



# The Fellows Gazette

Volume 85

Published by the College of Fellows of the American Theatre

Summer 2021

*Now is the Winter of Our Discontent made Glorious Summer.....*



Dean Gail Humphries & The College of Fellows of the American Theatre welcomed new Fellows for 2020 and 2021 in a Zoom webinar from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

## Spring 2021



Rives Collins



Caleen Sinnette Jennings



Odai Johnson



Harvey Young

Benny Sato Ambush

Risa Brainin

Lee Breuer

Dorothy Chansky

John MacKenzie Clum

Naomi Iizuka

Rhona Justice Maloy

Molly Smith



Top, Image from 2019 Annual Meeting; Middle, College of Fellows Class of 2021;  
Bottom, College of Fellows Class of 2020

## Celebrating the Fellows Webinar Weekend!

April 18 2021

**Class of 2021**  
**Citations for Investiture into the**  
**College of Fellows of the American Theatre<sup>1</sup>**

**Rives Collins**

**- Citation by Fellow Kim Peter Kovac**

It is hard to overestimate the far-reaching impact that Rives has had on the interrelated fields of theater for young audiences and theater education in the USA.

He has spent thirty years at the School of Theatre at Northwestern University and is currently a full professor and department chair. He heads up the theater for young audiences module, building inarguably the finest undergrad program in the country – the students (who are some of the most coveted interns around) and the graduates are, by and large, extremely intelligent, creative, well-trained, with open and broad attitudes toward their work. The TYA field in the US is filled with Rives' students, with major positions at theatres, universities, high schools, and community centers.

He is an internationally recognized storyteller who employs those skills in a variety of ways – teaching storytelling to both theatre students and to grad students in the business school, reminding playwrights, directors, and actors of the importance of story qua story in their work, and being one of our field's most dynamic and articulate spokespersons. His international reputation is as strong as in this country.

I have been fortunate to experience Rives' skills as a director and new-play shepherd on three recent projects: the Northwestern commission of Laura Schellhardt's *Ever In the Glades* part of *New Visions/New Voices*; the Center's commissioning Laura to write *Digging Up Dessa* and an ongoing artistic partnership with New Vision's Translation Project involving literal and cultural translation of a play originally written in Maltese, Rives' approaches the work with respect, joy, and intelligence. He guides actors and designers (both student and professional) by bringing out their most creative insights and then wrapping them up into a coherent and magical whole. Undoubtedly in part because of the years he's spent creating stories, Rives deeply understands the process of playwriting and sets himself up as a creative partner to the writer as involved as she or he needs.

It is with humility, respect, and pride that I present Rives Collins for induction to the College of Fellows of the American Theatre



**Caleen Sinnette Jennings**

**- Citation by Fellows Dean Gail Humphries**

Caleen Sinnette Jennings has generated a prolific career in the theatre, distinguished through her artistic accomplishments, scholarship, teaching and service to the field. She is a tour de force in the theatre world as a playwright, professor, mentor, and advocate for social justice through the arts. Her career reflects a consistent dedication to social justice and equality in her plays, teaching and directing. Her life in the theatre and her career embody a deep and consistent dedication to standards of excellence and a strong conviction to her ideals. She has affected and inspired thousands of students and audience members with her plays and teaching.

---

<sup>1</sup> Full Citations for the Class of 2020 may be found in the Summer/Fall 2020 *Gazette* (Vol. 83).

Professor Jennings is Professor Emerita at American University. Her work at American includes the creation of a minor in interdisciplinary multi-ethnic studies, extensive directing credits, service as the co-chair for the Department of Performing Arts, as well as Founder and Co-chair of the University President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion. She was also the National Endowment Distinguished Professor of Theatre at Colgate University, while on sabbatical. She was the recipient of a grant from the Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays and selected as Outstanding Teacher of Playwriting by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. She has served as a member of the acting faculty for the Folger Shakespeare Library Education Department's Teaching Shakespeare for many years. She was the project manager of a substantial National Endowment for the Humanities grant for this program focusing on identity and difference.

Ms. Jennings is a prolific playwright. Awards for her writing include numerous Helen Hayes nominations and significant honors for her new trilogy entitled *Queens Girl in Africa* at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland and Mosaic Theatre in Washington, DC. Her publications include multiple works published by Dramatic Publishing Company and New Plays, Incorporated. She has been a Ford Foundation sponsored playwright for a writing retreat, as well as a scholar/member of a Ford Foundation Funded project focusing on "Black Women's Work." Her plays for children's theatre have been toured by the Kennedy Center, performed at Imagination Stage and in countless other sites in the United States, as well as for ASSITEJ.

Ms. Jennings has presented a plethora of workshops and panels, served as a juror/respondent for countless theatre productions, and has been interviewed extensively for her work in the arts.

Caleen Sinnete Jennings truly "walks her talk," but she does it with such grace, dignity, and conviction that she is a catalyst and extraordinary magnet as a change agent in the arts.



