

INSIDE ARTS

PRECONFERENCE 2012

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTERS

Sparking Forward



ALSO INSIDE

Disinformationist
improvisationist.
Reggie Watts. Yo.

Lin-Manuel Miranda
on the conviction
of *In the Heights*.

An arts presenter
clowns around.

INSIDE ARTS

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 4
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Move over, traditionalists. Performer and APAP|NYC 2013 speaker Reggie Watts is in the house. Yo.

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Lin-Manuel Miranda is the Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist of *In the Heights*. Despite "rose-colored glasses" that keep him believing in his art, he has his feet on the ground.

BY ALICIA ANSTEAD

“Real artists show us the world in a way we recognize as our own. It’s not necessarily what we always want to hear, but it might be what we need to hear. Artists can do that in a way nothing else really can.”

— USE YOUR SPACE, PAGE 30



THIS PAGE: Jazz Masters at APAP|NYC 2012.

COVER: Jodi Kaplan/Booking Dance showcased Banafsheh at APAP|NYC 2012.

PHOTO: Jacob Belcher/APAP

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It goes without saying that imagination is important to every artist. Here's a collection of inspiring thoughts from people for whom performance has been a way of life.

“It’s so important in our field, really breaking down the barriers between what’s onstage and the people watching onstage and having it become much more of a community conversation.”

— FOLLOW SPOT PAGE 18

THIS PAGE: A step dancing showcase at APAP|NYC 2012.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



IN ONLY A MATTER OF WEEKS, our members and industry leaders will gather for APAP|NYC 2013 in New York City, and I am very excited about the reunions, business connections and productive conversations that await our members and attendees. My one-year anniversary as president and CEO of APAP has taken place, and I look forward to my second conference in that role.

Our members have been the major focus of this year – in committees, changes to our showcase book, communication with our agent and manager members, webinars, e-newsletters and advocacy efforts. Each staff member has communicated his or her deep appreciation for your commitment to APAP and your membership. I hope these efforts have been meaningful to you. As I have stated throughout my tenure, we are all working very hard, each in his or her own way, to support the important work of bringing artists to audiences in the U.S. and around the world. We stand in awe of your commitment and the impact of your tireless work.

This fall I had the pleasure of attending the regional conferences – Western Arts Alliance, Arts Midwest and the Performing Arts Exchange. For the first time, APAP had a booth at each of the conference exhibit halls. APAP membership director Sue Noseworthy, membership associate Vanessa Ferreira and conference and meetings manager Judy Moore met with many of you in exhibition halls around the country, and all returned with a richer understanding of our exhibitor members, a deeper sense of both the critical issues in the industry and the importance of coming together as a field. Thanks to all who visited. Your reception of us was uplifting and informative.

As well as the regional conferences, I enjoyed attending Grantmakers in the Arts, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture and the National Performance Network. At each of these events, I came away with an even stronger sense of the need for us to come together.

Congratulations to my fellow colleagues who do the hard work of creating these gatherings.

As a field we face many issues: diminished resources, changing tastes and modes of operation, dynamically shifting demographics and communities still recovering from economic challenges. Our field often faces the task of trying to navigate these difficulties alone. Know you are part of a much larger community, made up of some of the best people in the business and vocation of the arts. APAP is here to serve you and to be a resource and champion for you and your work.

I look forward to seeing you at APAP|NYC, and if you are in Washington, D.C., please don't hesitate to visit our staff and offices.

Mario Garcia Durham, PRESIDENT & CEO

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FROM THE EDITOR



ALBERT EINSTEIN FAMOUSLY SAID that imagination is more important than knowledge. And yet who among us would want one without the other?

Luckily, we are not forced to make a choice. In fact, at APAP|NYC 2013 — our annual conference taking place Jan. 11-15, 2013 in New York City — takes *Imagine* as its guiding theme. At APAP headquarters in Washington, D.C., we've been working to bring together the nation's leading thinkers

on the subject of imagination — how it feeds innovation, entrepreneurship, community engagement and artmaking.

This issue of *Inside Arts* shines a light on those topics. You'll find creative thinkers such as Jeff Leitner of Insight Labs in Chicago explaining the melding of civic activity with arts leadership, performer Reggie Watts philosophizing about improvisational discovery of language, and writer-composer Lin-Manuel Miranda reflecting on the powerful impact limitations can have on creativity. All three will be at the conference.

