

EquityNews

165 West 46th St.
New York, NY 10036

Address Services Requested
Second Class Postage
Paid in New York, NY



Change
the
Stage

Summer | Volume 101 | Issue 4

Equity NEWS

Actors' Equity Association

Change the stage. Change the conversation.

1. Joel Perez as Roy/Mark/Pete/ Bobby Jeremy in the Public Theater's *Fun Home* on Broadway
Photo by Joan Marcus

2. Aditi Kapil in Mixed Blood Theatre Company's *Distracted*
Photo by Ann Marsden

3. Mia Katigbak as Elizabeth Bishop in the Women's Project's *Dear Elizabeth*
Photo by Joan Marcus

4. Treshelle Edmond in Deaf West's *Spring Awakening* on Broadway | Photo by Joan Marcus

5. Jose Llana as Bill Sykes in Paper Mill Playhouse's *Oliver!*
Photo by Billy Bustamante

6. Karole Foreman as the Beggar Woman in Ensemble Theatre Company's *Sweeney Todd* | Photo by David Bazemore

7. Francis Jue as Dr. Givings in the Actors Theatre of Phoenix's *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)*
Photo by John Groseclose

8. Bernardo Cubria as Philip in the Mint Theatre's *Philip Goes Forth*
Photo by Rahav Segev

9. Lisa Yuen as Mary Poppins in Wheelock Family Theatre's *Mary Poppins*
Photo by Gary Ng

10. Angel Desai as Phyllis Nirlinger in The Old Globe's *Double Indemnity*
Photo by Jim Cox



Special thank you to all of the members and Equity theater companies that gave *Equity News* permission to use their images.

11. Will Young as the Grandson in Detroit Repertory Theatre's *Finding the Burnett Heart* | Photo by Bruce Millan

12. Anita D. Hollander as the Cook, Gertrude and Musician in Goodman Theatre's *The Matchmaker*
Photo by Liz Lauren

13. Manna Nichols as Eliza Doolittle in Arena Stage's *My Fair Lady*
Photo by Richard Anderson

14/15. Eleasha Gamble as Laurey and Nicholas Rodriguez as Curly in Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater's *Oklahoma!*
Photo by Carol Rosegg

16. Alice Gatling as Corryn in InterAct Theatre Company's *Gidion's Knot*
Photo by Kate Raines/Plate 3 Photography

17. Allen Gilmore as Horace Vandergelder in Goodman Theatre's *The Matchmaker* | Photo by Liz Lauren

18. Ali Ewoldt as Cosette in the first Broadway revival of *Les Misérables*
Photo by Michael Le Poer Trench

19. Christine Toy Johnson as Dolly Levi in the National Asian Artists Project's *Hello, Dolly!* | Photo by Eric Bondoc

20. Ali Stroker in Deaf West's *Spring Awakening* on Broadway
Photo by Joan Marcus

21. Wade McCollum as Crumpet the Elf in Syracuse Stage's *The Santaland Diaries*
Photo by Mike Davis

Cover design by Bruce Alan Johnson

CONTENTS

Summer | Volume 101 | Issue 4

In House
Read the many ways in which EquityWorks for its members



6

From Council
Resolutions educating members about the union's fight to take back the road



9

Change the Stage
Eighteen members on their own triumphs and tribulations of working in the industry

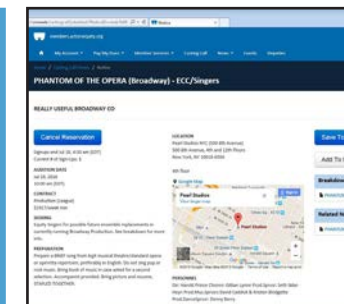


12

Lonergan Library
Equity's own literary resource for members turns 30



27



8



11



26



30

Casting Call
The union launches the revamped audition resource

Theatre Spotlight
Meet Vermont's Weston Playhouse

Building Bridges
A look at the importance of Equity's own Equal Employment Opportunity Committee

Awards
Shuffle Along wins the 2016 ACCA Award

EquityNews

Editor
Josh Austin

Advisory Committee
Christine Toy Johnson
(Chair)

Nancy Daly
Diane Dorsey
Nicole Flender
Bruce Alan Johnson

Heather Lee
Kevin McMahon
Liz Pazik
Barbara Roberts
Melissa Robinette
Buzz Roddy
Joann Yeoman

Got a question or comment? Email
equitynews@actorsequity.org





From the President On Progress

This column was supposed to be about diversity. We've been planning this issue of *Equity News*, as we do all issues of *Equity News*, for some time. Diversity in the American theatre — indeed, diversity throughout the global entertainment industry — is a huge priority

here at Equity. In these pages, you will find a reflection of what is happening in our halls these days. We're actively engaging in conversations and initiatives aimed at rewriting the script of what the theatre looks like. Who gets produced, who gets cast, whose stories get told and whose voices and bodies tell them. To complement what you read in this month's issue, I hope you'll check out the guest column I wrote for *Variety* several weeks ago; you can find it here: <http://variety.com/2016/legit/opinion/hamilton-diversity-casting-actors-equity-guest-column-1201745244/>.

At the eleventh hour, though, with my column woefully overdue and my thoughts consumed with another issue, I feel compelled to shine the spotlight elsewhere for a moment.

A week ago, I was in a midtown Manhattan recording studio with a who's who of American musical theatre, as well as a handful of legends. Chita Rivera. Bernadette Peters. Audra McDonald. Joel Grey. Carole King. Brian Stokes Mitchell, Jessie Mueller, Idina Menzel, Alice Ripley, Matthew Broderick, Sarah Jessica Parker, Whoopi Goldberg, Lin-Manuel Miranda. What an honor to have been invited to be one of the singers. Wow.

Sadly, the purpose that day was bittersweet. On the heels of yet another mass shooting — as we now know, the deadliest in our nation's history — the theatre community was struggling to respond. This one hit especially close to home, taking place in an Orlando gay nightclub very early on a Sunday morning. Initially, I feared that there must have been Equity members among the victims; thank God that this wasn't the case. That we did not have members killed that night, though, doesn't diminish the devastation for those who identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community, or those of us who have been longtime straight allies fighting for equality and justice alongside them.

Fortunately, Seth Rudetsky and James Wesley found a positive way to respond to the tragedy: They gathered their friends to cover Burt Bacharach and Hal David's classic song "What the World Needs Now is Love" and donate proceeds to the GLBT Center of Central Florida. A laundry list of sponsors helped pull off a logistical marvel: 60 extremely busy singers, a 22-piece orchestra and a film crew. The track and the video were recorded, edited and released within a week of the shooting; the song has since hit No. 1 on iTunes. It's a fantastic example of what our community can do together. You can find the single for purchase, and watch the

video, at <http://www.broadwayrecords.com/>. #Broadway-ForOrlando, indeed.

As performers, we're used to showing up to sing when someone needs to raise money for a worthy cause. After Orlando, though, at the end of yet another national tragedy during which we know our prayers are necessary but sense that condolences alone are insufficient, we at Actors' Equity have determined that we will be taking a more aggressive position on the issue of gun violence.

It's significant that the Pulse massacre was not even the only high-profile gun death in Orlando that weekend, nor the only one with reverberations for our industry. Barely 24 hours earlier, 22-year-old singer Christina Grimmie was signing autographs at a merchandise table there when a gunman entered the venue and shot and killed her. We spent that Saturday discussing how to respond to what was essentially the gunning down of a performer at the stage door. To our members and theatre fans everywhere, this is a time-honored tradition; that it could so easily turn tragic is a serious motivator for us to stand up and say something. We decided to convene on Monday and talk strategy. Hours later, the larger-scale horrors emerged. And now we believe we must act.

I've heard so many of our members wanting to know what they can do to organize and be heard. To them, and to all who are hoping for action, I say that this union will no longer tolerate the status quo. Late last year, I asked our National Public Policy Committee to consider recommending that Actors' Equity take a position on this issue. In February, Council authorized the union to lobby for gun legislation reform — adding this to many issues that we've championed over the years: fighting the Hollywood blacklist, advocating for civil and voting rights, HIV/AIDS activism, supporting marriage equality and others. All of these issues concern and affect our members. This one, in particular, also affects our workplaces.

In the days and weeks to come, we will be issuing an industry-wide call to action. We cannot afford to wait anymore. As I see it, we can either have this conversation now or after someone shoots up a stage door or a theater. And yes, we recognize the rights of Americans to have reasonable access to firearms for personal use, sport and protection. But when the nearly unfettered ability to buy military-grade weapons creates a situation in which our members are afraid to take the train, walk through Times Square, or go to work, it is incumbent upon us to act.

Enough.

Kate Shindle

@actorsequity

From the Executive Director Change the Stage



This is how I finished the story when I was speaking to the cast of *Shuffle Along*:

"The moment I received that text I realized that, in fact, my oldest child wasn't inclined to dismiss live theatre because her mommy was away at night. She simply had no interest in live theatre because nothing on the stage in my performing arts center spoke to her, because NO ONE LOOKED LIKE HER.

I have spent most of my career working to move the theatre industry toward a more diverse and inclusive state, where the performers onstage actually reflect the community. And although I always made sure we lived in neighborhoods that had neighbors who looked like her, I didn't fully recognize how the lack of diversity onstage kept my oldest child, my daughter, from finding a home in the theatre.

If you ever wonder whether what you do makes a difference, know that there is a mother and daughter, or some individual audience member that will be changed forever because of the performance you give."

That is the end of that story, but it is not the end of my commitment to "change the stage."

Our members come in all shapes and sizes, with glorious talents that differ one from the other. Our members come from all ethnicities and backgrounds and gender identities. They come from all religions and many countries of the world. All of you, every member has the right to access to work. Our audiences are the same. They deserve to see theatre that is relevant to them and that reflects the community in which they live.

Our industry will be stronger for it, because it is not only the RIGHT thing to do it is the financially sane thing to do. My daughter has a great job, makes a great salary and now may actually buy a ticket to the theatre. Think of all the 20- and 30-somethings all across the country who might buy tickets if what they saw onstage reflected some part of themselves.

Let's keep working to change the stage.

Mary McColl

Welcome to the second issue of the new *Equity News*. In this issue we are taking a look at the important topic of diversity from both a historic and current perspective. Diversity has been in the news this year — from the #OscarsSoWhite campaign to spotlight the lack of people of color among the Oscar nominees, to a recent Sunday piece in the *New York Times* about Asian American actors' fight for more visibility on screen.

I introduced a little of my personal story in my last column. Recently, I had the privilege to speak to the chorus of *Shuffle Along*, or *The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*, who were awarded the 10th annual ACCA award for Outstanding Broadway Chorus. I shared with them a story that was about them, about me and my family and about our industry. The story was meaningful to them so I have decided to share it here because it speaks directly to this month's topic of "Change the Stage."

I shared with you in the last edition of *Equity News* that I was a manager of a performing arts center in the Midwest. The addition to my personal story is this: I have two children who grew up in that theater. I have been married twice, my oldest child is of mixed race and my second child is Caucasian.

My youngest is a natural-born theatre fan. If it is a performance live and on stage, he wants to see it. As soon as he was old enough to sit still and watch, he wanted in.

My oldest never really cared much about the theatre. As she grew older she would accompany me occasionally, but as a child she had no desire to go into the house and watch a performance, no matter how I tried to entice her. I thought this was a direct impact of the fact that "the theatre" took her mommy away from home at night; I wasn't home at bedtime to read a story or there to help with homework.