## **Odai Johnson**

**- Citation by Fellow Laurence Senelick**

Odai Johnson is one of foremost practitioners of theatre studies in America today. His work is both erudite and exciting. For many years, he has taught at the University of Washington, where he has served as an example of fine scholarship both for its students and for the profession at large. His scholarship is both wide-ranging and deep, based on primary documentation. His interests and expertise range from the ancient world through the Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Baroque to contemporary trends in the writing of history. His courses have displayed a considerable variety of subjects, and his books and articles often treat of overlooked but significant subjects. For instance, he was among the first to investigate slavery in the Roman world in relation to the drama. Odai is an acknowledged expert on colonial American theatre and is in demand as a writer of prefaces and a speaker on panels. Invited by Colonial Williamsburg to help excavate the footprints of America's oldest theatre, he became a practiced archaeologist.

This sense of public service was especially in evidence some years ago when the University of Washington's administration decided to do away with its graduate doctoral program in the drama school. It was a move protested loudly by theatre faculties across the country as a sacrifice of learning and educational values to economic interests. Ingeniously, Odai managed to preserve the program by converting it to a Center for Performance Studies, which has thrived under his leadership. (He is a veteran dramaturg as well.) The Center has a strong reputation for turning out fine scholars and teachers, and his students are now in turn perpetuating his splendid teaching methods. Odai's reputation is international, for he regularly attends conferences and enjoys residencies at research institutions abroad. His work has been recognized by important institutional grants. And his investigations invariably result in a book which

resets the boundary markers of whichever field he is working in at the time. Odai purports to be “possessed by ideas.” As a teacher and scholar, his prime motivation has been to share the discovery process rather than merely convey information. Over the years I have enjoyed his company, collegial and congenial, as a host and a guest, wise in his judgment and opinions. He will be a valuable member of the College and I urge you to welcome him warmly.



## Harvey Young

- Citation by Fellow Cheryl Black

Dr. Harvey Young is a nationally and internationally renowned scholar, mentor, administrator, and arts advocate. His body of work has established him as a leading authority on the history of African American theatre and the performance and experience of race, and he has achieved this stature in a career that spans a mere two decades, a trajectory aptly described by fellow Harry Elam as "rather meteoric." Between 2002 (2 years before completing his PhD from Cornell University) and 2017, Dr. Young was a member of the faculty of Northwestern University, where he served as Professor and Chair of Theatre as well as Professor of African American Studies and Radio/Television/Film. He moved into his current position as Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Boston University in 2018, after having also received distinguished Fellowship appointments at Stanford, Harvard, and the University College of Dublin Ireland.

He has authored or edited nine books, including the groundbreaking *Embodying Black Experience*, which earned him ‘outstanding scholarship’ awards from NCA and ASTR in 2011, the indispensable *Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre*, for which he received ATHE’s 2014 editing award, and the just-released *Theatre After Empire*, which analyzes performances around the globe that reveal societies in the midst of cultural, political and geographic transition. His tenth book, on theatrical flourishing and exploring the intersection of positive psychology and theatre, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press. He has also published 40-some journal articles and chapters, edited for two years the journal *Theatre Survey*, guest edited special volumes for *Youth Theatre Journal* and *Theatre Topics*, and served on the editorial board of the *Journal of American Drama and Theatre*. He has been invited to present guest lectures across the U.S. and internationally in Korea, the UK, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. As Fellow Henry Bial has noted, however, Harvey's contributions are not limited to the "ivory tower." He has extended his influence beyond academic venues - publishing critical essays and opinion pieces in *Backstage*, *HowlRound*, *Al Jazeera Online*, and the *Chicago Sun Times*, and appearing on *CNN* and *Good Morning America*.

Dr. Young also has an outstanding record of service and leadership in major professional organizations including the Black Theatre Association, Performance Studies International, American Theatre and Drama Society, and the American Society for Theatre Research. He is the immediate past president of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and has also served on the boards of arts organizations like the Yale Club of Chicago and the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. And he makes it all look so easy!

### **Nominations for College of Fellows Due March 1, 2022**

This is a reminder of the responsibility of each Fellow to place in nomination those persons she/he/they believe are qualified to become members of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre. The deadline for nominations for 2023 is March 1 2022. For further details and submission guidelines, please see <https://www.thecollegeoffellows.org/members-only-area/nomination-form/>

## From the Dean



Dear Colleagues,

Greetings and salutations! It is nearly summer and we are finally moving out from under the restraints of the pandemic. It is my pleasure to announce that we have our dates established for our face-to-face annual meeting for 2022. Please mark your calendar for April 23 and 24, 2022! There are new components and locations for our gathering in Washington, D.C., while we also preserve and honor the outstanding tradition of the College of Fellows.

On Saturday, April 23, 2022, we will meet from 2-4 PM at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for Dynamic Dialogues—discussions related to pertinent theatre issues. Facilitators Dean Emeriti Dan Carter and Karen Berman will lead two different groups discussing relevant theatre topics. This is a new addition to our weekend agenda allowing for substantive dialogue, engaging in conversation between new and current Fellows. We will meet in two different rooms in the new facility at the Kennedy Center—The Reach (PT109 and the Skylight Room). A Board member will scribe each meeting and we will have what I believe will be an interesting article for the subsequent issue of *The Gazette*.