Interestingly, both Watts and Miranda harked back to their childhoods as a time when their gifts surfaced and were nurtured either by family life or by random responses of laughter and applause. Michael Alexander, executive and artistic director at Grand Performances in Los Angeles, talks about the same moment in life — when he was a teenager and had the opportunity to perform as a circus clown in a community. His story about finding his identity as an artist is also recounted in this issue. But all three men raise a fascinating point about imagination, the origin and chemistry of which increasingly interest scientists, but the machinations of which are elusive to all of us. How do we become imaginative people?

To go back to Einstein, we might look at APAP|NYC as a time to explore, discover and pursue the right balance between imagination and knowledge. Fall is a good time to think about ways in which you can integrate both qualities to achieve maximum force as an arts leader in your community, an executive director of a performing arts center or an agent and manager of artists.

After all, imagination is not the domain solely of the artist. The rest of us can benefit from embracing the creative imperatives that artists — and scientists, too, by the way — live and work by. We hope this issue of *Inside Arts* will stimulate new ways of appreciating your own imaginative capability and lead you to the exciting work of others, including those represented in these pages and at the conference in January.

Alicia Anstead, EDITOR

Jazz
EDDIE PALMIERI
2013 NEA Jazz Master

Toshiko Akiyoshi Trio

Eddie Daniels
also with Bob James

Marlena Shaw

Mills Brothers

LAVAY SMITH

Flora Purim & Airto

Little Joe Y La Familia

Tania Maria

Orquesta La Moderna Tradición

Claudia Villela

Latin

BRUBECK BROTHERS

Pete Escovedo Orchestra

Tito Puente Jr. Orchestra

Blues

JAMES COTTON

Persuasions

Gospel Hummingbirds

Steve Lucky and the Rhumba Burns

LINDA TILLERY
and the Cultural Heritage Choir

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APAP|NYC 2013 is
the go-to event for
networking, business
and the inspiration to
set your imagination
afire.



n the Spot

BY KRISTEN ANDRESEN

Photography by Jacob Belcher



There were many memorable moments at the London Olympics this summer. The medal-studded finale of Michael Phelps' swimming career. The grace and power of Gabrielle Douglas. And who could forget Usain Bolt's speed and showmanship?

But one of the most talked-about performances at the games had nothing to do with athletics and everything to do with the arts. It was a stirring tribute to the late John Lennon, complete with archival video, sculpture and live accompaniment by a Liverpool choir. The theme? *Imagine*.

Like the Olympics, the annual Association of Performing Arts Presenters conference — APAP|NYC 2013 — requires stamina, discipline and preparation. It is always a major production for organizers and conference-goers alike. There are moments of surprise. Moments that bring the crowd to its feet. Moments when it feels like anything — everything — is possible.

So it's only fitting that the theme for APAP|NYC 2013 is *Imagine*.

The conference, taking place Jan. 11-15 2013 in New York City, will be a celebration of possibilities. For APAP

and the field, it's a time to embrace new leadership, new opportunities for engagement and new ways of doing business while honoring the rich artistic traditions of the event, the organization and its membership.

In recent years, the presenting field has faced unprecedented economic challenges and shifting demographics — changes that have caused many to look inward as they weathered the storm. The conference is a call to look outward — and move forward. To do what artists and presenters do best: imagine.

"This is much more than a business networking opportunity," says Scott Stoner, director of programs and resources at APAP and the organizational lead for the conference programming. "It's a place for our members to learn and share and imagine in ways that will directly help them do what they do better. Our goal is to provide ample opportunities to share valuable knowledge, ideas and indeed inspiration that each member can apply in his or her professional life."

That inspiration will come in many forms.

It can be found in the popular pre-conference forums, which will include sessions on branded entertainment, international work, jazz and presenting beyond the



main stage. It can be found in the speakers. Lin-Manuel Miranda, the rapper-actor best known for writing and starring in *In the Heights*, will kick off the conference, multi-faceted artist Reggie Watts [see feature page 26] will provide the Sunday plenary and Roseanne Cash will close the conference. It can be found in the APAP EXPO Hall and more than 1,000 showcases. It can be found in the informal conversations over drinks or between professional development sessions. And of course it can be found on the streets, in the restaurants and on the stages of the city that never sleeps.