Fast forward to today. My children are now fully grown adults. My youngest still lives in the Midwest and visits as often as he can. He always wants to go to the theatre. And if he can go more than once in a weekend, that is even better. My oldest moved to New York two years ago. She has accompanied me to a couple of opening night performances but never asks to attend — until this season on Broadway and.... *Hamilton*. She asked if I would take her to *Hamilton*, and of course I said yes and she loved it. I thought, OK, maybe I can get something going here. So...

I invited her to attend the Gypsy Robe Ceremony for *The Color Purple*, which she thought was interesting and fun. I invited her to come see *The Color Purple* with me, and she wept right along with me at the end of the show.

I thought, OK, perhaps we are on a roll — so I invited her to see *Shuffle Along* and she was excited to go. She was an energetic audience member, poring over the program and completely involved in the show. And when she got home after the performance she sent me a text that read, "I just want you to know that I spent the last 20 minutes tap dancing in my socks!"

members.actorsequity.org



(a)



(b)



(c)

Equity Works

Theatre News & Notes

Atlanta, Ga. — Equity SPT company **Theatrical Outfit** is celebrating its 40th anniversary (and 35th year as an Equity company).

Boulder, Colo. — **LOCAL Theater Company** will produce its annual Playwrights Festival on an LOA-PP Agreement. After working with Equity, this year the company will hire an additional seven Equity members to the 11 it usually hires, for a total of 18 contracts. Western Region staff has also begun talking to the company about transitioning to an SPT Agreement later this year.

Chicago, Ill. — The **Chicago Theatre Workshop** will begin working as a CAT Tier 2 company this year. Its three-show season (which will consist of one or two all-principal musicals) will provide Equity 88 workweeks.

Chicago, Ill. — The new musical *The Bardy Bunch (The War of the Families Partridge and Brady)* will be produced under a CAT Tier 5 Contract, accruing an additional 144 workweeks.

Cincinnati, Ohio — **Cincinnati Shakespeare Company** renewed its SPT Agreement for the 2016-17 season, adding contracts to show-specific ratio and an additional contract per show. Overall, CSC adds 94 workweeks for members.

Coronado, Calif. — The **Lamb's Players Theatre** has entered its second year of transition from Guest Artist to SPT Agreement, employing two to four actors and a stage manager in each production.

Crystal Lake, Ill. — The **Williams Street Repertory**, has come on as a CAT Tier N Phase One theatre, giving members an additional 95 workweeks.

Custer, S.D. — Not having used a union member since 2013, the **Black Hills Playhouse** will use a Guest Artist Agreement for three shows in its summer season. The Central Region staff hopes to usher the company to an SPT Agreement.

Dallas, Texas — **Uptown Players** will continue to operate under an LOA to LORT Agreement through 2016 with a 4% salary increase per season and an increase of four actor contracts over two years.

Dayton, Ohio — **Human Race Theatre** has renewed its SPT Agreement, paying a 3% increase in salaries and adding an additional contract to its minimum ratio to secure an additional 26 workweeks for members. Additionally, the **Little Theater on the Square** (Sullivan, IL) has renewed its SPT Agreement.

Flat Rock, N.C. — **Flat Rock Playhouse**, which produces under CORST Tier Z on its Main Stage, has utilized an SPT 8 Agreement since 2011 for its Playhouse Downtown productions. Over the past year, staff and members worked with the theater to move those SPT shows onto Tier zz of the CORST Agreement.

Indianapolis, Ind. — **Heartland Actors' Repertory Theatre** has renewed its LOA-LORT Agreement with a salary increase and an increase in the number of workweeks.

Kansas City, Mo. — **Kansas City Starlight Theatre's** 2016 show will be 100% Equity (with at least 81 workweeks) after Central Region staff negotiated the company from an LOA to COST Agreement.

Las Vegas, Nev./Los Angeles, Calif. — A new Western Special Production contract for *I Only Have Eyes for You* at the **Montalban Theater** totals 188 workweeks for members. A Special Agreement Contract with the **Smith Center for the Performing Arts** for its production of *Idaho! The Comedy Musical* will accumulate 101 workweeks.

Lawrenceville, Ga. — **Aurora Theatre** recently completed its transition from utilizing Guest Artist contracts to an SPT Agreement.

Los Angeles, Calif. — **The Latino Theatre Company** will transition to the SPT Agreement, using eight actor contracts, one stage manager and one assistant stage manager contract.

Minneapolis, Minn. — **Dark and Stormy Productions** has moved to a full SPT Tier 1 Agreement with at least two additional contracts this season (and most likely even more), creating at least 18 more workweeks.

New York, N.Y. — Staff was able to negotiate the following significant pay increases for the NYC-LOA contract: **Irondale Ensemble** – 5%, **Axis Theatre Company** – 8%, **Theatre Breaking through Barriers** – 10% and **Inner Voices Premieres** – 11%. Also, the Mint Theatre, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary, has increased its proposed workweeks for this season by 180. And staff was able to negotiate a 10% increase with the company.

Oklahoma City, Okla. — **Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park** has renewed its Transitional SPT Agreement, progressing onto Phase Two with a required health payment in addition to paying a 3% increase in salaries for the 2016 season.

St. Louis, Mo. — **Variety Children's Theatre** has renewed its LOA contract to LORT, receiving two additional contracts this year.

Tracking What You're Owed

In checking weekly reports for an URTA heater, Eastern Region staff detected that the pre-production for a stage manager was not contracted or reported. Working with the theater, staff was able to obtain the \$750, and an additional health week, for the member.

A theatre operating on an ANTC Special Agreement did not stipulate terms regarding costume or tech bump increments. With members' assistance, staff was able to get both costume rental fees and tech bump payments for the members, totaling around \$400. Additionally, while checking over an executed ANTC contract, staff noticed a discrepancy in pay rates. After speaking with the producer, staff was able to get the balance, which totaled over \$500, paid to all members.

(Continued on page 31)



(d)

Pictured:

(a) Members (L to R) members Michael Strauss, Christy Baggett, Joe Knezevich and EMC Carolyn Dorff in *Theatrical Outfit's The Light in the Piazza*. Photo by BreeAnne Clowdus Photography.

(b) Members (L to R) Richard E. Waits, Matt Kopec, Matt Welsh, Christopher deProphetis, Josh Kenney and Jamie Cordes in the *Human Race Theatre's The Full Monty*. Photo by Scott J. Kimmins.

(c) Members (L to R) Geoffrey Rivas, Lucy Rodriguez and Sal Lopez with Evelina Fernandez in the *Latino Theatre Company's Premeditation*. Photo by Ed Krieger.

(d) Equity members take the stage alongside children with disabilities for *Variety Children's Theatre's Mary Poppins*. Photo by ProPhotoSTL.

Reintroducing Casting Call

We're taking Equity's Casting Call to the next level. And as we improve the Call site, the first thing we're introducing is online signups.

With this redesign, not only is the site mobile-friendly, but now you can be anywhere to sign up for an audition. The first phase of the Call's rollout allows members to sign up for any Equity Chorus Call (ECC) online. On your computer, on your tablet, on your phone — wherever. Coming into an office to sign up for an ECC is a thing of the past. Now there is no need on cold, rainy days to pencil your name in (or have a friend do it) on that list. Of course, slots will remain available for those who walk in for the audition.

In a future phase of the Call's unveiling, Equity Principal Auditions will be online and readily available for signup.

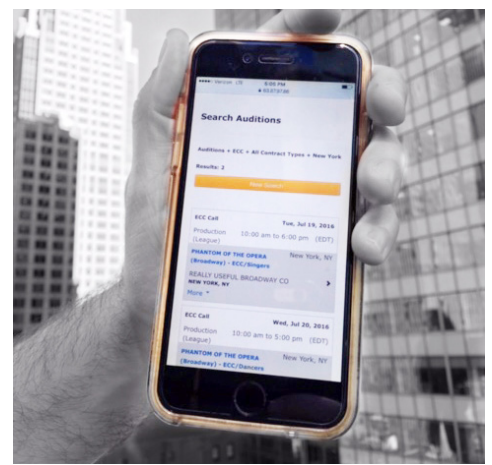
"The first thing we think about, with everything we develop, is accessibility," said Doug Beebe, National Director of IT. "Our members are on-the-go constantly. They're working. They're traveling. And they're thinking about their next job. Casting Call is now with them, wherever they are."

Developed by Beebe and his team in 1998, the union's Casting Call was (and remains) the original, digital go-to source for Equity casting notices — whether a chorus call, principal audition or stage manager notice. A way to allow members to easily peruse auditions across the country, the Casting Call page has become a crucial tool for members looking for work.

With the continual growth of the Member Portal and adding features like the Deputy Support Center and the Equity News Center, revamping and remodeling Casting Call was only a matter of time. The newly reimagined notices page, which is now housed in the Member Portal, was blueprinted with the ideas and lifestyle of Equity members in mind.

A perk of membership, Casting Call is now easily accessible for the working, searching, on-the-road, fresh-out-of-school or veteran actor and stage manager.

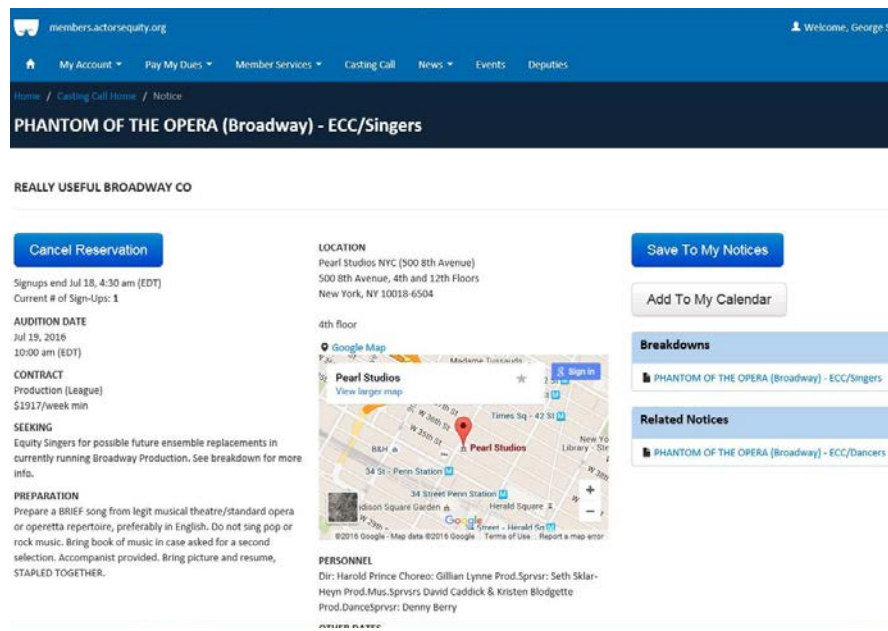
And in many ways: For the first time, the Call page can be personalized for you and by you. You are now able to completely control how and when you sign up for auditions. You can save notices to your "Casting Cart"; look back at previous auditions; cancel an audition if you need to; and set new, more specific criteria when searching for a job that fits you.



"We really wanted this new version of Casting Call to reflect each one of our members," Beebe said. "Not only is using Casting Call much easier, but now members can control how and what they sign up for online. They have the option to save notices and search for specific jobs. It's really a great way for members to interact with the site and their union."

Casting Call has new search options that will allow members to exercise more control over their schedule and the opportunity to gain familiarity with the work around their region. You will still be able to search for jobs via contract or a specific call, but now you can also search by state, office or an individual Equity liaison city. Even more, you will have the option to search for jobs by audition location or by actual job location.