Our Saturday evening event is at the National Press Club in the Holeman Lounge from 6:00-9 PM. The Cosmos Club, our normal gathering spot, is not available that evening. It is hard to believe that it is booked that far in advance, but that is the case. The National Press Club is an exceptional venue which you can view on the website (or take a virtual tour) at [press.org](http://press.org). Our Saturday evening will be an informal event that provides an opportunity, as always, for current Fellows to catch up and network with one another and also provides us with the opportunity to introduce the new Fellows to current members in a cocktail reception and lighthearted introduction by their nominators. This evening also includes the opportunity for the new Fellows to sign the formal book for the College. We will have Fellows signing from 2020, 2021 and 2022, so that we can include everyone invested currently and during the pandemic. The evening will be unprecedented in many ways, but this year has certainly surpassed any precedent.

Our business meeting will occur at The Reach in Room PT109 from 10-11 AM, with a short informal coffee beforehand starting at 9:30 AM. After that time, everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy the various spaces of The Reach and then we will convene in The Skylight Room for our investiture luncheon from noon-3 PM. The investiture luncheon will include the Roger L. Stevens address as well as the presentation of citations to the new Fellows for 2022.

More details and your formal invitation will follow in the months to come, but I hope that you enjoyed this Sneak Preview.

Now, to special thanks. Planning and implementing the Zoom webinar was quite an accomplishment because of the exceptional team of individuals involved in so many aspects. If you saw the long list of thank yous on the Zoom Webinar scroll, you can readily understand that it took a comprehensive team effort to realize the meeting. I am particularly grateful to Paula Marchiel and Ed Baker of The Seven Devils Theatre Organization, Jesse Leong (our video editor), Brenda Brody (our ex-officio consultant), the Kennedy Center Team (Gregg Henry, Laura Krause, Bekah Wachenfeld) and the Fellows who worked so hard to make this happen (Karen Berman, Dan Carter, David Leong, Brant Pope and Randy Reinholz). A special shout out to all of the Board members who gave so generously of their time and talent and to each of you for joining us for that special 2 hours on April 18, 2021. A reminder that you can watch the entire meeting on our website under the Members Only section and that you can also access Kathleen F. Conlin's inspiring Roger L. Stevens address via the website.

Kudos also to the magnificent donors who afford us the opportunity to pay it forward! Thank you, Karen Berman, Charlene Gordon, Bonnie Nelson Schwartz, Thomas Schumacher, and Jeffrey Sine. The

scholarships for 2020 and 2021 were recently awarded via live stream and video through The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). Gregg Henry, the KCACTF Artistic Director, has been a formidable force through all of the challenges of the pandemic and we are deeply grateful for his many yeoman efforts. Photos and biographies of the scholarship recipients will be posted on the website soon.

My deep gratitude to our Lifetime Benefactors and to our sponsors for the Zoom webinar. As we move forward in the upcoming months, I am reminded of a quotation from JFK that seems pertinent...

THE FUTURE IS NOT A GIFT. IT IS AN ACHIEVEMENT.

I do believe that we are on the right track!

All the best,



Gail  
Dr. Gail Humphries, Dean

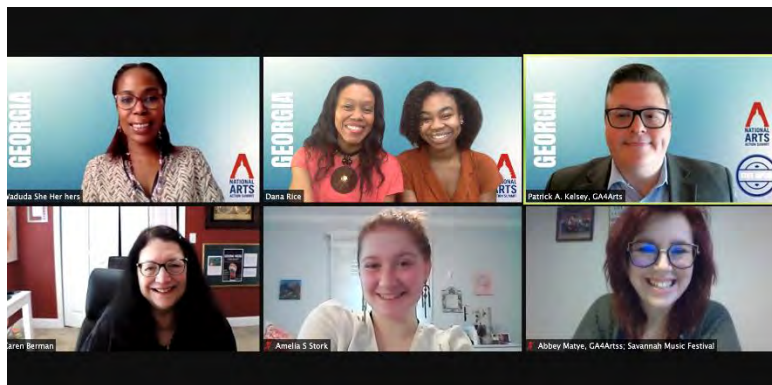


---

**SAVE THE DATE for our first post-pandemic, in-person Annual Meeting**  
Washington, DC. April 23 and 24, 2022

---

## **April 2021 Arts Action Summit Report from Dean Emerita Karen Berman**



**“Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts – the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art.” John Ruskin, English Art Critic**

Arts advocacy promotes equity and access to arts for all citizens. Americans for the Arts found that 90% of the public agrees that arts institutions are important to the quality of life. The College of Fellows, therefore, has supported arts advocacy in order that the arts flourish in small and large communities. The Fellows support an Arts Impact emerging artist award, begun by Fellow Gail Humphries in 2018 and funded by Charlene Gordon, to mentor artists in the delicate craft of effective advocacy.

