

Arts Management E-Newsletter

Watching for the Rainbow

by Richard Kamenitzer

The concern over the economy is no longer isolated by professional sectors. Everyone of us is bombarded by daily news reports, headlines and the physical evidence that places of business are abandoning their locations. Suddenly, you get a phone call from a family member or a friend who tells you that they have lost their job or they are having to layoff people at work. If you are on in years, you may have received a call that says, "all my retirement plans are out the window.... I am going to have to work until I die." It is getting very close to home. It is no longer "out there," it is here and it is **now**.

Anyone who has entered the world of the "not-for-profit," (please – not "nonprofit") thought that at least they would be spared the ups and downs of business cycles, but we are all engaged in a new reality – the ability to generate income has been severely impacted by an entire international constriction (some may call it a recession and others are even calling it something like a depression).

So, here we are – current and future arts managers who have acquired the "tools," to come up with creative solutions. For some of us, the tools may have been sitting at the bottom of the toolbox and they need to be examined. For others, we have yet to use these tools and are uncertain if the theoretical application we practiced in class will really be of any help. **Fear not** – once the moment of panic passes, all of us are capable of participating in the "turnaround."

Some of our upcoming graduates and some of our graduates are fearful of job prospects. Some are even holding on to the job they have. They are hearing about layoffs at this theater or this dance organization, or at this gallery that was so promising and is now closing, etc. We are watching the established arts organizations develop contingency plans, amend their seasons, seek permission to dip into endowments, and the list goes on. All of these are very real and, yes, very necessary.

Despite this, there is a "**rainbow**," that we will see break through. When will this happen you ask; perhaps near the end of 2009 or as some are even saying, it may take until 2011. In the meantime no one who has invested so much in their passion can lay idle. We do what we can, we deploy what we know, and we stretch to learn more. We collaborate, we explore, and we assess. **The S.W.O.T analysis exercise now needs to be demonstrated.**

- Director's Corner
- New Generation
- Course Profile
- Alumni Column
- Poetry Book
- New Faculty Spotlight

continued from page 2

On March 4, we had the opportunity to hear from two people who have invested their professional lives in the arts. They approach these ideas and concepts from different skill sets and they have exercised their management acumen in very different arenas. They came to us to speak about other troubling times, about individual organizational challenges and the very "now" we are in. Michael M. Kaiser, a member of our faculty and President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, spent his first part of the afternoon discussing his new book, "The Art of the Turnaround." Later that day, he lectured in MAM 602 – Seminar in Arts Management – about the current economic dilemma. He was joined by Glen Howard, an attorney, an executive in the philanthropic community, an artist and Vice President of the Helen Hayes Awards, and a board member of the Americans for the Arts. He shared his perspective on what the "investors" will be thinking and doing – and what they will not be doing.

In retrospect to this event, we learned a few things about ourselves as arts leaders. First, we will not just be able to "wait it out." These are exciting and challenging times. Second, we will have an opportunity to learn new lessons and re-visit some of those theories and practices we heard in the classroom and on the lecture circuit. Third, we will be participants in a system of management and leadership that will have found its way to respond to these conditions. I hold out much hope, because in sharing with my fellow faculty members the experience of your inquisitiveness and your endeavoring to solve problems, we truly believe we have the "talent," to come out of all this even better than before.

We need to listen and have faith that our hard work, our values, our passion and that of others will allow us to weather the storm and see that rainbow very clearly.

Richard Kamenitzer
Program Director & Associate Professor Arts Management
Executive Director of the Center for Arts Management

A New Generation for the Arts Lead by President Obama

by Lesley Irminger

The media are hitting us with news of the economy, the possibility of the next depression, and the unprecedented stimulus bill! With all of the ramblings, it is hard for one to keep track of what is truly going on in the world and what is really important to the cultural life in America. The arts, as we all know, are a vital part of civilization and they have cultivated our society for centuries. However, in the midst of the economic turmoil we are finding that the funds for the art that we hold dearly are slipping out of sight. Just a few weeks ago, Americans witnessed history with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. His views on the arts, our economy, and the American culture are views that the younger generation has not been privy to. In a sense Obama is reflecting on the experiences of John F Kennedy era when he ran for the presidency. Our parents grew up in a generation that reveled around the arts, yet we have grown up in a society, that yes – values art, yet we seem to be reluctant to national fund art.

Last year, Barack Obama made promises and became one of the first presidential candidates to create an arts platform. Others quickly followed, and the arts found a spotlight in the national media. During the campaign, Obama was quick to become a "champion for the arts and culture" in America. His platform ideas, were simple and in most cases they didn't require governmental funding, rather they required changes in the way our laws are established.