Auditioning itself might not be as easy, but now, for members, maintaining, tracking, discovering and signing up for those auditions can be less stressful. Casting Call, which is now operating on responsive technology, ensures that all notices are up to date. The sign-up button will be enabled as soon as the date arrives — all you have to do is check your Casting Cart or browse other opportunities and sign up for the auditions or stage manager notices that interest you.



From Council

Understanding The Road

The National Council wants to inform membership about how the union has fought for members on tour

In January 2004, the Council passed the following Membership Rule regarding Equity members who accept non-performing work on non-union tours:

RESOLVED to approve the President's Planning Committee's recommendation that Equity Members shall not accept employment in any capacity in non-Equity productions produced by Big League.

RESOLVED to approve the President's Planning Committee's recommendation that Equity Members shall not accept employment in any capacity in non-Equity productions produced by Networks and Troika.

With these resolutions, staff was given the responsibility of not only implementing Council's actions, but also deciding when to permit such work (especially if the production in question was not an organizing target).

This kind of organizing situation is different from those where the union has specifically targeted productions that staff could reasonably use Equity contracts (especially once the Tiers and the SET were in place), but had been unable to organize them successfully. (On rare occasions, concessions

The following Councillors voted in favor of the MOTION:

Ms. Price, Ms. Robinette, Ms. Borts, Mr. Brody, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Denmark, Ms. Horne, Mr. Liebert, Ms. Nicole, Ms. Robinson, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Slusser, Ms. Swiderski, Mr. Watanabe, Ms. Williams, Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Fallon, Mr. Shavzin, Mr. Carfrae, Ms. Arnett, Mr. Bott, Mr. Cahn, Mr. Dotson, Mr. Marlow, Mr. McDermott, Mr. McMahon, Mr. North, Mr. Jue, Ms. Cody, Ms. Pinkins, Ms. Moreland, Mr. Brown, Ms. Daly, Ms. H. Lee and Mr. Quinn

The following Councillor was opposed to the MOTION:

Mr. Solomon

The following Councillor abstained from voting:

Mr. Willet

History Behind The 2004 Membership Rule

The union began addressing non-Equity tours in 1997, with the post-Broadway tours on Special Agreements for *State Fair* and *Victor/Victoria*. Equity bargained many Special Touring Agreements leading up to the Production Contract negotiations of 2000, but was unsuccessful at addressing the issue at the bargaining table.

The topic once again gained momentum with not only Equity members but also the Broadway League when, in 2001, it was announced that the first national tour of Dodger Theatricals' *The Music Man* would be a non-Equity tour produced by Big League Theatricals. The tour was traveling

were made in order to influence other decisions by a subject producer, generally to support organizing other targets.)

At a Membership Meeting on Jan. 8, 2016, members present in the Eastern Region passed the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the 2004 Council resolutions be printed online in a prominent page of Equity News no later than the April 2016 issue to inform all Equity Members of Union policy and the consequences of doing so.

In response to this resolution, Council held a Special Council meeting on Friday, April 1, 2016, to thoroughly discuss the substance of the 2004 resolutions. Council RESOLVED to approve the January Membership Meeting resolution and to expand the 2004 resolutions to include all national non-Equity touring productions.

Council determined that publication occur as soon as practicable in both *Equity News* and in the News Center of the Member Portal, along with printing an explanation of the context, purpose, history of administration and other necessary background information regarding the rule.

into first-class markets with several one-week or multi-week stops. Equity was unable to negotiate a deal with Big League and the tour went out with Susan Stroman's original direction and choreography — with an Equity member staging the show.

When rehearsals began in New York City, Equity immediately started organizing the cast and the Communications Department began both hand-billing and press campaigns.

The Music Man tour was wildly successful. Members believed that a big part of that success, aside from the title, was

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

due to the use of the exact direction and choreography from the Broadway production. In many ways, the distress over this show was the origin of the membership's willingness to address the issue of non-Equity tours.

While continuing to negotiate Special Agreements, and simultaneously trying to work with the Broadway League on the issue, the union started planning what became The Road Campaign.

The Road Campaign was implemented in stages, with the planned culmination being the 2004 Production Contract negotiations. During these negotiations, Equity achieved the Tiered Touring terms (then called the "Experimental Touring Contract"). One of the steps of the campaign was Council's desire to address an issue raised by the membership — that of Equity members signing on to work in non-acting/stage managing positions, particularly creative positions, on non-Equity tours produced by those employers who, at the time, were the union's biggest problem on the road.

Equity and the then-named Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (now SDC) met to discuss their common interests, including non-Equity tours. The SDC agreed to support Equity's efforts in this area by asking its own members to refrain from providing services for certain tours. In return, Equity assured the SDC that it was addressing the issue of Equity members who were not yet members of the SDC taking those potential jobs away from its members.

How the Road has Changed

In the 12 years since that 2004 Council meeting, the road has changed dramatically. The number of non-Equity tours in the one-week market (those that should be covered by the Production Contract Tiers and SET Categories) decreased; but there was an increase in the number of producers doing non-Equity work. While the majority of newer work has not been at the level Equity had been trying to organize, the union is still concerned about its increase and will continue to examine the issue.

However, some producers, including NETWORKS, are again trying to tour non-Equity in target markets rather than use Tiers or Categories. In order to continue addressing the concerns of the membership, Council is reaffirming the resolutions from January 2004 and expanding them to include all non-Equity national tours, regardless of their producers.

As with all membership rules, members may be subject to disciplinary action under Article X of the Bylaws for failure to abide by the rules of the Association. If you have questions about whether you may accept work in a creative capacity on a non-Equity production, please contact National Director, Organizing & Special Projects Flora Stamatiades at flora@actorsequity.org to discuss the matter before accepting any offer of employment.

Communicating with Our Members

Communicating with union members is a top priority for Equity, and one of the most efficient ways is through email. Our email topics range from negotiation updates and surveys to meeting announcements, seminars and benefits, just to name a few.

But with scarce time in an already busy schedule, members may be juggling emails from family, friends and other organizations or businesses. That's why Equity has an easy-to-manage system in place that helps members manage the type of electronic communications they want to receive from the union. While notifications of membership meetings, billing notices, elections and negotiation-related updates are exceptions (meaning members will always receive these emails in their inbox), there are four subscription-based categories that Equity's emails often fall under. The union provides an opt-out option for each category of email. If a member doesn't want to receive an email on a particular topic, he or she can simply unsubscribe from those emails. This easy-to-use system can be managed through "Preferences" under the "My Account" tab in the Member Portal. The categories of electronic communication Equity offers includes:

Benefits/Discounts: Theatre tickets; rehearsal spaces; classes, workshops and coaches; subscriptions and books; car rentals; fitness and yoga centers; etc.

Workshop & Seminars: Various activities, including workshops, round table discussions, career development and educational seminars.

Special Events: Equity's Equal Employment Opportunity Celebrations; award ceremonies; talkbacks; parades; and events sponsored by The Actors' Fund, Career Transition for Dancers and others.

Take Action Alerts & Advocacy: "Take Action" notices on topics like arts funding, collective bargaining and worker's rights, and health care reform, among others.

An important item to remember: If a member globally unsubscribes from email, then he or she will unsubscribe from all emails sent by Equity. That can cause a problem when it comes time for billing notices, elections, etc. To re-subscribe, visit the email subscriptions page (in the Member Portal under "Preferences") and uncheck the "Globally Unsubscribe" box.

However, email isn't the only tool the union relies on to communicate with membership. In addition to social media (we're on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as @actorsequity), the union recently introduced the Equity News Center in the Member Portal — complete with an RSS feed. An RSS feed, or rich site summary, allows members who subscribe to the feed to get instant updates when a new article or announcement is published. The feed automatically updates within the user's web browser with any updates. Equity strives to keep its members aware of any and all union news. And with the various platforms we're on, getting information from Equity has never been easier.

Weston Playhouse Theatre Company

theatre spotlight



Photo by Hubert Schriabi

Weston Playhouse's production of *Guys & Dolls* with (L to R) Marissa McGowan, Sam Lloyd, Jr. and D'Ambrose Boyd.

We asked the staff at the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company to tell us about themselves. This is what they had to say:

Celebrating its 80th anniversary season this year, Vermont's Weston Playhouse Theatre Company is in the midst of an exciting transformation from a seasonal to a year-round operation: The theater plans to begin construction on a state-of-the-art studio space at the conclusion of the summer. The flexible space, seating up to 140, will bolster its summer season at the historic Weston Playhouse and house a New Play Festival in the spring, a fall foliage production and a series of winter workshops.

Weston's mission builds on — and enhances — the unique assets of its Vermont village campus to 1) produce a diverse, entertaining and challenging season of live professional theatre and high-impact events; 2) enrich the theatregoing experience with education and outreach programs; and 3) make significant contributions to the American theatre through training programs, play development and artistic retreats.

Producing Artistic Director Steve

Stettler said that Weston is dedicated to "celebrating the classics and nurturing the new," as evidenced in the new season. The 2016 season runs the gamut from the Broadway blockbuster *Mamma Mia!* to Pulitzer finalist Dael Orlandersmith's *Forever*. Singer-songwriter Benjamin Scheuer, whose award-winning *The Lion* was developed in part at a Weston Artists Retreat, will perform in concert, and actor Christopher Lloyd (who began his career at Weston and returned in 2010 in *Death of A Salesman*) will be the first recipient at a Weston Honors event.

Weston produces on three stages. *The Boston Globe* dubbed its flagship, the 300-seat Weston Playhouse, "the most beautiful theater in New England." A classic white-columned building on the Village Green, it overlooks the West River, which famously flooded the theater during Tropical Storm Irene

(Continued on page 27)

Change the STAGE

Can you imagine if artists were given their creative calling based solely on the color of their eyes or the size of their feet, with no regard for their individual qualities, skills or passions? Sounds ridiculous, right? Though I am proud and grateful to have been a “journeyman” working actor for my entire adult life, this is often what it feels like to me, as an actor of Asian American descent, when I am excluded from even getting into the room to be considered for roles (whose race/ethnicity/cultural background is not germane to a part) solely because of the shape of my eyes. I know that I’m far from alone. Let’s face it: showbiz is impossible, at best, for everyone. But wouldn’t it be amazing if we were all given a fair shot at finding our place in it?

We’ve made great strides with our work at Actors’ Equity in gaining more universal access to auditions, and implementing our philosophy that every single one of our 50,000 members is entitled to equal rights and an even playing field — but we need to go further in expanding perceptions of who we are and what we can do in order to make greater gains.

We need to find ways to help our industry stop defining actors of all stripes only by color of their skin, gender, age, sexual identification and/or disability — and to look more at our individual qualities and skills. We need to be leaders in driving home the point that inclusion is meant to expand the boundaries of the status quo, not take away from it; to expand our global perspective and reach, not take a bite out of whatever exists.

The bridges we build as storytellers — from page to stage, from actor to audience, from backstage to onstage, from culture to culture, from human to human — are at the center of why inclusion in the arts is vital. Without these bridges, we miss out on bringing the world’s many and varied aspects of humanity to life. With them, we learn what makes us different from each other, but most of all, what makes us simpatico. I am certain that when these bridges we build are inclusive of all of us, they are at the core of how we are able to shift the lens through which we see ourselves and each other. They are at the heart of how theatre can unite us and enrich us beyond measure.