I attended the week-long National Arts Action Digital Summit sponsored by Americans for the Arts in April 2021. Actress Annette Benning opened the proceedings. The Summit sessions detailed recent legislation on COVID-19 relief for artists and arts organizations given that 63% of arts providers are out

of work with a loss of \$16 billion in the arts industry. Pre-pandemic, the arts and cultural sector represented a \$919 billion dollar industry.

New advocacy efforts discussed during the Summit included increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (which is currently at .0004% of the federal budget or 49 cents per person in taxes), diversity and equity, creative arts for veterans, K-12 arts education, arts and health, and juvenile justice (where arts are proven to reduce recidivism). The Summit culminated with virtual visits with members of Congress to spotlight the economic impact of the arts and the import of funding the arts.

The Summit also provided extensive statistical data on how the arts contribute to society. The arts and culture sector represented 4.3% of the nation's GDP and 5.2 million jobs in 2019. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that in the United States the arts and culture sector was a nearly trillion dollar industry in 2019.

According to Americans for the Arts, the U.S. nonprofit arts industry (separate from for-profit arts) generates \$166.3 billion in economic activity each year, and arts audiences generate \$102.5 billion in revenue for local businesses, such as restaurants.

A Brookings Institution study reported that COVID-19 in the United States has resulted in \$150 billion in lost revenue in creative economy businesses through July 2020. The Creative Industries include performing arts, visual arts, museums, design, arts schools and instruction, and film, radio, and TV.

Beyond finances, the arts contribute to health, well-being, creativity, and innovation. Americans for the Arts found that 55% of Americans with jobs say their job requires creativity. IBM's 2010 study of 1,500 CEOs determined that creativity is the single most important leadership skill. Nobel Laureates in science are seventeen times more likely to be involved in the arts. Arts-involved students get better grades and have higher graduation rates. In 2019, 153,000 higher education degrees in the arts were conferred. Additionally, the Arts Education for All bill would make it explicit that arts can be funded through Title I funds.

I participated in individual virtual appointments with a dozen members of Congress, including Georgia Congressman Jody Hice, to help provide statistics on jobs and financial impact of the arts. I also shared personal stories of how the arts have inspired and transformed at-risk youth with whom I have worked. I was also lucky enough to share my Congressional meetings with high school Arts Presidential Scholar finalist Jordan Rice, whose story was compelling.

We also thanked members of Congress for the recent Recovery Act which provided financial relief to artists and arts institutions. For those needing information on Recovery Act funds for artists and theatre institutions, go to the Americans for the Arts website and link to the American Rescue Plan.

Some of the immediate goals of our Congressional visits were to advocate for two upcoming bills, the CREATE Act and the Saving Transit Art Resources (STAR) Act. The CREATE Act ensures timely visas for foreign guest artists and expands Small Business Administration loans to arts organizations previously not eligible for funding. The STAR Act, as part of the infrastructure proposal, repeals the prohibition on aesthetic art in transportation expenditures, thus allowing murals and artistic landscaping along cement highway construction. North Carolina Representative Alma Adams says she will vote for the STAR Act because "the arts make us human."

Arts advocacy efforts enlighten and persuade Congressional leaders on issues with which many are unfamiliar. Ultimately, passing these bills will keep the arts vibrant in our communities. The College of Fellows of the American Theatre is a proud partner in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Dean Emerita Karen Berman

(For Arts Advocacy 2021 Summary of Congressional Acts, see <https://www.americansforthearts.org>)

## Congratulations to Dean-Elect Dr. Sandra Shannon!



Dr. Sandra Shannon is Professor Emerita of African American Literature in the Department of English at Howard University. Her accomplishments and contributions to the field, as well as leadership in the field, are significant. Shannon is a leading expert on August Wilson and a major scholar in the field of African American Drama. She is the author of two books, several book chapters and multiple key essays and articles. Dr. Shannon is the Founder and current President of the August Wilson Society, former President of the Black Theatre Network, and editor of the *College Language Association Journal*. She also served as Editor of *Theatre Topics*. Her robust career evidences a commitment to excellence in both educational and professional theatre. For more on Dr. Shannon, see <https://gs.howard.edu/content/sandra-shannon>

