other jobs or professions. The reason for suggesting that theatre prepares students for other fields may be to placate parents, who may worry that their child is going to enter the labor force in an industry where finding work may be difficult and the average starting salary may be low. The fact is, many will be self-employed and work via independent contracts. If the measure of success includes having a career where people feel they have a purpose and they are making an impact on the world, then the numbers on the paycheck should not determine if the choice of major is valuable. Sure, one wants to have a realistic expectation regarding employment and wages, but the value of committing to a life in the arts is unquantifiable.

When will theatre be enough?
Or, more poignantly, isn’t a life in theatre more than that? Are we teaching ourselves and our students to discredit the art by identifying it as a means to an end rather than an end itself? Can’t we encourage our students to study theatre for the sake of theatre? Isn’t it enough to say, “I want an education in art in order to be an educated and informed artist?” Why can’t we say, “I am a theatre major in order to have a life in theatre”?

More info: Email tiza@setc.org
SETC’s Financial Picture Is Strong

The past decade has been fiscally challenging for many nonprofit arts organizations. But I’m very pleased to report that SETC has continued to steadily increase its revenues and services to members while keeping dues and registration costs at a very reasonable level.

As the audit points out (summary at right), SETC’s FY 2016 revenues exceeded its expenses. As has been the case with some previous surpluses, the Finance Committee recommended that $50,000 be transferred to the SETC General Unallocated Endowment Fund. The Executive Committee approved this transfer in September.

So, the bottom line is that we’re in great financial shape, and there is no reason to believe that things will change radically in FY 2017. I’m certainly proud to be part of an organization that has kept its membership dues and convention registration fees lower than similar entities and one that is still committed to providing increased and diverse services to its members. But we must always be cognizant of financial challenges that may lie ahead. I’m convinced, however, that SETC will maintain its financial strength and vitality and continue to build on past successes through strong leadership, effective communication with its members, and continuous self-study and assessment.

See you in Lexington in March.

Audit Summary
Southeastern Theatre Conference, Inc.
Schedule of Revenues and Expenses – Cash Basis
Year Ended June 30, 2016

INCOME
Membership Dues 255,095
Committees and Projects 67,969
Festivals 3,896
Professional Auditions 172,630
Southern Theatre 59,225
Convention 619,449
Contributions 39,004
Other 14,294
Investment Income 12,202
Gain on Investment Sales 141,035
TOTAL: 1,384,799

EXPENSES
Awards 27,010
Committees and Projects 36,692
Festivals 14,085
Professional Auditions 142,149
Southern Theatre 72,952
SETC News 12,050
Convention 113,313
Central Office 612,857
Officers’ Expense 27,709
Management Fees 23,741
Credit Card Discount 31,075
TOTAL: 1,113,633

REVENUE OVER EXPENSES: 271,166

Copies of the audit are available at the SETC Central Office by request.
SETC, IOT Collaborate on Transition

We have officially begun the Institute of Outdoor Theatre’s transition year, which will end July 1, 2017 with the transfer of its operations and governance to SETC.

During this transition year, we are exchanging information, learning the nuances and differences between the organizations and, most importantly, discovering how SETC can preserve the identity of the Institute of Outdoor Theatre under new management.

A few highlights from our work:

- **Databases:** All IOT theatre members are now integrated into the comprehensive SETC database. Theatres remain IOT members, but now have the additional benefits of SETC.

- **IOT Auditions:** SETC staff and the auditions chair will “shadow” IOT’s early January auditions to learn more about their format and operation. Recognizing that these auditions for summer work serve a different talent base than SETC’s auditions, we will continue the current timeline and format. (Less than 10 percent of IOT auditionees also attend the SETC Professional Auditions in March.)

- **Website:** Both websites will remain independent, with links back and forth. SETC has already moved its website hosting to IOT’s strong web development partner.

- **Consultancy:** The executive directors started with the current framework of IOT’s consulting arm and examined how the SETC community of experts could join the “practitioner consultants” of the IOT to offer an even more diverse service.

### IOT Annual Conference

SETC President Tiza Garland, VP of Finance David Wohl, Auditions Chair Mike Murphy, Marketing Manager Clay Thornton and I attended the October 21-22 IOT conference in Chillicothe, OH, the hometown of the outdoor drama Tecumseh! This gathering gave us a chance for deep discussions about the unique services the IOT has provided, along with an opportunity to learn during informative sessions presented by expert IOT members and conference presenters.

The conference is very intimate and retreat-like, creating an opportunity for honest, reflective thinking, sharing and collaboration. One of the tangible outcomes from the two days is the initiation of a task force of IOT theatre leaders who will work side by side with us in building the consultancy framework and service.

More info: www.setc.org/iot
‘Who’ Doesn’t Own It – But Neither Does ‘I Don’t Know’

If you weren’t familiar with the classic Abbott and Costello comedy routine, “Who’s on First?” you might have discovered it when you went to see the off-then-on Broadway play, Hand to God. The puppet in the play performs a minute of the famous routine verbatim.

The heirs of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello brought suit, arguing that the use of the routine in Hand to God was copyright infringement. The federal district court ruled that the use was allowable “fair use.” The Second Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, holding that it wasn’t fair use! But the appellate court still ruled in favor of the producers, finding that the heirs did not demonstrate that they had the copyright. (You can read an article on the decision in The Hollywood Reporter here and read the full decision here.)

The three take-aways for me are:

1. “Fair use” is never a sure thing. Even judges looking at the same facts can disagree! The district court said it was fair use; the appellate court said it wasn’t!

2. The copyright laws prior to 1978 are complicated – especially as they relate to renewal of the copyright term.

3. Keep contracts as straightforward and as clear as possible. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals found that the heirs didn’t have the copyright. When the issue is important (like copyright), state the agreement a few different ways to be sure it is clear. The series of contracts that allegedly transferred copyright interests were about as clear as the back-and-forth banter of the comedy routine itself.

Watch Abbott and Costello’s classic “Who’s on First?” routine here.
Actor Invents Theatre Board Game

What do you like to do when you’re not in the theatre? Play board games? Then Stephen Charles Turner (see profile, Page 8) has just what you’ve been looking for. An avid board game player himself, Turner has designed a board game called My Big Break, which he says “is based on the lives of gypsy actors.”

“Players move from Mommy’s to gigs to NYC and then often back to Mommy’s,” Turner says. “If they succeed in auditioning, they collect credits (for their resume) and money, but if they don’t, they pick up ‘bitter cards’ which can be used to thwart their rivals. Often, players compete with each other for the same gig. Eventually somebody who is a triple threat (vocal, dance and acting) will get their ‘Big Break’ and win the game!”

My Big Break is available online at several price points, with the lower-priced version using less expensive parts, Turner says. You can find the game at:

- https://www.thegamecrafter.com/games/my-big-break ($39.95)
- https://www.etsy.com/listing/254415261/my-big-break ($40; fastest to ship, Turner says, because it uses existing stock)

Looking for a Play to Produce? For Free?

As a playwright and a producer, Doug Schutte (below) of The Bard’s Town Theatre in Louisville, KY, is devoted to the development and production of new works. Now he is taking his commitment a step further, offering SETC members and member organizations several of his scripts royalty-free for the upcoming year. “If people want to produce one of my plays, I don’t want cost to be a factor,” Schutte says. “Offering the scripts for free for a year can make the work accessible to any artist or company interested.” The selection of plays is available at thebardstowntheatre.org/doug-schutte-plays.html.