I’m grateful to Equity’s Executive Director Mary McColl, President Kate Shindle, our Council, Board members, past and present chairs and vice chairs of the EEOC, and staff who continue to support the work we are doing toward make equality a priority for the Association, and toward having Actors’ Equity take a leadership role in creating a more diverse and inclusive industry. And I’m thankful for the members at large who have agreed to be profiled in this issue of *Equity News*, giving us a window on their individual experiences and perspectives. I hope that you will find their insight as interesting and valuable as I have. Of course, this is just a tiny sampling of our diverse and beautiful membership. This work is arduous and ongoing. But as certain as I am in my gratitude for my life in the theatre, I am certain that it is well worth fighting for all of us to be included in the American landscape of storytelling. We’re better and stronger for it.

To be continued.

In solidarity,
Christine Toy Johnson
National Chair, Equity News Advisory Committee
National Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Committee



The ensemble of *Shuffle Along, or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed* performing the song “Broadway Blues.” The cast of *Shuffle Along* garnered Equity’s 10th Annual ACCA Award.

Photo and contents page photo by Julieta Cervantes



Kat Nejat

Equity member since 2004

Dream Role: Toss-up between Brooke Ashton in *Noises Off*, Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* and Glinda in *Wicked*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

Since I first started acting, more often than not, I've found my ethnicity to be beneficial instead of something to overcome. My appearance, identity and experience have provided me with a truly varied life to draw upon, and I believe the most important thing that makes a good actor is life experience.

Which is not to say there haven't been instances where it has been challenging. Yes, it is. Yes, it is painful to hear that I'm "too ethnic" for certain parts or learning that I didn't get a part because another ethnic person or person of color has already been cast in a show and there's not room for *another* ethnic person in the cast. But I would be remiss not to

acknowledge all the times my ethnic ambiguity has been beneficial.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

In my career thus far, I think it was most disconcerting that audiences didn't respond to the beautiful interweaving of the Spanish language in the recent Broadway revival of *West Side Story*, instead preferring the all-English version complete with heavy, put-on Puerto Rican accents for the Sharks. That was a case of a stereotype that director Arthur Laurents was trying to diverge from, but audience response dictated us reverting back to what was deemed acceptable in the '50s and '80s revivals rather than (what I would call) forward progress.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

Being the only person to have played both Maria and Anita on Broadway [in *West Side Story*] certainly ranks up there, as does creating *Lysistrata Jones'* Cleonice and bringing her from downtown to Broadway, or portraying Mahwish, a woman who is carefully — and perhaps unsuccessfully — navigating the waters of being Muslim in present-day America in Ayad Akhtar's *The Who & the What* at Kansas City Rep.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Yes, I think that's the nature of the business I signed up for. What I can do now is share my story and champion for progress.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Blind auditions like on *The Voice*? Ha! (I'm only sort of kidding.)

Jose Llana

Equity member since 1996

Dream Role: Bobby in *Company*, Georges Seurat, Sweeney Todd

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

When the creative team clearly cannot look past my ethnicity, or if all they can see is my ethnicity. Sometimes when creating new work in readings or workshops, it's clear that my involvement will only go so far until the producers decide they won't go "non-traditional" in a lead role since they fear backers won't sign on for it.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

The worst is when they ask you to use an "Asian" accent with no specificity, race or country. That's just insulting. "Asian as butt of joke" happens all the time. I've refused to do accents in auditions unless they know exactly what they're asking for.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

When directors and producers have been brave enough to cast me in roles not necessarily written for someone who looks like me. I like to think that young people see that decision as an example and think that *they* shouldn't limit themselves either.



Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

All the time. Every season when I look at the shows coming in, I instinctively focus on the supporting roles to see if I might be a good match for any of them since those are the only roles I know a producer would go "non-traditional." But in Asian or Latino shows, I'm a leading man. A Caucasian actor my age with my credits would easily look at *all* roles, including the lead roles.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Encourage directors, producers and casting directors to broaden their scope of what constitutes a selling show and provide data that shows that productions with diverse casts actually make money.



Cheryl Lynn Bruce

Equity member since 1979

Dream Role: Cleopatra

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

Some years ago I entered an audition room in Los Angeles. The 20-something sitting at the table looked up from my résumé a bit dazed, and said in a rather bewildered and discouraging tone, "Um...you've done a lot of plays." I immediately understood that he was either not much interested in or familiar with stage work, and it might be an uphill climb to convince him that I should even be in the room.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I've long held Viola Davis' frank opinion that darker-skinned women are generally per-

ceived to be less attractive, less desirable than lighter-skinned women. Since early on, I've been a character actor. Now, I'm mostly considered for mothers or grandmothers, medical or legal professionals. I've turned down many a "maid" character because they were one-dimensional versions of "The Maid" we've seen too many times to count — "The Wisecracking Maid," "The Sunny Maid," "The Funny Maid." A maid can be a complicated character, and that's exciting, but when she's not, it's just sad.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

The first night I was able to get through an entire performance of Tarell McCraney's epic *Head of Passes* without calling "line!" was a personal milestone. Though I'd begun previews needing someone "on book" and held the last 10 pages in my hand, I was mortified because I'd never stepped onstage without my lines all buckled down. Never. I learned a tsunami of lines, and by the middle of previews I was able to make it to the end unaided.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

I don't "feel" I lost out on a job because of my race; I know it. The auditioner told me himself. I read for an astronaut on a spaceship and got a callback, then another. Finally, I was asked to come in to speak with the company representative who'd been present at all of the auditions and callbacks. My name was called, I stepped into the room and the pleasant representative asked me to take a seat. After a brief pause, he told me that he'd liked my work very much and felt I'd been the best actress he'd seen for the role. But, unfortunately, he could not offer it to me because, he explained, he knew his boss would never accept me as that astronaut. He said he was sorry. I just sat there; I don't know how long. Still. Stunned. Shocked. Unsure of what to do until the representative thanked me for auditioning and asked his assistant to call in the other actors, all of them white, the ones he was going to hire. I watched them file past me and saw the "second string" white girl who was going to "fly" that spaceship instead of Black me. When I thought about it, I wasn't sure what to do. I'd lost that job because I was Black, sure, but the representative had taken a chance and called me in to tell me to my face why I couldn't have that job. I didn't file any suit or make a fuss, and I never mentioned it to Equity either. I just swallowed it and went on like countless others have and do.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Actors' Equity can and should share as many of its members' firsthand accounts of discrimination and exclusion as it can. Make noise! Tell the world! Don't keep quiet! All actors should know the clever, cruel exclusionary practices and habits that cripple many of their colleagues. Racism, sexism, homophobia and other biases may cloud the theatre world in ways, subtle and not-so, but Equity can shine its bright light in all those corners. Daylight's the best disinfectant!

Equity: Standing Up for Diversity since 1913

May 26, 1913 — 112 actors gather at the Pabst Grand Circle Hotel in NYC to found Actors' Equity, a union that will stand up for its members.

May 1947 — Equity draws a line in the sand on segregation within the industry: "We state now to the National Theatre... that unless the situation at the National Theatre is remedied within twelve months from June 1, 1947, we will be forced to forbid our members to play there."

Matthew Kacergis

Equity member since 2009
Dream Role: Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

While living in New York City I found myself fighting against the “type” issue quite often. I literally had a casting director say to me, “I don’t know what to do with you because you’re a baritone but you’re not tall, so you look like a tenor.”

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I am fortunate in that this is not an issue I’ve dealt with, although I’ve certainly worked on projects where I’ve observed my fellow cast members being asked to portray stereotypes in a way that did not serve the story or its message. As artists, it’s our job to tackle challenging and sensitive issues — and artists need to feel safe and supported doing so.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

I am proud of the amount of energy and time I have invested working on new pieces, including five world premieres and countless readings and workshops. There is nothing more thrilling to me than speaking words no other actor has spoken.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Yes. In my “ingénue days” I often found myself in callbacks with a group of non-union performers. There were a number of instances where the job went to a non-union performer.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

This is challenging because a union cannot legally tell an employer whom to hire. That said, I would like to see the union provide resources and training to member theaters to help them create more diverse and inclusive workplaces. I am also interested in whether Equity might be able to create a grant program for organizations that tell diverse stories and are progressive in their casting practices.



Cassie Calderone

Equity member since 2008
Dream Show to SM: *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

One challenge I’ve come across during the interview process is misapprehensions and assumptions — mainly based on age — especially from phone interviews. As someone who digitally sounds younger than she is, I feel this may have changed previous interviewers’ perceptions of me.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I’ve noticed a theme where minority stage managers are paired with minority casts. I have not turned down such positions where this has happened (in fact, I have found great community in large, minority casts), as I have felt a strength in working relationships with these casts. I’ve often been sought out to work with specific theaters because of these relationships.

What are some of your proudest achievements as a stage manager?

My proudest achievement is balancing motherhood and the strenuous, erratic (and fun!) hours of a stage manager. It’s tough! I’ve personally found more ease in assistant stage managing — it allows me a bit more freedom to balance work and home life.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age/disability?

I don’t feel that I lost out on a specific job, but I feel that within the stage management community, seniority is often taken

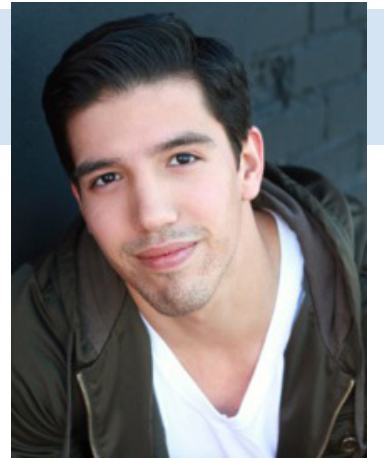
into consideration. I also feel there are gender and age restrictions as a mother. Stage management isn’t an hourly position, and you are often called on after hours. Many assume a stage manager will be available at any time, and we have a hard time changing that expectation. At a salaried job, it seems easier to take time off or even breaks during the work day; I’ve found difficulty in managing that aspect for myself.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

As a mother, sometimes a break isn’t just important, but imperative. With a newborn, for instance, breaks for breast pumping are crucial. In general, however, it’s important to create an environment that not only supports the arts, but supports and recognizes an individual’s needs.

Danny Bevins

Equity member since 2004
Dream Role: Alexander Hamilton in *Hamilton*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

I’m biracial Sioux Native American, an identity I’m very proud of. My ethnicity has given me a very ambiguous look — both a blessing and a challenge. Onstage, I’ve played about 10 different ethnicities, ranging from Puerto Rican to Irish to Taiwanese. I often feel a challenge when auditioning for ethnicities outside my own, which is nearly always the case. It can feel dishonest. I never want to do any culture or ethnic group a disservice by playing any stereotypes, which I combat with my background work in hopes I can be as authentic as possible. While it is acting, authenticity is always key, as is respect to those whose stories you’re telling. Also, it was not until moving to New York City that I realized and eventually understood playing Caucasian characters would no longer be very common for me. Again, my ambiguity can be a blessing and a challenge, and not being able to always play Caucasian characters was something I had to wrap my head around.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

Fortunately, I have not been offered a job that would cause me to turn it down based off any prejudice or discrimination within the character. However, I have auditioned for many generic “Latino” and “Guido Italian” characters that could feel like a stereotype if not portrayed with honesty.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

I’m very goal-oriented for a major reason: My two amazing mothers, Lynn and Laura, adopted me at birth. If I had not been adopted, I would have grown up on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota. Of course, this was all out of my control. But, what is in my control is how I live my life with the set of circumstances I grew up with. Therefore, I’ve always strongly felt it is my duty to honor my birth mother, and my parents, and to achieve as much as I can out of this life to make something of the serendipitous fortune I received. I’ve learned and grown in every rehearsal and show and with every cast and crew — that’s the biggest reward and achievement.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Yes, but I believe every actor will lose out on a job due to their background, gender or age. That’s the nature of the business. For me personally, this year, I lost out on jobs due to my age and being new to New York. It’s frustrating at times, yes, but it’s not like I can age myself or make myself look more or less of something I’m not. I am who I am in this moment, and I am where I am on my journey. If I don’t fit the mold of a character because of that, so be it. I’ll fit the mold of the next one I audition for.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Actors’ Equity needs to continue celebrating its diversity — an achievement it has excelled at, this year in particular. I know we’ll look back on 2016 as a sublime year of theatre with its accomplishments in shows’ successes, but even more significantly in its diversity. I hope and believe AEA will continue to grow inclusive and celebrate the diversity of the world we live in, perhaps by allowing classic music theatre shows to reflect what our world looks like now. For example, there’s no reason Kathy Selden or Don Lockwood cannot be portrayed by people of color. At the end of the day, we’re in this business to tell stories of the human spirit and condition. We need eclectic stories to fully explore what and who we are to successfully accomplish that. The fact that we’re having this discussion is a clear indication AEA is heading in the right direction.