## A Special Tribute to Dr. Shannon by Fellow Bill Doan





**ARTS IMPACT AWARDS  
2020-2021**



2018 Charlene Gordon Arts Impact Award Recipient  
Alex Tolle (L) with Charlene Gordon

**Jane Alexander Emerging Artist Awards**

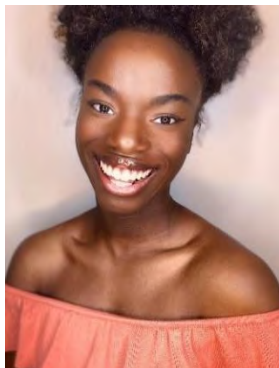


**Jimmy  
Nguyen  
Doane  
University of  
Nebraska  
[2020]**



**Gerald Kitt II  
University of Central  
Florida  
[2021]**

**John Cauble Emerging Leader Awards**



**Jada Alexia  
Hampton  
University of  
Southern Indiana  
[2020]**



**Isha Rao  
Slippery Rock  
University,  
Pennsylvania  
[2020]**

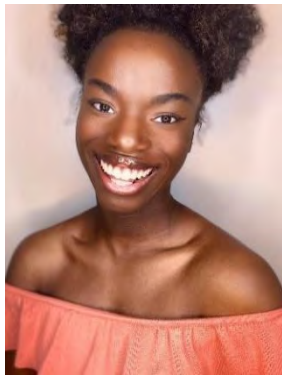


**Kelli Crump**  
University of  
Michigan-Flint  
[2021]



**Nadel Henville**  
Emmanuel College,  
Massachusetts  
[2021]

**Charlene Gordon Arts Impact Awards**



**Jada Alexia Hampton**  
University of  
Southern Indiana  
[2020]



**Isha Rao**  
Slippery Rock  
University,  
Pennsylvania  
[2020]



**Sierra Lancaster**  
Boston Conservatory  
at Berklee  
[2021]



**Kelli Crump**  
University of  
Michigan-Flint  
[2021]

**Opportunities to Serve**

The College has no permanent infrastructure and is therefore dependent on the work of individual Fellows who volunteer their time and effort to serve in various capacities. Anyone who wishes to volunteer for service to the College should reach out directly to Dean Gail Humphries at any time.

**Visit our website**

<https://www.thecollegeoffellows.org/>

Please stop by to keep abreast of the latest information and updates, familiarize yourself with our scholarship activities, peruse the **2020 Financial Report**, or browse the **Photo Gallery**.

**Stay in touch**

If there are any changes in your contact information, please notify Kristy Simpson [ksimpsoncof@gmail.com](mailto:ksimpsoncof@gmail.com).

## News of the Fellows

**Benny Sato Ambush** directed a virtual production of Frank Higgins' "Gunplay: A Play About America" for the Brooklyn College Department of Theatre's MFA Acting Program that streamed April/May 2021. Starting July 2021, Benny will become the new Artistic Director of the Venice Theatre in Venice, FL, the second largest community theater in America.



New Mexico Actors Lab

**Robert Benedetti's** theater in Santa Fe, The New Mexico Actors Lab, will re-open on August 5 with a four-show season. The shows are *The Lifespan of a Fact* in August, *The Cradle Will Rock* in September, *Lungs* in October, and *Other Desert Cities* in November. The company will perform in its new home, a splendid black box theater with moveable seating.



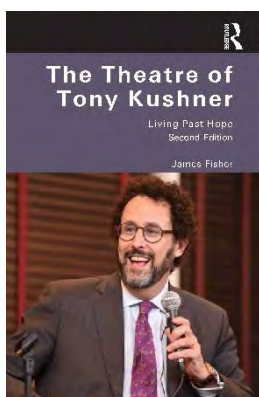
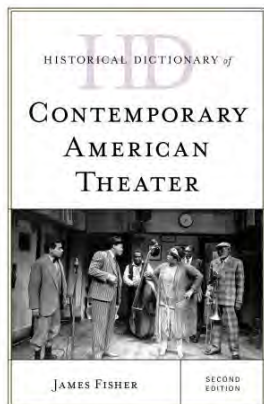
**Karen Berman** directed the award-winning film "Giving Voice: A Black Lives Matter Musical." It has been named Best Feature Film at the Canadian Diversity Film Festival and Best Social Justice Film at the Silk Road Film Awards Cannes. In addition it

has been named Best Social Justice Feature, Best Human Rights Film and Best Cause-Driven Film at the Cannes World Film Festival. The film was devised by Karen and her students at Georgia College and included original songs by Music Director Raymond Jackson.

**Cheryl Black** published "A Virtual Season: *The Rope* and *Where the Cross is Made*, Metropolitan Virtual Playhouse," in *Eugene O'Neill Review* 42: 1 (April 2021) and contributed a chapter titled "Susan Glaspell, the Provincetown Players, and Greenwich Village Feminism," to *Susan Glaspell in Context*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press *Literature in Context* series, edited by J. Ellen Gainer. On May 5 Cheryl hooded her last doctoral advisee, Xiomara Cornejo, on the stage of MU's Rhynsburger Theatre (no hooding or hugging allowed during the "official" ceremony at Mizzou Arena).

**Michael Dinwiddie** participated in the "Revisiting the Harlem Renaissance: The African American on the American Stage" speaker series, May 13 2021. [https://www.mcnyc.org/event/revisiting-harlem-renaissance-african-american-american-stage?utm\\_source=Museum+of+the+City+of+New+York&utm\\_campaign=26fdd13da2-PublicPrograms\\_May2021&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_4336ff1f8c-26fdd13da2-153758953&mc\\_cid=26fdd13da2&mc\\_eid=4464ba2562](https://www.mcnyc.org/event/revisiting-harlem-renaissance-african-american-american-stage?utm_source=Museum+of+the+City+of+New+York&utm_campaign=26fdd13da2-PublicPrograms_May2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4336ff1f8c-26fdd13da2-153758953&mc_cid=26fdd13da2&mc_eid=4464ba2562)

**Bernard Dukore's** "Racism and Shaw" was published as the lead article in the latest issue of *Shaw: The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies* (41,1, 2021).



