



SETC NEWS

July / August 2007

Alliance Theatre, SETC Alumni Star on Broadway and at Tony Awards

I was en route to New York for my annual marathon of attending Broadway plays and writing about the New York theatre scene when this year's nominees for the Tony Awards were announced. I was pleased to find SETC well-represented among the elite of the Great White Way.

Perhaps the most exciting Tony announcement involved Atlanta's **Alliance Theatre**, which was awarded the Tony Award for outstanding regional theatre. This award, honoring ongoing excellence over a number of years, is a recognition that is richly deserved and some would say long overdue. The last SETC region theatre to win this award was Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1980.

Under Artistic Director Susan V. Booth and her predecessor Kenny Leon (profiled in *Southern Theatre*, Winter 2000), the Alliance has increased the diversity of both its offerings and its audience. The theatre has developed partnerships with other regional theatres to produce innovative new works. Above all, the Alliance has become a proving-ground destination for Broadway-bound productions, including *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Aida* and *The Color Purple*. This season audiences saw a tryout of *Sister Act*, and next season will bring the musical version of *The Women of Brewster Place*.

Those of you who attended the SETC Convention this year got an opportunity

to learn some of the Alliance's strategies for excellence. Literary Manager Freddie Ashley and Dramaturg/Artistic Associate Celise Kalke presented a master class. In addition, Rosemary Newcott, the Sally G. Tomlinson Artistic Director of Theatre for Youth at the Alliance, presented a Fringe Festival performance of *Hip Hop King Lear*, part of the organization's innovative Collision Project (profiled in *Southern Theatre*, Spring 2007).

The Alliance wasn't the only name with an SETC connection that was included in the release announcing the Tony Award nominations.

Rebecca Luker, currently enjoying a magical run as Mrs. Winifred Banks in *Mary Poppins*, received her third Tony nomination. Rebecca, who earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Montevallo in Alabama, is known to theatre audiences for roles in *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Show Boat* and *The Music Man*. SETC President-Elect Glen Gourley is an old friend of hers, and he arranged for me to meet her at the stage door of the New Amsterdam Theatre. She sends her best to all and hopes that she will some day be able to address our annual convention. (We'll look forward to it!)

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From the President

David S. Thompson



Is It Time for YOU to Move to SETC's Head Table?

At about this same time last year, a past president of SETC came up to me and suggested that it was time for me to step up and take a seat at the head table, something akin to graduating from the kids' table to the grown-ups' table at Thanksgiving.

However, unlike the family gathering table, SETC's head table is more than a place to hear the best stories and get adult portions of food. It's the place where you'll find volunteers who have dutifully accepted a position to help further the future of SETC.

Right now is the time to make **your** move to the head table. We are currently taking nominations for new faces to join the leadership team of SETC. It is too easy to think that someone else will move up, and maybe next year would be better for you. The reality is, now is the time!

Creative leadership is the buzz in all organizations, and it is the perfect time to consider your role as a new creative leader

From the Administrative Vice-President

Beth Harvey



of a very vital organization. SETC has nearly doubled its membership in five years, and each spring convention more programs are added because you, the members, are finding new and interesting ways to share your talents with others.

Share your leadership talents, too. It is a great time to be a part of the team that helps make it all happen. So, go on. Nominate yourself. That's the best way for the committee to know who really wants to be at the head table.

You can find the nomination form and information link on the SETC website at www.setc.org. It's easy. No speeches, no campaigning, no caucus. Nominate yourself today for SETC's tomorrow.

There's an SETC in the Fall?

Yes, SETC is much more than a spring convention! Fall events include:

- Fall Board Meetings, September 7-8
- Fall Professional Auditions, September 9-10
- Fall Graduate Auditions, September 8, NEW THIS YEAR!

Opening Night Reception, 7:30 p.m., September 7, hosted by Metrolina Theatre Association

Spirit Square Center for the Arts, Charlotte, NC

More Information: www.setc.org

A special thank you to the North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center for its generous sponsorship.



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SETC NEWS

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Make your reservations now for...

SETC's Fall Auditions, Meetings in Charlotte, NC...September 7-10, 2007

Omni Hotel Charlotte, 704-377-0400; Use code SETC for discounted rate

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College Students and Professionals

Audition in Charlotte in September!

SETC's First-Ever Fall Graduate School Auditions, Sept. 8

Who: Students seeking Fall 2008 Graduate School Admission

SETC Fall Professional Auditions, Sept. 9-10

Who: Professional actors seeking year-round work

More info: Visit the website at www.setc.org/

SETC 2008

Chattanooga, TN

March 5-9

Where to Send News

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From the President

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Up Broadway at the Marquis Theatre, Rebecca's husband **Danny Burstein** is still delighting audiences in his 2006 Tony-nominated role as the absurd matinee idol Aldopho in *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Although Danny hails from New York, he has SETC connections – obviously at home, but also onstage.

Appearing with him in *The Drowsy Chaperone* is **Beth Leavel**, who continues in the title role following her Tony Award last season. Beth hails from North Carolina and credits SETC with her first job in theatre. She has translated that beginning into two

Broadway productions of *42nd Street*, as well as Drama Desk and Tony Awards.

Actors are not the only Tony nominees with connections to our region. **John Doyle**, who once was an exchange student at the University of Georgia (see *Southern Theatre Summer 2006*), is celebrating two consecutive nominations for Best Director of a Musical and Best Revival of a Musical (*Sweeney Todd, Company*).

Congratulations to all!

Endowment Contributions

Thanks to the following for their contributions to the SETC Endowment: Mark Malinauskas, Donald Loeffler and Clarence Merriles.