September 28, 1951 — Council resolves that blacklisting “is hostile to the fundamental purposes of this Association, and that Actors’ Equity will act to the fullest of its capacities in defense of its members.”

April 20, 1959 — On the stage of Broadway’s Majestic Theatre, Equity sponsors the first Integration Showcase (from a selection of famous scenes using what will later be known as non-traditional casting) for an audience of casting directors and producers.



Ali Stroker

Equity member since 2009
Dream Role: An original role on Broadway

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

I don't feel like I am challenged any more than any other actor in an audition room. I feel like my disability has been an advantage.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I am not asked to play stereotypes; half of the auditions I go out on are for characters with disabilities and half are not.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

My proudest achievement is that I was the first actress in a wheelchair to appear on Broadway.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

No, I feel like my wheelchair has helped me get where I am.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Make all Off-Broadway and Broadway theaters accessible backstage for actors with disabilities by 2025!

Perry Layton Ojeda

Equity member since 1991
Dream Role: An original role that I've created from scratch

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

As a Latino actor that often plays anything but Latino, I find that it's all about who's on the other side of that table and what they're looking for. Sometimes "I'm not Latino enough," whatever that means. I find it usually means the color of my skin is too light for whatever their notion of Latino means — forgetting that we come in every shade under the sun.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I play "ethnically ambiguous" a lot. I have a lot of Italian, Jewish and even a few actual Latino characters among my credits. I actually have deeply enjoyed some of the stereotypical characters I've played, especially in comedy. Since I am of Mexican and Spanish descent, I believe I can endow what on the page appears to be a two-dimensional, "just-for-laughs" sketch and flesh it out into a real human with blood and bone. It's part of the fun and challenge of being an actor.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

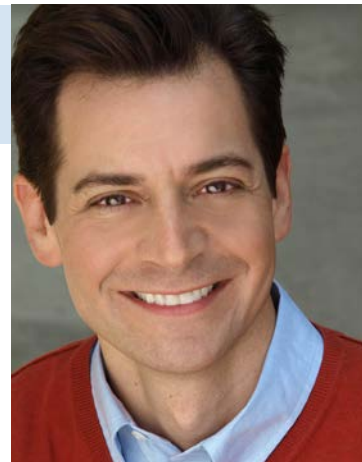
In a career that has spanned a quarter of a century, I have a lot to be proud of; not the least of which is that I'm still here. I've been in the chorus and in lead roles on Broadway. I got to create a role in a play in London's West End. I've done everything from cruise ships to Shakespeare. I'm slowly finding my footing in Los Angeles and in film and TV — I have my first lead in a feature film this year, playing a very funny, loud and gay Latino character. Proud? I have a lot to be grateful for.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Being a Latino has only ever been an advantage to me and my career. I only regret that I didn't harness the uniqueness that is my ethnic identity sooner. I have yet to become fluent in Spanish, though I'm working on it.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

What I respect most about our union is that we, as members, create the discourse. We, as members, are standing up and saying we demand change. The union is us. If we see something that needs to change it is our responsibility as individual members to get involved, show up for meetings, volunteer to be a deputy, communicate with our representatives or sign up for a committee. That's how we can help Equity become more diverse and inclusive: We show up and include ourselves.



Aneesh Sheth

Equity member since 2004
Dream Role: The Witch in *Into the Woods*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

More often than not the challenges I face in the room are in regard to either my skin color or my gender identity. I was once up for the role of a leading lady in a play, and although I ended up booking the gig, I was later told that the casting director had disclosed my gender identity to the director, as if to deter his decision allowing a trans woman to play the role of a cisgender woman. Additionally, there have only been a few roles in my career in which my racial identity did not play a factor (meaning, only a few roles that weren't specifically for South Asian women).

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

Being at the intersection of race and gender identity, as a transgender woman of color, the most common role I'm asked to play is that of a prostitute. Much is changing with the current climate and I'm proud to see more people tell different stories. While sex work is a reality of many transwomen's lives, it is not the only story to be told, and definitely not one people should be using to get a laugh. However, my very first gig on network television was playing a hijra, hired to strip at a bachelor party. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to be on that show with a wonderful group of talented individuals, but I also recognize that as actors, we're oftentimes forced to skew our moral compass in order to make ends meet and play roles we may not be particularly fond of to get the exposure we need. Being South Asian, I have been asked many times to put on an Indian accent — mostly for the accent to be a punchline.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

My proudest achievement as an actor was when I returned to the business after a few years' hiatus to find my new self and booked a gig playing a non-transgender leading lady. It brought me immense resolve within myself as an artist and human to be able to be seen in this business not for my gender identity, but merely as an actor who could do the job. (It was also a dream role to play.)

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Absolutely! I have many times felt I didn't book the gig because of my skin color or gender identity. I once received a beautiful and thoughtful card from a director I auditioned for. She expressed how lovely it was to see my work, and yet how sorry she was, for had it been up to her, I would have booked the gig. However, the producers did not see a woman of color playing the role of Hedda Gabler, and I was passed up.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Hiring POC actors isn't enough. Diversity needs to start from the top. Each aspect of production should reflect our current society — filled with many different colors and identities.

Bernardo Cubría

Equity member since 2008
Dream Role: Any character in a play by Mando Alvarado

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

I once had a callback for a very well-known TV show. After my first read, one of the producers asked me, "Are you sure you are Latino?" I froze in the moment and proceeded to bomb the audition. I think of witty comebacks to that insane question from time to time. Wish I'd had one then.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

The most common role now for Latino men is "Narco." And screw that. I obviously want



(Continued on page 20)

August 27, 1974 — Equity sends a letter to President Gerald Ford for recognizing Woman's Equality Day in such a prominent manner. "We of the theatre have always been proud of our tradition in the theatre without discrimination in employment or employment opportunity based on sex or race. We are pleased that our nation is beginning to follow suit."

1982 — Equity conceives the concept of "non-traditional casting." Defined as "the casting of ethnic minorities, females, seniors and disabled actors in roles where race, ethnicity, gender, age and the presence of a disability is not absolutely essential to the development of the play or character," this will become accepted and practiced throughout the industry.

(Continued from page 19)

to be a part of telling the story of what is happening in my home country. And I do think some TV shows, films and plays are doing a great job of telling this story. But too often this story is being written by people who have no connection to the location, the culture or the tragedy. It almost feels as though they think it's "cool" or "fascinating." And I hate that I feel that I am at a point in my career where I have to keep playing Narco #2. I need to change that.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

Getting to perform as part of The Mobile Shakespeare Unit at The Public Theater last year was a true honor. That program, under the leadership of Stephanie Ybarra, is one of the most important things happening in theatre today. The audiences are so happy to be involved in the play. Mobile Shakes does away with all of the class structure of New York theatre.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

I know I have. But I can either get bitter or get better. And I think all of us who want to see change just need to keep having conversations about diversity, keep working harder, and more importantly, keep making our own awesome shit.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Things like this. And also make sure that as we fight for a more inclusive industry, we don't become policemen in the world of art. I don't want us to focus our energy and our time trying to shut down the things we find offensive or telling people what they are doing is wrong. I think the focus needs to be on supporting the good work that is already happening and encouraging more diverse voices to get out and be heard. Help us get space. Help us get funding. Help us get more opportunities, and the amazing voices that are already out in the theatre landscape will do the work.



Winnie Y. Lok

Equity member since 2005

Dream show to SM: *House and Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn — two shows that happen at the same time with one cast

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

For a stage manager, one of the biggest challenges is being adaptable — whether that means adapting to the workings of a producer/GM office or adapting to how a director likes to run the production. I think I have been successful because I try to be open to how things are done, but also not let go of the skills and specifics that make me a good stage manager. The interview process can prove difficult if it's a director or producer/GM who only knows you by your résumé — so much of stage management is personality and the ability to build working relationships with everyone on the production. I generally tend to come into an interview with an open mind and trust my instincts and just be myself.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I haven't felt this as a stage manager although sometimes I feel I get interviewed for a job because I'm a woman — if there is a need for some reason to have a female PSM. I've also had people ask if I speak or read Chinese — if I did, maybe that would have made me a better contender for that particular production.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

I'm pretty proud of the reputation I've built. I've been stage managing in New York City for over 10 years, and I came here from Los Angeles not really knowing anyone. I caught some breaks and got to know a lot of great people. I have a reputation that I'm reliable and I get the job done. I also have a reputation of being able to pick things up quickly — I've been in a couple of situations where I pretty much had to go in and learn the call of shows I'd never seen in a short amount of time, and I did it. Those are the challenging experiences, but I'm the proudest of them.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age/disability?

No, although I feel that it is hard to be a female PSM in the business. Stage management started out as a man's job and although more and more female stage managers are working, I do feel that whenever I walk into a meeting, rehearsal, interview, etc., I have to be on my A+ game; I cannot mess up. And maybe that is also something I put on myself being a perfectionist, but there is definitely a gender gap. I've been lucky; I've worked with a lot of directors and producers that seem to prefer working with females, so there is change happening.

1989 — Member Rosetta LeNoire is the first recipient of the Equity award that will bear her name, given to those exemplifying the principles of non-traditional casting.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

For stage managers, I feel that Actors' Equity can work on making sure we have the same rights as the actors we're in the same union as. And it's the little things — the 10-minute breaks we give the actors are, most of the time, not breaks for stage managers. Same with the extended meal breaks. And it's not that we're not allowed to take them; it's that there is a longstanding preconceived notion from directors, actors, designers, producers, etc. that we can "reset for the next thing" or "make copies of new script pages" or "order lunch." The list goes on. This makes us feel that we're not really as protected as the actors are.

Mueen Jahan

Equity member since 1998

Dream Role: Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma!* and Amir in *Disgraced*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

Being typed out immediately because of the color of my skin, even though the casting notice states "all ethnicities encouraged."

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

Terrorists and convenience store owners with accents. I have never turned anything down because I usually needed the money and the credit, and the people had some weight that could further my career.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

When I received my bachelor's degree in acting and when I received my master's degree in acting, as well as my year on Broadway in *Bombay Dreams*. Playing Naseruddin in *Taxi to Jannah* and playing the chancellor of Yerba on *Victorious*.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Yes. All the time.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

I think you guys are doing OK. There are a lot more diverse plays out right now and more opportunities for me. It's the directors and casting directors that need to think outside the box and be really specific in their breakdowns so we don't waste our time. There is a lot more *colorful* and *colorblind* casting going on right now, but there could be more.