**James Fisher** has two forthcoming books -- *The Historical Dictionary of Contemporary American Theater*, Second Edition, will be out in June, and *The Theater of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope*, Second Edition, will be out in September. Both are updated and expanded versions. He is also at work on *The Historical Dictionary of Vaudeville*, due out sometime in late 2022. Jim retired from UNCG officially on July 31, 2020 after 42 years of teaching. 29 at Wabash College and 13 at UNCG.

**Julie Jensen's** play, P.G. ANON, was given an audio production at Plan-B Theatre, Salt Lake City, Utah, February 25 to March 14, 2021. She also delivered the keynote address at the Mountain West Popular Culture Conference in Las Vegas, NV, February 20, 2021.



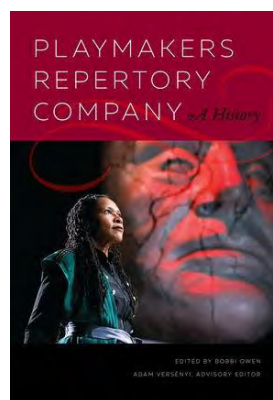
**Kim Peter Kovac's** poetry collection "Border Sounds: Poems & Dispatches from Other Timezones" was recently published by Kelsay Press and is available on Amazon.

**Felicia Londré** is participating in an international online seminar on Gratitude in Transatlantic Relations from February to July. Her paper on 9 June examines Eugène Brieux's deep affection for

and gratitude toward Americans as better expressed, understood, and accepted in his interviews and letters than in his 1919 play *Les Américains chez nous* (*Americans in France*). This research relates to her study of the play as indicative of French and American cultural differences in an article to be published in the forthcoming issue of *New England Theatre Journal*. Meanwhile, as president of the nonprofit KC Molière: 400 in 2022, she oversees events building up to the public celebration of Molière's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday on 15 January 2022. Her verse translation of Molière's *Les Fâcheux* as *The Pests* will be staged by Kansas City Actors Theatre in January 2022.

**Tom Markus** will direct the premiere of *Legal Bribery*, by retired Federal Judge H. Lee Sarokin, in November. This will be the 11th of Sarokin's "ripped from the headlines" plays on topical issues of legal and social justice that have been produced at North Coast Repertory Theatre in Solana Beach, California. *Legal Bribery* turns on the legality and ethics of a politician's non-disclosure agreement in a rape case. (As a whimsical footnote, the combined age of the playwright and director will be 180.)

**Jim O'Connor** will be directing a production of *Baskerville* for the Gloucester Stage Company which opens July fourth. The production that was originally scheduled for 2020 at the company's home indoor theatre was postponed due to Covid and has been rescheduled and moved to an outside venue for this year's production.



**Bobbi Owen** spent the pandemic editing a book about PlayMakers Repertory Company which UNC Press has published. Bobbi's colleague Adam Versenyi was advisory editor.

**Randy Reinholz** directed *Indigenous Earth Voices* by Lee Cataluna and Dillon Chito, a virtual theatre production for Arena Stage, Washington, D.C., 2021 with Kalani Queypo. It should be live on their web page sometime this June.

<https://www.arenastage.org/IndigenousEarthVoices>

Randy is working on a new play with the Indigenous Writer's Collaborative at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and continues to Zoom into universities and theatres to discuss Native / Indigenous theatre. He was elected as President of the National Theatre Conference in New York.



Photo of Maria Manuela Goyanes, Artistic Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre, by Zack DeZon. Courtesy of Woolly Mammoth Theatre

**Bonnie Nelson Schwartz**, Broadway producer and founder of the Helen Hayes Awards, is producing *Backstage With the Helen Hayes Awards*, a series of filmed interviews presented by theatreWashington and EventsDC that spotlights the richness and variety of today's Washington, DC theatre actors, directors, playwrights, designers, producers. Washington DC, with its 90+ theatres, is rich

with major players who either began or make their home in DC or keep returning to play to the appreciative theatre audiences in the nation's capital. From Helen Hayes, (who began her career in Washington, DC at age 5) to Jane Alexander, Kathleen Turner, Phylicia Rashad, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Debbie Allen, S. Epatha Merkerson, and more have deep connections to DC theatre. Intimate conversations mixed with performance clips provide an entertaining and personal look into the lives that make Washington, DC theatre the second largest and most successful community in the nation.