Here is a stance on Arts Education that President Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden took while they were on the campaign trail.

First: Reinvest in Arts Education:

"To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to reinvigorate the kind of creativity and innovation that has made this country great. To do so, we must nourish our children's creative skills. In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education."

To do this Obama wants to do the following: expand public/private partnerships between schools and arts organizations, create an artist corps, and to publicly champion the importance of arts education. The words of the former chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts rings in my ear when I think about what our president has pledged.

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

"The purpose of arts education is not to produce more artists, though that is a byproduct. The real purpose of arts education is to create complete human beings capable of leading successful and productive lives in a free society."

It is not the goal of artists, arts managers, and arts organizations to create more artists; however, we want to instill a love and passion for the arts that encourages children to witness the arts for generations to come. People who grow up in the arts continue to support the arts when they are adults. If a parent takes their child to the theatre once every few months, then the child will grow accustomed to this activity and a love for theatre will blossom. We as a society will also become more creative and culturally enriched by promoting arts in our schools. These central idea that creates supporters and those who fund the arts.

Other important stances that the campaign took were to **support increased funding for the NEA, promote cultural diplomacy, attract foreign talent, provide health care to artists, and to ensure tax fairness for artists.** If you look at these items, all but one requires little to no economic funding from the government. Rather, these statements provide artists with security and privileges that many of us take for granted. It is hard for many to realize that artists donate their work for nothing. They do not get to write off the "true" value of their work, rather according to policy their work is only valued at the costs of the materials it takes to make them.

In this statement, Obama is taking a stance we have yet to see in our government. He is willing to seek out ways that the arts can survive and thrive without governmental funding. He is looking for the needles in the hay stack! He is also finding a solution to the ongoing problems that plague the arts, he is not just placing a Band-Aid on the wound. This to me, is what makes our president an "ambassador for the arts" and someone that artists can and will have faith in.

As artists and arts managers, we appreciate the true value of art and we recognize that art is more expensive than the cost of materials to make it. Art is about soul, about life, about love, and most of all about our passion for what we do. It is this passion that has helped us elect an arts friendly leader. It is hard to tell what will happen to American arts in the next four years. But one thing is for sure, we have a president who values our work as artists and arts managers. It is because of this that I feel the arts will eventually find a new niche in the society we live. The road will be bumpy and with the state of our economy, it will take time to recover – yet American's can say that we "have a champion for the arts" as our leader.

I encourage all arts supporters, managers, and most of arts enthusiasts to visit Obama and Biden's art's platform at:

http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/additional/Obama_FactSheet_Arts.pdf

After you have read up, please join the arts management program in a "blog" regarding the arts, our economy, and our new president. This is an opportunity for all to openly discuss the impact our new president will have on the world we work in. The blog is free and open to anyone interested in the topic and can be found at <http://gmu-arts-management.blogspot.com/>. Also keep an eye out in next month's issue for another article regarding the arts, our economy, and the Obama years.

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Course Profile

IT and Digital Media for Arts Managers

by Allison Katsufakis

No use in denying it any further - technology is a major part of our lives. The iPhone release stretched lines of prospective customers through malls across the nation, and Barack Obama fought to keep his Blackberry after assuming the presidency. The Internet, mp3s, and YouTube are a way of life for many young people. The major arts organizations of the country are even beginning to utilize new technologies to draw audiences – a website is considered mandatory for all but the smallest of nonprofit organizations, and one is more likely to get an email from local theaters than a postcard.

It's only natural, then, that skills in technology are becoming more and more important to the success of arts managers. It is with these changing needs in mind that the Arts Management Program created MAM 599: IT and Digital Media for Arts Managers. The course was offered in Fall 2008 and taught by Professor Anthony Allen, who also was one of the first students to enroll in the Arts Management Program.

Allen's journey to arts management began in the first year of MAM's existence. Allen finished college with a BA in percussion performance and a BS in business. He recalls, "From 2001 to 2003, I was a professional touring drummer, teaching lessons and writing music theory books and education articles." A broken hand left Allen unable to play the drums, so he made a decision to transition into a new career. "It's hard to change careers as a musician," he says. "You can't just walk into Booz Allen Hamilton and say, 'I was a drummer, gimme a job'." Allen landed at the Arts Management Program and found his niche.

Although IT for Arts Managers has previously been offered in the Arts Management program, Allen's course is a little different. "When Professor Kamenitzer asked me to teach the course, he gave me a clean slate. There was no particular model I had to follow, so we reinvented the course.