Amber D. Johnson

Equity member since 2007

Dream Show to SM: 1st National/Chicago tour of *Hamilton*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

I think one of the biggest challenges for stage managers is just getting a foot in the door with a company. Unlike auditions, stage managers have fewer opportunities for actual face time with general managers and/or production managers, and it's sometimes very challenging to get an interview unless you know someone already involved with a company or project. That's not to say it doesn't happen, but it's important to keep getting your name out to companies any way you can, even if they aren't hiring at that moment. Eventually, some opportunity will come along.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I have never felt like I was hired to fill a quota, but there have been some occasions on which I was stereotyped a certain way because I am a woman. Being a strong and confident woman as well as a stage manager has often led people to assume

(Continued on page 22)

April 11, 1990 — Equity co-sponsors Creativity & Artists with Disabilities, a forum to explore ways to improve opportunities for performers with disabilities. Later, Council resolves that "where a role [has] a disability, or where the presence or absence of a disability is not relevant to character...actors with disabilities will be given equal casting consideration."

(Continued from page 21)

certain ideas and sometimes comment on what they think is my sexual preference and lifestyle. Thankfully these comments have lessened over the years, and I would like to think it's because there are several strong women in this industry showing that being able to do our jobs well has nothing to do with our sexual identities.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

For me, joining the union was a big deal, but I think my proudest moment was being able to leave my day job and make stage management a full-time gig for the last several years. I'm also proud of myself for continuing to grow within my field, taking risks and being able to collaborate with some of the most professional people in the theatre industry today. I'm also proud of the fact that I feel at home working at all levels of theatre, whether it be a Chicago storefront or a national tour.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age/disability?

Unfortunately, yes. I've only felt like that two or three times. To feel that I wasn't properly considered for a position because I am a woman or not the right ethnicity is infuriating, and it makes me sad for those organizations. On the flipside, I've also been in interview situations where it has been admitted that the company wants to only hire women for the SM team due to the sensitive nature of the play material, and it assumes the cast would be more comfortable with a female stage manager. To be put in that position feels icky, and it immediately undermines all the hard work I've done to get where I am today.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Actors' Equity should continue to be a progressive leader in the fight for equality and human rights, and not just in the arts community. We can set an example for other unions and national organizations. That also means listening to members on their needs when it comes to these issues, admitting and correcting any mistakes made in the past and making sure that future opportunities are open to all members regardless of gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

Thomas Peter Johnson

Equity member since 1994
Dream Show to SM: *Cyrano de Bergerac*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

Most of my experience in the audition room has been as a producer. Nearly all of our auditions were held in the Chicago office in the early days. I had a lot of sympathy for the performers who had to audition across the desk in the small office. However, today that problem has been solved — at least in Chicago.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I can't answer this question based on any personal experience as an actor or stage manager. However, I have seen tremendous improvements brought about by the actions of the union, government legislation and the activism of groups that have been historically stereotyped. The stereotyping that I have experienced in my over 50 years in the professional theatre is of our rural theatre often perceived as lacking diversity.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor/stage manager?

The achievement that makes me most proud is the simple fact that a theatre company that I helped to create and nurture, along with countless theatre artists, has existed for over 40 years. Actors' Equity has played a very major role in the company's survival.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age/disability?

Not at all. I know how important diversity is to any performing organization. I can say that I have been in the position as a producer to ensure that no policy or practice of management exists in our company that would limit the opportunity for any talented professional regardless of age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation or political belief.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Encourage all members to explore the opportunities for work outside the city. There are hundreds of opportunities each season in rural areas throughout the United States. Diversity can only be achieved when companies have a truly open hiring policy and when theatre artists are willing to make their skills and talents available to such rural companies.

February 24, 2009 — Council resolves that Equity "has a long history of commitment to human rights for all people. [Equity] reaffirms its support for equal rights for gay Americans, and declares its support for marriage equality and for the repeal of Proposition 8 [stating marriage is between man and woman], currently before the California Supreme Court."



Karole Foreman

Equity member since 1987
Dream Role: Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

Directors making disparaging remarks about me in the room. I once had a director kiss me during a reading — completely caught me off guard. In New York, I was called in to a Broadway audition that was doing a non-traditional casting of a role; however, it was apparent that this particular British director did not want to do that with this role. Because of the subject matter, I completely understood, but I just wanted to do a great audition because my attitude is "You never know what you are really auditioning for." Before I even got to read the director said, "Well, this role isn't written for a black person, but you all [I guess she meant Americans?] do this sort of thing here."

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I've been asked to be sassy, be loud, sing gospel, riff, be more urban, be more black (yes, actually, by a stage manager during a rehearsal), and because of my age range now, most of the breakdowns go something like this: earthy, wise, wit and humor, great gospel belt, matriarch of the family...and sassy. Yes, I have passed on auditions, roles and plays that either made me cringe or I thought were objectionable.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

Well, I'm so grateful that I have been able to make a living and a life as a working actor/theatre artist. To me, that has been a childhood dream come true. I also had the benefit of working a lot during the heyday of non-traditional casting throughout the late '80s and '90s. I feel that theaters have become more conservative over the past decade. Roles that I am very proud of (the traditional and non-traditional ones) include: Diana Goodman in *Next To Normal*, Caroline in *Caroline, or Change*, Emma Arkadina in *Stupid #\$\$%^&# Bird*, Julia in *Wedding Band* and Esther in *Intimate Apparel*.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

I am sure I have because that is just the nature of our business. We cannot be all things to all people. I've always believed that the right opportunity is out there for me. If not, then I just have to create it.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

Continue to advocate as it has always done. There is always a generation of artists who don't know what came before and how we've won the benefits that may be taken for granted. I think Equity has had a long, wonderful history of inclusiveness and diversity, even before film and television began to embrace them. If anything, I think we as members have to be more courageous in speaking up about these issues and not be afraid of making waves or losing a job. There are ways of engaging people with different or even unenlightened opinions and remaining respectful and open to having a dialogue. If a potential employer or creative team is belligerent or unkind, it is better to move on to a healthier situation. We deserve nothing less.

David Drescher

Equity member since 2013
Dream Show to SM: *Newsies*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

My age has always been a factor when it comes to interviewing for jobs, and meeting with production managers has been no different. But I have never let that stand in my way. I get the contracts because of my ability to think on my feet and manage a production well.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

In my experience as a stage manager I have not been offered a job based on stereotype or background, but I have seen such situations many times in the audition room with actors.

(Continued on page 24)

January 17, 2010 — The EEO Chairs and staff from all regions meet in Chicago for the first National EEO Summit. The agenda includes exploration into the concerns of Equity members of color, women, seniors and performers with disabilities. A new brand is unveiled that encompasses these concerns and their solutions: EEO: One Voice.

(Continued from page 23)

What are some of your proudest achievements as stage manager?

One of the proudest moments of my job as a stage manager is calling a show from the wings and seeing the work of four-plus weeks, and countless hours, finally on its feet. I have great joy and pride in the shows I work on, and seeing them running is where I get my satisfaction. Every show is important to me. But I would have to say the proudest moment as a stage manager so far would be the day I got my Equity card in the mail.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age/disability?

I know that I have been looked over for jobs because of my age. A friend of mine was offered a job over me because the company wanted a stage manager that was older even though I had two more years of experience.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

At this point in time, I cannot think of a way for Actors' Equity to make the workplace more diverse or inclusive. Every time I have an issue that I cannot handle, whether it is between me and the company or an actor and the company, that I cannot handle, all I have to do is talk to our Equity representative and everything is dealt with. I am proud to be an Equity stage manager. I feel like I have the full support of Actors' Equity in every job I take.



Jennie Sophia

Equity member since 2012

Dream Role: Right now it's Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*

What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

My greatest challenge in the audition room is navigating what I feel to be a "cold" room — a room where I sense people are tired, bored, frustrated or annoyed that they have to sit there and listen to something I have invested my heart and time in. I understand why this might be the case in some settings because of the demands of the business or the actors that have abused their trust, but I always do better work when people show me I matter to them and help me fight the nerves and fear that hinder my work instead of presenting more for me to work through.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

Most of the time I am stereotyped as the love interest, ingénue or leading lady — and I am in the beginning stages of adding "mother" to that lineup. I love my stereotype, but I have learned the most when I strayed from it. Earlier in my career, I would turn down roles that scared me because I didn't want to understand their truth and was afraid of what they might do to me if I embraced them. After I learned to lower my pride and embrace courage, I discovered a way to bring more life and depth to the roles I predominantly play. Badasses were my ticket. Also, the directors who were able to see beyond my stereotype and think outside the box gave me a gift I will forever treasure.

What are some of your proudest achievements as an actor?

Baring my soul to strangers, friends, teachers, producers, critics, foes, etc.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Yes. Confessing to me in all love, a director told me that part of the deciding factor of whether or not I would play a principal role on a national tour was due to my image — more specifically, my weight. I was hired as an alternate if the actor couldn't complete the run. Well, six months later, I got the call. I jumped in and completed the run. Later, in a heart to heart with the director, I gleaned that it was my grit and determination to prove I could take on the role (and I sure did) that taught that director to look deeper into an actor as she makes the final casting choice.

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

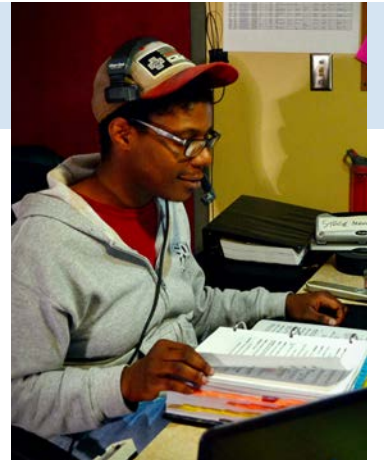
Find people who are willing to see "outside" the box and "in" the box to aid people in being more aware of what "could be" rather than what "always has been." Put their words in this publication, advocates in the workplace and leaders in the union who are dedicated to this model.

September 22, 2013 — In celebration of our centennial, Council recommit itself to our history of diversity. We recognize that this policy of diversity, which is endorsed by the AFL-CIO, makes us stronger, better and more equitably representative of our members.

Jeremy Phillips

Equity member since 2010

Dream Show to SM: *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*



What are some of the challenges you've encountered in the audition room or during the interview process?

During the interview process, I always ask, "What will my experience in your town be like for a black, gay man?" I know it's 2016, but you still have to ask this question. The theatre may be as inclusive as they come, but you also have to exist as a member of a community at large, and depending on where you are, that could be problematic. It's the one time where the answer of "Um..." tells me all I need to know, and it weighs on decisions to accept contracts or not.

What are the most common stereotypes you've been asked to play? Have there been roles/jobs you've turned down because you didn't want to portray a stereotype?

I haven't had to play any stereotypes as a stage manager, but I've watched this happen multiple times. Most of the time, it's directors and music directors trying to get a black person to act more "urban." I was in a rehearsal when a director leaned over to me and asked, "What's the least offensive way to ask [the actor] to be more black?" It's slightly offensive, as the usual reason that this request is made is for comedic purposes. Everyone wants that "sassy black friend." (Read: one-dimensional cultural stereotype.) I see it time and time again when there's a gospel-style number in a musical and they want the black actor or actress to riff, giving the number that "soul" feel. And it doesn't just apply to blacks. There's the "fiery" Latino, the "quiet" Asian, etc.

What are some of your proudest achievements as a stage manager?

I would say that my proudest achievement as a stage manager would be earning my Equity card doing a TheatreworksUSA tour. Compared to loading in a full set into a gym at 7 a.m., everything else was pretty tame. Also, I learned that some of the best crews I've ever worked with have comprised lunch ladies (I ate so many tater-tots) and janitors. The best part was always the warm reception we received when we arrived at the schools. We were the biggest thing coming through that town, and they appreciated it. It gives me my drive today to make every performance of every show great, even when I don't feel like it — because to someone in that audience, what we're doing is magic.