“To me, the highlight is the whole of the conference,” says Mario Garcia Durham, APAP president and CEO. “It’s a gathering place to see your colleagues from the U.S. and internationally. You’re brought into conversation. You see artists you haven’t been exposed to, and hopefully enjoy fantastic cuisines and see the art offerings in New York.”

Durham was new to the office during last year’s conference, but has been able to take an active role shaping the content and scope of the 2013 event. His priority is to

ensure that APAP meets the needs of its membership effectively and productively. To that end, he is focused on making it easier for everyone — artists, managers, agents and presenters — to do business.

“We’re keenly aware of the challenges presenters, agents and managers face when they’re trying to accomplish their important work,” Durham says. “We want to be responsive and timely. We’re also working in conjunction with other national service organizations for the greater good of the field.”

According to conference co-chair Alison Spiriti, president of AWA Touring Services in New York City and an APAP board member, there’s no better place to respond to the field’s needs than at APAP|NYC.

“I think this event is the touchstone of our entire industry,” she says. “It’s not only a gathering place, a place to knowledge-share, a place to learn from each other, it’s a place of transaction. Business is actually getting done.”

For Spiriti, who has an extensive background in touring Broadway, business may be the focus. But that doesn’t mean there’s no room for creativity — or imagination.

“As a businessperson, it’s hard to step out of my practical and analytical mind. What ‘imagine’ means to me is



giving me the freedom to almost not be who I am, to push boundaries, to approach art in a different way, to approach my colleagues in a different way,” Spiriti says.

That dialogue — the kind that emerges when people from all sectors of the industry and all parts of the political spectrum come together — is one of the most exciting aspects of the conference for Spiriti’s co-chair Michael Reed, senior director of cultural participation and programming at ASU-Gammage in Arizona.

Reed has attended more than 15 conferences and was a member of the inaugural class of the APAP Emerging Leadership Institute. He feels a deep responsibility to the organization and the membership because the conference has been such a positive force in his own career.

“We want to make sure the entire field feels welcome — there’s room for a smaller commercial house in rural Montana, and there’s also room for the Yerba Buenas of the world,” Reed says. “There is truly a voice for all of the membership on the programmatic side.”

Saturday’s plenary will bring back the popular pecha kucha format with a series of rapid-fire presentations driven by such thought leaders as Daniel Bernard Roumain, playwright and director Young Jean Lee, Kickstarter’s Stephanie Pereira, Algerian-born singer and activist Souad Massi and young arts “projectician” Adam Horowitz. Jean Cook, an artist and founder of the Future of Music Coalition, will host the event — which played to an overflow crowd last year.

The concise format — each speaker has exactly six minutes and 40 seconds to present a pre-set series of images and/or video — requires a bit of preparation, which forces the speakers to think critically about what they’ll say and how they’ll say it. But there’s plenty of room for spontaneity



as well, with the audience interaction built into the pecha kucha and with an “Imagination Booth,” a new feature that allows conference-goers to record three-to five-minute vignettes in a mini “studio booth.” These vignettes could be lessons about techniques or initiatives that worked particularly well. They could be questions that others can respond to. Either way, they’ll be shown at the beginning of sessions to stimulate conversation — in person, on Facebook and on Twitter.

“Sometimes, we don’t know what we don’t know,” Stoner says. “Sometimes, what’s going to be of the most value to you comes to you on the spot, and if you’re in the right setting, you’re able then to follow through on that on the spot.”

At other times, follow-through takes time, planning and strategy. That’s where the professional development sessions come in. The sessions follow two threads: entrepreneurship, which focuses on using tools from the business world to enhance the creation and presentation of new work, and activism in the arts, inspired by last year’s

rousing Yates Award acceptance speech on social activism by Ben Cameron.

“How can we in the field take a more active role to build or rebuild communities across the country or around the world?” Stoner asks. “If APAP members come together as a unified force, we can combine thought and action to ensure a heart of civic engagement and community involvement. In the presenting world, we’re working at the intersection of these activities to be a key player in revitalizing communities, to rebuild from the many challenges we have all faced in recent years.”

There is no better time than APAP|NYC 2013 to revitalize, recharge and, yes, rebuild. There is no better place to connect with colleagues and share our knowledge. And there is no better reason to imagine how we can move forward, how we can come together, how we can all grow stronger — through the arts. **IAA**

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