The students had a wide range of skills, and the challenge for me was trying to find a way to balance the needs of each student, while making sure that everyone got something out of the course."

IT and Digital Media for Arts Managers is structured a bit differently than most of the other classes in the Arts Management Program. The class is divided up into three parts, explains Allen. The first class meeting is an assessment of student computer skills in a variety of applications: web design, video, word processing, and other types of computer programs. Once Allen understands the skill levels of each student, the second part of the course begins. The students arrange individual schedules of STAR lab workshops to develop their skills, reporting in regularly via a class blog. "We use the blog to try and relate the skills students are learning to the arts management world, and discuss how the digital arts can further the cause of an arts organization," explains Allen. At the end of the semester, the class gathers again to share the skills they've learned and present examples of their work.

If you're not able to take the course, or want to do some work individually, Allen recommends that students try online courses to expand their skill sets– he recommends www.lynda.com. "Also, there are free versions of some of the main software packages online," offers Allen. "They're not the most feature-rich, but they're still a way to become more comfortable with the software and interface." He also recommends that students check out blogs to keep up with tech trends. "Go to www.linkedin.com (a social networking site for professionals) and search 'media arts' or 'arts management'. Look at those people's blogs, organization websites or profiles. Reach out to them and be in contact with them."

When asked what he believed to be the most important tech skill for arts managers, Allen offered, "I believe in the power of video. You can send a more compelling message with video. People can see your emotions, and it's infinitely better than anything printed. When a big company has some kind of scandal or screw-up, what do you see? - You see the CEO on television, apologizing. I think it should be part of the marketing strategy for every organization."

continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

Allen hopes that the course will continue to be offered in years to come. "It's assumed that when you leave the Arts Management program, you'll be looking for a job," says Allen. "Anyone who has IT skills can be useful and very agile within an organization. Many of the places you'll be working are low on staff or have skimpy budgets. If you have to contract out for all these [technology] services, it'll cost a lot more than if you can produce these sorts of things in house. Not only do you save the organization money, you're demonstrating that you can make things happen. Even if you're not going for a position that has IT requirements, it makes you a more desirable candidate."

The next time you're looking for an elective to round out a semester's course load, consider IT and Digital Media for Arts Managers. The skills you develop just might land you the job of your dreams!

Allison Calhoun Katsufakis is an Arts Management student and will complete her degree in August 2009. She can be reached at acalhou1@gmu.edu.

Alumni Column

by Burma Gates

Towards the end of June of last year, my boyfriend Chad and I packed up our lives and relocated to Albuquerque, NM. It was a good time to go. Chad wanted to go in a new direction with his career and I had just graduated from George Mason University with my Masters in Arts Management and was looking forward to putting my degree to good use.

We chose Albuquerque for a number of reasons. First, for those who love the desert, New Mexico is a wonderful place to be. Between the incredible sunsets, exceptionally mild seasons, and the stunning vistas, this is paradise. Second, Albuquerque is artistically influenced by nearby Santa Fe, though it's far more affordable. I was confident before the move that I would be able to find a suitable arts management position in no time.

However, it took me more than a month after we were settled to finally find something. I had exhausted several resources and had applied at a variety of arts organizations, but I kept coming back empty-handed. Finally, I spoke of my frustrations in an email to Mr. Kamenitzer. He suggested I speak with one of his colleagues in Santa Fe, Frieda Arth, to see if she had any advice for me.

After a couple quick emails, Frieda invited me up to her house in Santa Fe for some ice tea and a chat. I found out rather quickly that by 'chat,' she actually meant interview. During the chat/interview, Frieda told me about a new project she was pioneering in Albuquerque. The project was designed to help women start and run their own home-based business or cottage industry. Not only would the women learn how to run a business, but we would also help them learn various fiber arts if they were interested. Since most cottage industries involve making and selling homemade goods, we would arrange reputable venues and craft fairs for the women to sell their wares. All of it would be offered at no cost to the women. It was a big project, but I was very intrigued.

I found out a week later that I was hired on as the Managing Director of what would eventually become the Village Design Collective. The location used to be a sterile Navy Recruitment office situated in a developing area of Albuquerque. Frieda and I quickly went to work to make our new resource center look a little more pleasant and bright.

We recruited women from the surrounding neighborhood by placing flyers in the library and community center, as well as some churches and schools. We wanted this to be an organic process, meaning we kept advertising to a minimum and focused primarily on starting small. The number of women would grow with the success of the project.