Do you feel you've ever lost out on a job because of your background/gender/age?

Um...not really?

What can Actors' Equity do to help make the workplace more diverse and inclusive?

This is a difficult question to answer, because it's so complex. Mostly, when it comes to the acting side, I think the burden needs to be placed more on the theaters themselves to actually promote non-traditional casting, not just casting people of color when the script specifically requires it. I mean, why can't Mary Poppins be black? When it comes to stage management, I think that Equity should do more to aid POC stage managers: job shadowing, interview skills assessments, internships, etc. Most of my job interviews are over the phone, so race doesn't really play into it that much, but a stronger skill set and better connections would definitely help.

Continue the Conversation Online

"It's not about the many jobs you get, it's about that one job you do well and break boundaries with." - Valerie Lau-Kee Lai

Annually, Equity celebrates diversity with panel discussions and performances. To celebrate Black History Month in February and Asian Heritage Month in May, the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee held two panels to discuss the lives of artists of color working at the height of their careers. Both panels were filmed and are now available on our YouTube page: [YouTube.com/ActorsEquity100](https://www.youtube.com/ActorsEquity100).

Here are some highlights:

"You gotta be better than the rest. You've got to work harder to get everyone to see talent - not color." - JoAnn M. Hunter

"You're going to be met with a lot of resistance. Continue to knock down doors and push barriers." - Pearl Sun

"I struggle with being the token member on a team." - Kenneth J McGee

"What I tell my students: It's important to learn and understand that everybody's path is different." - Carly Hughes

"There's pain in the game, but there's growth in the hard places. Stay with it." - Peter Jay Fernandez

May 2, 2016 — During a Plenary session, Council affirms that promoting equal opportunity, diversity, gender parity and inclusion in its organizing, representation, communication and educational work shall be a top priority of the union.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The importance of Equity's National EEO Committee

Equity has never cowered from standing up for its members. The union's recognizable and powerful National Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (EEOC) is a remarkable emblem of Equity's history and legacy regarding discrimination and harassment against any member.

"The National Equal Employment Committee gives a voice to many of our members who have felt marginalized in the industry, in part by creating initiatives and events that celebrate, educate and illuminate our diverse membership," said Christine Toy Johnson, Chair of the National EEO Committee.

The origins of the committee are rooted in the founding and development of Equity. The Committee Investigating Jim Crow in Theatres formed in 1946, the Committee on Integration

followed in the early '50s and the Ethnic Minorities Committee formed in the early '60s. These and several others are all incredible snapshots of how Equity has fought hard and shaped the industry's stages — quite literally. In fact, before it was the EEOC, it was known as the Committee for Racial Equality.

The committee has been tasked with and is responsible for creating anti-discrimination and non-traditional/inclusive casting language that is in all of Equity's rulebooks, crafting language that reflects the union's diverse membership. The actions of Equity's EEOC has reverberated across the globe — whether working with industry leaders to build bridges of inclusiveness, panel discussions across the country, specific initiatives taken by Council and staff or

participation at the annual Federation of International Actors conference. Equity and the committee continue to speak up and stand up for inclusion.

"We have spoken up against exclusionary practices in the press, providing a public platform for the union's philosophies on equality to be heard," Johnson said. "We continue to take a leadership role in helping to make this a more diverse and inclusive industry by participating in and leading nationwide discussions."

In 2014, the regionally chaired committee became national and currently has 109 members. Below, Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of past and present tell us how the committee has grown, the legacy it's continually building and how our industry has been shaped by Equity.



Photo by Bruce Alan Johnson

"I knew of the committee's work before I ran for Central Regional Board and Council, but it was the *Miss Saigon* controversy that shook me awake. On Broadway at the time, I attended a number of tense Membership Meetings where the disingenuous casting of that particular production was chewed on right in the open. That watershed moment raised a lot of consciousness and galvanized union members of every color — especially Asian American actors — all across the country. *Miss Saigon* got everybody's attention and helped us form important alliances. Real progress was made. We still have a ways to go, but that crisis ushered in meaningful, much-needed growth."

— Cheryl Lynn Bruce, former Chair, Central Regional EEOC

"The Equal Employment Opportunity Committee has helped to shape this union and industry by empowering members to create change from within. It gives voice to the issues of diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity, which affects each and every one of us as actors and stage managers. The forums, meetings and open discussions with industry leaders and awards created by the committee have resulted in increased job opportunities, which are being seen on our stages in New York and around the country."

— Julia Breanetta Simpson, former 3rd Vice Chair, National EEOC; former Co-Chair, Eastern Region EEOC

(Continued on page 31)

The Lonergan turns 30

The Ray Lonergan Memorial Library celebrates three decades assisting members

An Equity resource turns 30 this year. A library just for actors and stage managers, the Ray Lonergan Memorial Library, located in the Chicago Equity office, celebrates three decades of being a treasure trove of study for Equity members. Established in 1986 as the result of a generous donation to the Central Region by the family of the late actor and Equity member Ray Lonergan, the library has become a place of research for members in the area. Lonergan's expansive collection formed the core of the library, which has grown to house more than 4,000 scripts thanks to several generous donors (and specifically a large donation from member Sidney Eden).

The library is adamant that it is neither a research nor archive library, but rather it's a place "to help the actor get that job."

"The Ray Lonergan Library has lasted for 30 years because of the support from the Central Regional Directors (Tad Currie, Kathryn Lamkey and Sean Taylor), because of support from the Central Regional Board and because of the dedicated volunteers working tirelessly to help their union brothers and sisters find resources needed to succeed," said Non-Councillor CRB Member Diane Dorsey.

The resource center is run by a committee of Equity members, including Dorsey and Chair Iris Lieberman, Buddy King, Connie McGrail and Lucy Zukaitis. Many of the committee members helped found the space and raise



Photo and contents page photo by Emmanuel Rios

additional funding to provide bookshelves for the scripts and to catalogue the entire collection. Last year, the committee decided to change the scope of the library's offerings. Originally the collection stored books, DVDs, videos, cassettes, CDs and sheet music — but as the world goes digital, the committee found that the space's real heft was in its scripts.

The mission of the library has remained the same over the three decades: to truly assist an Equity member

in booking a job. The simple intention of the scripts, which can be read on site or checked out, is to help an actor prepare, whether just reading the play, searching for a monologue or studying a scene.

"This library is a vital resource because it's the only one of its kind," said Committee Chair Iris Lieberman. "It's the only place in Chicago where you can borrow scripts other than the Chicago Public Library. The space is convenient because it's located in the



Equity Membership Candidates Lucy Zukaitis and Courtney Cerny research in the Ray Lonergan Memorial Library.

audition waiting room, so members can peruse the collection, read a script or check one out before or after an audition. There's no fee and members already technically have a 'library card' — their Equity card!"

The library is always looking for donations, either financial or in the form of used scripts in good condition. Additionally, the library is a tax-deductible 401(c)(3) entity under the umbrella of the Actors' Equity Foundation — so all donations are tax-deductible. If interested in donating, contact Member Services Coordinator Emanuel Rios at 312-641-0393, ext. 240.

Theatre Spotlight - (Continued from page 11)

in the summer of 2011. The company's 90-seat second stage at the Weston Rod and Gun Club is to be replaced by the new studio theater in 2017. Weston's famed after-hours Cabaret takes place nightly in a 70-seat lounge adjacent to the theater's restaurant on the lower level of the Playhouse.

The company actively partners to reach a wider audience. Weston co-produced *The Glass Menagerie* last season with Florida's Gulfshore Playhouse, and is producing Alan Ayckbourn's comic trilogy, *The Norman Conquests*, with neighboring Northern Stage and Dorset Theatre Festival. Weston joined

with eight Southern Vermont arts organizations to form the "Hills Alive!" Festival of the Arts, which was featured in the *New York Times* as one of the top 50 festivals in the country in 2015.

Weston has produced eight world premieres including the chamber version of Craig Lucas and Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, and helped send the Tony-nominated (title of show) to Broadway. Plays and musicals developed at Weston in 2016 are slated for production at Dallas Theater Center, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Playwrights Horizons and London's Southwark Playhouse.

Long committed to diversity, Weston was proud to receive Equity's

Rosetta LeNoire Award in 2015. Artistic Director Stettler said, "We are proud of our relationship with Actors' Equity, and we are constantly working to see that our company and community are inclusive and welcoming and that the work on our stages reflects a broader world and world view."

Contents page photo:

Members Preston Sadleir and Sarah Stiles in the Weston Playhouse Theatre Company world premiere of *Analog and Vinyl*. | Photo by Hubert Schriebl

In Memoriam

"Were I to die and go to heaven and find it populated by actors, I would not be unhappy."
— Playwright Ben Hecht

Robin Joy Allan	Frank Freda	James Noble
Arthur Anderson	Miriam Goldina	Martin Novemsky
Barbara Barron	Robert Hackman	Kenneth Paine
Royal Beal	Marian Haraldson	Dina Paisner
Evelyn Bell	Bill Henderson	June Prud'homme
Jerry Bell	Art Hern	Kevin Remington
Jacob Benami	Cynthia Hopkins	Doris Roberts
Mary Ann Bentley	Ken Howard	Audrey Roth
Shannon Bolin	Edward Howes	Daniel A. Schay
Cheryl Carter	Beth Howland	Frank Senger
Ted Chase	Anne Jackson	Michael Shelle
David Compton	James Javore	James Wilson Sherman
Chad Cunningham	Jeanne Jones	R. L. Smith
Tammis Day	James Karr	David Langston Smyrl
Sharon Devonish	Timothy Kashuk	Jeff Stacey
Larry Drake	Michi Kobi	Jean Streit
Patty Duke	Jack F. Lee	Frank Torren
Shawn Elliott	Zoya Leporska	Stephen Vess
Joseph M. Erdey	Lynn Manning	Janet Stewart White
Helen F. Evans	Jack Matthew	David Williams
Bill Fairbairn	Edwin J. McDonough	Karin Woodward
Amy Marie Ferraro	Frankie Michaels	Alan Young
Iris Forrest	Michael Minor	

Reported between 3-1-2016 and 5-31-2016

Save the Date: General Membership Meeting Dates

The following dates have been set for the Regional Equity Membership Meetings:

Eastern Region	Central Region	Western Region
October 24, 2016	October 25, 2016	October 24, 2016
January 9, 2017	January 9, 2017	January 9, 2017
Both meetings will be at 2 p.m. EST on the 14th floor of 165 West 46th Street in New York City.	Both meetings will be at 12 p.m. CST in the Audition Center at 557 West Randolph St. in Chicago.	Both meetings will be at 12 p.m. PST in the Audition Center at 5636 Tujunga Ave. in North Hollywood.

Please visit the Member Portal at members.actorssequity.org for further information and any changes, as well as the date of the Annual April Membership Meeting.

For members with disabilities who would like to request an accommodation to participate in the Membership Meetings, please contact National Director of Governance Allison Bodwell at 212-869-8530, ext. 318, two weeks prior to the meeting.

Want more headlines?

Make sure to check out the Equity News Center located in the Member Portal. It's regularly updated with important news from your union, stories from liaison cities and features about the industry. Visit members.actorssequity.org for more.

Council Resolutions Posted

Resolutions passed from Equity's National Council can now be found in the Equity News Center. Recently published are the resolutions from the General Membership Meeting from Jan. 8, 2016, as well as resolutions from more recent Council meetings.