**Laurence Senelick** published his translation of Strindberg's *Dance of Death*, Parts 1 and 2 (Broadway Play Publishing, 2020). His latest articles appear in two formats – print : “Dickens on

the French stage, 1911. Part I -- *Monsieur Pickwick.*” *The Dickensian* (Winter 2020) and “The Company of ‘Whoops, M’dear’” *Gay and Lesbian Review* (May-June 2021); and on-line: “The Mythic Decadence of Weimar Cabaret, » *Volupté. International Journal of Decadence* (Winter 2021) <https://www.stagingdecadence.com/blog/the-mythical-decadence-of-weimar-cabaret>; and “A Formalist Critic’s Picaresque Novel,” *Arts Fuse* (Apr. 2021).

**Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei's** play *A WILDERNESS OF MONKEYS*, a revenge comedy sequel to and reversal of *The Merchant of Venice*, was performed live for six performances via Zoom in March, 2021. Produced by Ophelia's Jump Productions, this visually innovative production was enjoyed by a large international audience. The play reveals the anti-Semitism of Shakespeare's "charming" Venetians, enhances the role of Shylock's daughter Jessica, and concludes with a series of comic stings, reversals and revelations as Shylock and Jessica finally get revenge on their tormentors, who get "as much as they deserve." Her *GHOSTLIGHT: THE HAUNTING*, a contemporary, metatheatrical fusion of *Macbeth* and the kabuki *Yotsuya Ghost Tales*, will be presented as a Halloween Night Zoom performance on Oct. 31, 2021 by New Jersey's Cape May Theatre. The ghost of an Asian-American actress takes revenge on those who betrayed her both personally and professionally. The lead offers a plumb role to a versatile Asian American actress who plays both the Asian American actress in the play and her racist, Caucasian, male manager -- using the rapid changes and simultaneous performance (with the aid of doubles) for which kabuki is famous. Both plays are highly entertaining, fresh takes on classics that are tinged with food for thought in a time of increased hate-crimes against minorities.

**James Still's** trilogy *The Jack Plays* received the 2020 Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards in Drama <https://www.indianaauthorsawards.org/2020-awards/>. The play *The House That Jack Built* is streaming on demand as the closing production for Indiana Repertory Theatre's virtual season through June 20th. <https://www.irtlive.com/plays-and->

[events/2020-2021-Season/the-house-that-jack-built.](https://www.commonwealththeatre.org/our-season/i-love-to-eat/)

Still's *I Love to Eat* is live-streaming at Commonwealth Theatre through June 27th.

[https://commonwealththeatre.org/our-season/i-love-to-eat/](https://www.commonwealththeatre.org/our-season/i-love-to-eat/). His short film *A City of Stories* commissioned and produced by The New Harmony Project in their Sunset Gallery, one of seven short films inspired by hope, may be watched here:

<https://www.newharmonyproject.org/cityofstories>.

His play *Dinosaur(s)* was named the Winner of the Southwest Theatre Productions New Play Contest (Austin, TX).

<https://www.swtproductions.com/female-lead>. His play *Joe the Rememberer* was the winner of the Lake Placid Center for the Arts ZoomFest 2021. His play *Them / Us: a Friendly Ghost Story* was commissioned by Indiana Rep as part of Play At

Home series of short plays commissioned nationally to be enjoyed at home. Online at

<https://www.playathome.org/plays/still-them-us>.

His play *Saint Monica of the Unemployment Helpline* was commissioned by American Blues Theater in Chicago for their 2020 The Ripped Festival online at

<https://americanbluestheater.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/June-24-James-Still.pdf> .

Four of his new plays commissioned by Launch Pad of UC-Santa Barbara are now published in "ALONE, TOGETHER" by Dramatic Publishing Company in a collection of plays written for Zoom at <https://www.dramaticpublishing.com/alone-together>.

---

**The May 2021 issue of TCG may be of special interest to Fellows!**

Check out the College of Fellows ad (p. 37)

and the feature on Fellow Ricardo Khan (pp. 8-9) at the link below:

<https://www.tcgala.org/journal>

---

## In Memoriam

**Judith Kase-(Polisini) Cooper (1989)**

(13 December 1932 - 5 August 2020)

[http://www.obituarymanager.com/obititem.php?cust\\_id=18&id=41862](http://www.obituarymanager.com/obititem.php?cust_id=18&id=41862)

**Ming Cho Lee (1991)**

(3 October 1930 - 23 October 2020)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/theater/ming-cho-lee-dead.html>

**Coleman A. Jennings (1993)**

21 November 1933 - 28 October 2020

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/statesman/obituary.aspx?n=coleman-a-jennings&pid=197147195>

**Harvey Sabinson (1998)**

24 October 1924 - 18 April 2019

<https://deadline.com/2019/04/harvey-sabinson-broadway-league-obituary-press-agent-1202599329/>

*A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again.*

Maya Angelou

**College of Fellows Special Feature**  
**a poetic expression of life in the pandemic year(s) by Fellow Kim Peter Kovac**

**FOG, STILL**  
by Kim Peter Kovac

1.  
**DARK**  
Basho  
*with dewdrops dripping*  
*I wish I could wash*  
*this perishing world*

Brecht, Bertolt  
*In the dark time will there also be singing?*  
*Yes, there will be singing about the dark time.*