Frieda and I had our first open house four weeks after we moved into the space. Nearly 20 women came in to learn about jewelry design from a professional New Mexico jewelry artisan and how it could be their business. The response was encouraging. We continued in this manner – offering different classes each week taught by a professional artisan.

continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

After three months, Frieda and I decided to put on a small craft show called the Holiday Gift Fiesta at a local high-end gallery called 516 ARTS. In addition to a handful of the ladies from the Village Design Collective, we also invited several artisans from around the state to participate. We wanted to combine amateur artisans with professional artisans so the women could learn from each other. On December 5th and 6th, we squeezed everyone in amidst a controversial gallery show featuring the Guerilla Girls. Even though the walls had little in the way of holiday spirit, all of the ladies enjoyed themselves and made a little extra income for the upcoming holidays.

The New Year brought new changes and new faces to the Village Design Collective. An informative ad placed in a local church bulletin over the holidays proved to be a phenomenal success. Within four weeks, we saw more than 30 new women come through the door. Frieda and I have also started offering weaving instruction, crocheting, greeting card design, sewing instruction, and gift basket making. We ask our participants to teach classes whenever possible.

We continue to see new women every week, each with new talents and fresh excitement, all with the same desire to better their lives.

I consider myself one of these women. I am making my life better. I am doing exactly what I hoped I would be doing when I started the MAM program three and half years ago – perpetuating art into society and making a difference. I am my own success story.

Burma Gates is an alumni of the George Mason University's Arts Management program and the Managing Director of the Village Design Collective. She can be reached at: burmagates@gmail.com.



Participants can learn a multitude of crafts at the Village Design Collective. Here a woman learns how to construct an artistic greeting card.



Participant at the Village Design Collective learning how to weave.



Burma Gates, enthusiastically learns to channel the inner artist.

Poetry Book

spoken love

*the final chapter is revealed in the first word
 the finish is known from the start
 the end is known from the beginning
 and in between is the living
 the destinies the joy and the love
 the decisions determined in soul and spirit
 let the Spirit lead, and soul obey the same
 to paint sweet mysteries
 and bleeding stains of glory
 appeal with stroke of brush
 and scrawl of pen
 then prophesy to life that moves apart from word
 on canvas not stretched but alive and full
 and floating and free
 so shall it be, in time
 that moves in current and wave and tide
 not stroke or tick or intended hand
 but carried on Wind and life
 bourne of this message
 the end is known from the beginning*

from *Current 84, the Beautiful Wound*
by Christopher Choate

Art has a unique privilege of getting past words and mindful angst. It cuts to the chase of communicating beyond the trappings of "civilization". It's as if there's a special place where art tries to go, and only art can get there. Sometimes it reaches that destination. Sometimes it doesn't. It's a place where brush or sound or performance alone can't go, but they provide the wheels for the journey. That land is where souls and spirits communicate apart from the use of the mind. It's the place where I always want to go and often can't, mostly because I get in the way.

Since about 1989, poetry has been my way of finding this place, inviting others to join me there, and letting it encroach into our present reality. It's the spiritual medium I use to paint for others a life I've found in my relationship with the Almighty. I've just finished the publication of my second book *Current 84, The Beautiful Wound*. Inside a choice collection of 28 poems and 14 paintings from excellent artwork of Isabel Castañeda, Eve Hennessa and Roy Petersen.

As a prospective arts manager, I'm learning a lot about how to manage the process of producing and delivering art beyond the creation of the work itself. Case in point, I was going to have a book signing event to celebrate the milestone in January before the semester started.



Due to administrative errors at the venue it failed to happen. Leading up to that, however, there were many stressful issues going on that were causing problems along the way. Through taking the Special Events this semester with Sarah Denhardt I've learned some key areas where, if I knew to apply them, I would have been saved from those problems. Foremost to this point in the semester, I've learned the critical value of Research, the 5 W's and a SWOT analysis. I'm regrouping now for a book signing in May, and I fully intend to employ these lessons. Hopefully this time there won't be nearly as many headaches!

Note: If you're interested in learning more about my books, you can visit <http://authortree.com/revel8r>. If you see my in class, also ask about my spoken word CDs. I've made two of those as well!

Chris Choate is a current Arts Management student. He can be reached at revel8r@hotmail.com.

New Faculty Members Spotlight

by Chris Anderson and Shannon Siemens

Adjunct Professor Karalee Dawn

(Seminar in Arts Management, Public Relations and Marketing for the Arts) is a firm believer in The Three P's - passion, perseverance and patience. "I tell my students if you're willing to work really hard, you're willing to show up early and stay late, and you're curious but respectful, and have done your research you can learn so much. And that will get noticed."