Get Active with Equity

Join a committee! At Equity, member involvement is crucial and there are numerous ways for you to get active! Committees span from national to regional. To join a committee in your region, call the Governance Department at 212-869-8530, ext. 327.

Equity's 2016 Election Results

Fourteen members — nine from the Eastern Region, one from the Central Region and four from the Western Region — were elected to Council. Ballots were tabulated on May 19, 2016 by Global Election Services. There were 7,215 total valid ballots cast, 4,132 of which were cast electronically.

Eastern Region

Principal Four-Year Term
Nick Wyman
Nancy Slusser
Camille Saviola
Francis Jue
Jeff Blumenkrantz
Mary Gutzi
Not elected: James Ludwig, Wally Dunn, Timothy Oliver Reid, Brian Myers Cooper, Todd Buonopane, Jeff Applegate, Scott McGowan, Morgan Paige Fluss, Joe Zaloom, Peter Davies, BoB Knapp, Jay Paranada, Pernell Walker, Buzz Roddy, Benjamin Mapp, Mark Richard Taylor

Chorus Four-Year Term

Kirsten Wyatt
Rashaan James II
Not elected: Ronald L. Brown, Stas Kmiec

Stage Manager Four-Year Term

Jason A. Quinn

Central Region

Principal Four-Year Term
Kelley Faulkner
Not elected: Mark David Kaplan

Western Region

Principal Four-Year Term
Charlayne Woodard
Not elected: Leo Marks, Barbara Callander

Chorus Four-Year Term

Kim Huber
Not elected: Tro Shaw

Stage Manager Four-Year Term

Pat Loeb
John M. Galo
Not elected: Lara E. Nall

Celebrating Diversity at Equity

Equity has recognized that it's not alone when celebrating its members and their talent. Theaters, agents, directors, producers and organizations across the nation continue to exalt the value of diverse actors and stage managers telling stories to audiences.

Honoring these individuals and organizations that continue to promote inclusiveness on and offstage, Equity generated three remarkable awards.

The Rosetta LeNoire Award

Established in 1988, the award was named in honor of actor and Equity member Rosetta LeNoire, who was also the first recipient, not only because of her body of work in the theatre and her work with the then-titled Actors' Equity Association's Ethnic Minorities Committee, but also for founding the AMAS Repertory Theatre Company (which still practices colorblind casting while developing original musicals) in 1969. LeNoire was a fierce advocate for racial equality onstage and used her talents and platforms to promote those beliefs.

Equity's LeNoire Award recognizes outstanding artistic contributions to the universality of the human experience in American theatre. The award is given to an individual, theater or producing organization with an exemplary record in the hiring or promotion of minorities, female actors and actors with disabilities through multiracial and/or non-traditional casting. Previous recipients include the Sacramento Light Opera Association; Joseph Papp and the New York Shakespeare Festival; and the National Asian American Theatre Company.

The Kathryn V. Lamkey Award

Named after longtime Central Regional Director Kathryn V. Lamkey, this special honor is awarded to an individual and/or an organization that helps to maintain and further Equity's goals of diversity and inclusion.

Started in 2008, the honor is bestowed to members of color and Central Region theaters whose mission is to present work that is by, for and about diverse racial and ethnic groups as well as women, seniors, the disabled and the LGBTQI+ communities. Presented by the union's National EEOC, the award is part of the annual Spirit, A Celebration of Diversity. Past recipients include President of the Joyce Foundation Ellen Alberding and Criss Henderson, founder and artistic director of the Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

The Extraordinary Excellence in Diversity on Broadway Award

Presented by Equity's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee for the first time in 2007 to Broadway's *110 in the Shade* and *Les Misérables*, the Extraordinary Excellence in Diversity on Broadway Award has become an annual, theatrical staple each Broadway season.

The award honors productions that exemplify and promote the union's founding principles of diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity for all who work in the theatre. Not only does the acknowledged production often employ the beliefs of non-traditional casting, but the show itself might recognize social injustices and issues while promoting inclusiveness and diversity.

Winners include *110 in the Shade*, *Billy Elliot*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (2012) and *Cinderella*.

Shuffle Along Receives Union's 10th Annual ACCA Award

This Equity award is the only industry accolade to honor the distinctive talents and contributions by original chorus members of a Broadway season

Shuffle Along, Or The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed garnered the 10th annual ACCA Award for Outstanding Broadway Chorus. Presented by Equity's Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs, the ACCA Award is the only industry accolade of its kind to honor the distinctive talents and contributions made by the original chorus members of a Broadway musical.

Smith, Zurin Villanueva, Christian Dante White, Joseph Wiggan, Pamela Yasutake and Richard Riaz Yoder.

In reviewing the chorus of each Broadway musical that opened in the 2015-2016 theatrical season, ACCA considered the chorus requirements made by each production's director, choreographer and musical director; the caliber of technical skill used to execute those requirements; and the unique contributions made by the entire chorus to the overall production. Members of the ACCA, all of whom have worked on a chorus contract and have seen the ACCA-nominated musicals during the season, cast their vote for the winning chorus.

Past recipients of the ACCA award are the

original chorus members of *Legally Blonde* (2007), *In the Heights* (2008), *West Side Story* (2009), *Fela!* (2010), *The Scottsboro Boys* (2011), *Newsies* (2012), *Pippin* (2013), *Beautiful* (2014) and *An American in Paris* (2015).

The award was presented on June 21 during Equity's National Council meeting.

The 24 individual recipients of the 2016 ACCA Award — all of whom were on chorus contracts and part of the *Shuffle Along* cast on the musical's April 28, 2016, Broadway opening night — are Phillip Attmore, Alexandria Bradley, Darius De Haas, C. K. Edwards, Afra Hines, Curtis Holland, Jason Eugene Holley, Adrienne Howard, Lee Howard, Kendrick Jones, Lisa La Touche, Alicia Lundgren, JC Montgomery, Erin Nichole Moore, Janelle Neal, Brittany Nicole Parks, Arbender J. Robinson, Karissa Royster, Britton



Photo and contents page photo by Stephanie Masucci

Area Liaison Hotline System

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has a national toll-free hotline system for members who live in area liaison and office cities. The number is 877-AEA-1913, honoring the year of Equity's founding.

Each area liaison city has its own extension, where members can access news and information in their region.

(1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

(2) Dial your area extension:

- 810 Albany
- 811 Atlanta
- 812 Austin/San Antonio
- 813 Boston
- 814 Buffalo/Rochester
- 815 Chicago
- 816 Cincinnati/Louisville
- 817 Cleveland
- 818 Dallas/Fort Worth
- 819 Denver
- 820 Detroit
- 821 Florida – Central
- 822 Florida – South
- 823 Houston
- 824 Kansas City
- 825 Las Vegas
- 826 Los Angeles
- 827 Milwaukee/Madison
- 828 Minneapolis/St. Paul
- 829 Nashville
- 830 New Orleans
- 831 New York
- 832 Philadelphia
- 833 Phoenix/Tucson
- 834 Pittsburgh
- 835 San Diego
- 836 San Francisco
- 837 Seattle
- 838 St. Louis
- 839 Washington D.C./Baltimore

#EquityWorks - (Continued from page 7)

Eastern Region staff was able to achieve \$4,742.46 for members working on a show where the production exceeded the span of performance as allowed by the SPT Rulebook.

Staff discovered that a 2012 non-broadcast recording was aired on a PBS local station and available online for rent or download. The media department achieved \$2,364.17 for each member for this unauthorized use.

Staff in the Eastern Region noted a discrepancy at a COST company where the members did not receive the appropriate parts payments. Staff was able to achieve an additional \$588 in salary and \$47 in pension for those members.

Equity reached a settlement for 15 members who were called to rehearse on the day after the day off (not permitted under the LORT Agreement except in emergency), recovering overtime payments totaling \$828 and \$66.24 in pension contributions.

Two LORT theaters produced shows that were subsequently presented in New York. Staff identified that employment for these productions would need to be presented under the terms of a LORT tour, requiring a higher minimum salary. The members in the first company received an additional \$7,675 in salary and \$614 in pension in total. The second company's members received a total package of \$3,885 in salary and \$311 in pension.

In closing out the season for a COST Theatre in the Eastern region, staff identified 44 days of unpaid, but accrued vacation for a total payment of \$5,342.81 to 15 members.

Central Region staff discovered that a regional theater underpaid and underreported two members' salaries. Staff was able to recover \$1,322 for the members.

Central Region staff was able to recover \$700 in vacation pay from a regional theatre in Minneapolis. Additionally, staff recovered over \$600 in unpaid vacation for members who had worked on an extended production under the CAT Agreement.

Western Region staff successfully recovered \$1,166 in unpaid pension and \$4,671 in past due health payments from a regional theater.

Staff in the Western Region noticed that two companies stopped paying into unemployment insurance through their states. Staff was able to collect \$5,000 in unemployment benefits, and both companies are now registered with their respective states.

Western Regional staff recovered almost \$1,000 in past-due travel reimbursements for a member who drove his own vehicle for a production for an extended period.

For even more #EquityWorks items, visit the Equity News Center in the Member Portal.

Building Bridges - (Continued from page 26)

"I believe the EEO committee has an enormous mission to effect change in our union and in our industry. We have focused on affinity-specific events, often celebrating ground-breakers and leaders in the community, which have been successful in connecting members with shared concerns and interests to the union and to each other. But how can we better support our members who are people of color, women (especially women over 40), PWDs, seniors and LGBTQ. We need to explore bolder ways to impact hiring practices both onstage and behind the scenes to enable us to become more inclusive in every way."

— Pat Loeb, former 2nd Vice Chair, National EEOC; former Chair, Western Region EEOC

"Art has always led society; change is not always an easy thing, but art always confronts an issue head-on and embraces it. With the help of groups like Equity's EEOC, the industry is starting to reflect what our membership looks like. Women are speaking out more; people of color are speaking out more; people with disabilities are speaking out more; the LGBTQ community is speaking out more. There seems to be an enlightenment wave that is hitting us all. Our voices are strong; they're part of this fabric that makes up this nation and our art world — and showcases how much we have contributed to the arts."

— Allyson Tucker, 3rd Vice chair, National EEOC

"I have always been proud to serve on the EEOC from the first day I was elected to the Central Regional Board. The National EEOC can, and is, the committee that lends a voice to members who sometimes feel forgotten. We are all diverse in many ways. EEOC allows members to voice their concerns and issues about the industry, the workplace and equality in hiring. We try to find solutions to aid members' issues. We all want to be valued and acknowledged. As a Vice Chair I can now collaborate nationally with our National Chair and other Vice Chairs to discuss and share issues and solutions from different perspectives. That's what's so rewarding about this committee: We all have the same goal nationally, inclusion and equality by any means necessary!"

— E. Faye Butler, 1st Vice Chair, National EEOC; former Chair, Central Region EEOC

"The Equal Employment Opportunity Committee paved my way onto National Council. As an actor of color, I found a place within my union to gather with likeminded members to voice concerns, formulate ideas, create effective programming and focus on solutions for the ongoing issues of 'more roles and paying work.' EEOC represents a catalyst for change, inclusion and empowerment, and provides a safe place to nurture our differences and embrace our similarities while advocating for the right to contribute equally to the landscape of theatre both on and offstage. I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our EEOC leaders and members who work tirelessly to level the playing field. I know through our continued efforts our stages will reflect society in a broader sense. Wait, did that just happen with H.....!?! The work continues."

— Barbara N. Roberts, 2nd Vice Chair, National EEOC; former Chair, Western Region EEOC