Bachmann, Ingeborg  
*The uniform of the day is patience*  
*the order of merit is the star*  
*of hope over the heart*

2.  
**NOW**  
Now is the winter of ~~our~~ the ~~discontent~~ pandemic  
Now is the winter and then is will be the spring  
of the pandemic  
Now is the winter and then will be the spring and  
then will be (hopefully not but  
probably) the summer of ~~the~~ our pandemic  
Now is the winter and then will be the spring and  
then will be (hopefully not but  
probably) the summer of the our pandemic  
and its deadly ripples

3.  
**PAN**  
Pandemonium  
Panjandrum  
Panopticon  
Pantheist  
Pantoums  
Panacea  
Panzer  
Panic  
Pant  
Pan (Peter)

4.  
**FOG**  
of war  
of time  
of illusion  
of confusion  
of lockdown  
of social distancing  
of pandemic-fatigue

5.  
**FOG, DISTANT PAST**  
*Fair is foul, and foul is fair, hover through fog*  
*and filthy air*

A 1603 outbreak of the bubonic plague killed over 20% of Londoners. Shakespeare stayed in town and during and after outbreaks wrote some of his greatest plays, including *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

6.  
**FOG, PAST**  
*The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city* - Robert Louis Stevenson

7.  
**FOG, PRESENT**  
Walking our 'pandemic puppy' after dark on the cusp of winter wearing a mask, resulting in totally foggy glasses leading to dangerously limited vision — making me a metaphor for these times. As well as a cliché. And/or a trope. Or all three.

8.

### POEMS, POEMS, METRONOMES

A kind of metronome was among the inventions of 9th century Andalusian polymath and poet Abbas ibn Firnas. (Sidebar: He also climbed the Cordoba Tower in 875, donned wood and vulture feather wings, and flew—or glided—and lived.)

Ravel's Bolero begins *pianissimo* and rises in a continuous crescendo to *fortissimo*, over an unchanging rhythm played 169 times. (Sidebar: *I've written only one masterpiece -Bolero.. Unfortunately, it has no music in it - Ravel*)

Philosopher Henri Bergson described *durée* as the time it takes for a sugar cube to dissolve in a glass of water - only a few minutes might pass, yet tension of waiting extends the present into an intolerable, infinite drag. He felt that *durée* is the only real experience of time and that clocks and calendars, watches, and metronomes are just means to measure time.

The fog virus comes in on little large cat panther feet paws. It sits looking over harbor and city the whole world on silent haunches, sheds its deadly children and then moves on looking for the next victim.

*We love fog because it shifts old anomalies into the elements surrounding them. It gives relief from a way of seeing.* - Eavan Boland

9.

### ARS PANDEMICA

*It's the vagueness of time in a zeitgeist forged by what bakes us all in our personal cocktails of COVID lockdown, long overdue racial reckoning, economy imploding & toxic politics.*

*I train my weather-eye & weather-pen to seek articulation of the state of the state & the state of myself & the state of my randomly bouncing brain & the state of my own incipient out-feeling & out-reaching intuition.*

10.

### END

R.E.M.

*It's the end of the world as we know it,  
It's the end of the world as we know it,  
It's the end of the world as we know it,  
And I feel fine.*

---

## Thoughts to Invite Post-pandemic Dynamic Dialogues

The physical, emotional, political, and economic toll of America's battle against Covid-19 is staggering, in no small measure due to the tragic ways in which this struggle illuminated an equally virulent condition of life in the U.S. of much longer duration: a violent animosity toward individuals or communities deemed "other." Throughout the past decade, sociologists, historians, and others have been documenting what the *Scientific American* dubbed America's "empathy deficit" in fall 2020. Which brings us to the special power and responsibility of theatre artists and educators to more deliberately, consciously, and creatively transform that deficit into a surplus. We know that theatre has the potential to increase our understanding of and compassion toward others. But without a certain awareness of whose stories are told and how, that potential can be wasted. The following sites may be useful resources to launch "dynamic dialogues" in classrooms, boardrooms, and rehearsal halls throughout the nation as we welcome live theatre back into our lives!



<https://sourceful.us/doc/454/alternative-canon>

**Listing of Non-Western plays, plays by Black, Indigenous, people of color, by women and by queer writers from before 1945 (listed by country/regions )with links to supplemental readings and a selected list of post-1945 works.**

<http://diversifyingtheclassics.humanities.ucla.edu/produce-this/>

**Lists and full texts of early modern Hispanic theater**

<https://www.historymatterscelebratingwomensplaysofthepast.org/programs/one-play-at-a-time-initiative>

**This site includes titles and summaries of intl. plays by women, with links to full texts, a scene library, recordings of mini-lectures by scholars, info on playwriting and directing awards.**

<https://www.weseeyouwat.com/>

**This site features "Principles for Building Anti-Racist Theatre Systems"**

---

### **Special Thanks**

**From the Editor to Dean Gail Humphries, Former Deans Dan Carter, Bob Schanke, and Karen Berman, and to Kristy Simpson for their ongoing generous support and assistance**