While Dawn did not have an organized plan when she first arrived in New York City (a strategy she does NOT recommend to M.A.M. students), her career path is an example of The Three P's in action. A big fan of the show *Stomp*, she combined that passion with her pre-internet research skills and a copy of *Backstage* in newspaper form to track down the producers, Richard Frankel Productions. She asked them for a job. As it happened, they had an internship available. They hired her and soon discovered her organizational ability and what she terms her "Midwest work ethic." Within a month she was promoted to office manager and shortly after that she was promoted to assistant company manager for the show she loved, *Stomp*.

Dawn can now rightfully claim to have nearly done every job in theater. Her extensive career in Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional, commercial and non-profit theater includes stints as the North American press representative with Boneau / Bryan-Brown for the musical *MAMMA MIA!*, Agent's Assistant with William Morris Agency, Managing Director with the Cherry Lane Theatre (New York) and General Manager for the Signature Theater Company (New York). At George Mason, Dawn has also served as the Production Manager of the World Premiere of *Two-bit Taj Mahal* by Paul D'Andrea and as producing director for the Theater of the First Amendment.



Students seeking careers in the arts should not discount taking lower level jobs, as long as there is a possibility of moving up, according to Dawn. For students who are not quite sure what they want to do upon graduation, smaller offices may be a good option, "...there's just more opportunity because they need more help and you can do more actual work..."

When she began her career as intern at Richard Frankel Productions, the then-small office was involved in their first Broadway production, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*. (The office has since quadrupled in size and garnered numerous awards, including 31 Tony Awards, 40 Drama Desk Awards, and 32 Outer Critics Awards.)

Dawn, a graduate of Central College in Pella, Iowa, received her M.A. in Theatre History and Performance Studies from the University of Maryland where she is in the process of completing her doctorate. She currently teaches Public Relations and Marketing Strategy for the Arts as well as the Seminar in Arts Management. She has office hours by appointment and can be reached through the M.A.M. office.

Chris Anderson is a an Arts Management student and the General Manager for A.M. TuneShop. She can be reached at office@amtuneshop.com.

Continued from page 8

Adjunct Professor Sarah Denhardt

(Festivals and Special Events) joins us as the Special Events Director for the award-winning Arena Stage in Washington, DC. She has a long background in the world of theatre, earning her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from the College of William and Mary, MFA in Directing from the Catholic University of America, and an Event Management Certificate from the George Washington University School of Business.

She's taken on directing positions at several organizations in the Washington DC area, including the Actor's Center, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Rorschach Theatre, and the Washington Shakespeare Company. Recently, she joined the ISES DC Board of Directors as Breakers Committee Chair for the 2008/09 membership year.

For the 2005/06 season, Prof. Denhardt traveled to Juneau, Alaska for the position of Director of Production with the Perseverance Theatre. She directed *The SantaLand Diaries*, a play taken from the essay of the same name by author David Sedaris. Perseverance Theatre sent *SantaLand* on tour during that season—she and the cast traveled to the smallest little towns in southeast Alaska—Gustavus, Sitka, Ketchikan, Skagway, Haines, Wrangell, and Petersburg. Perseverance has added *SantaLand* to its holiday programming, producing it again each season since.

While some productions run on a more normal time schedule, Prof. Denhardt is no stranger to planning in dire situations as well. During the Washington Shakespeare Company's 2006/07, the lead character in their show (*King Lear*) fell ill, causing the show to be cancelled. She assisted in producing an entirely new show (*Rape of Lucrece*) in a span of less than 3 weeks—and the show still opened on time.

Her history of theatre direction has well-prepared her for the world of event planning. Professionally, her proudest event-planning moment was the celebration of Artist Director Molly Smith's 10th season at Arena Stage. One of her first coordinated events at Arena, she successfully transformed the dreary Fichandler lobby into a warm, cozy environment for 100+ guests. Personally, she is most proud of planning her mother's 60th birthday—the logistics included gathering 60 bottles of wine from friends and family across the country—and according to Prof. Denhardt, "the return on investment (my mom's surprise at everything from unexpected guests at dinner to the love shown by her friends and family) was priceless."



Prof. Denhardt began teaching in the Arts Management program at the suggestion of an Arena Stage colleague, and has quickly gained excellent rapport with other students and faculty by portraying this passion in her class instruction. Her former teaching engagements have included the Communications Department at both Mason and Northern Virginia Community College, as well as the Theatre Department at the University of Alaska Southeast (Juneau, AK). She is thrilled to mark her return to teaching, particularly at the post-secondary level.

Shannon Siemens is a current Arts Management student, who will be graduating this spring. She can be reached at: ssiemens@gmu.edu.

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