

2016 Annual Election Gets Underway

All Members Wishing to Run for Council Must Submit Petitions

The 2016 Equity elections are just around the corner, and now is your chance to step up and be a part of the action. Active members like you ensure that Actors' Equity Association continues to be a strong member-driven union. Consider running for a seat on Council to have a voice in representing your fellow actors and stage managers.

14 Council Seats Open

There are a total of 14 Council seats, all of which have four-year terms, open in this year's election. In the **Eastern Region** there are six seats in the Principal category, two seats in the Chorus category and one seat in the Stage Management category. In the **Central Region**, there is one Principal seat available. (There are no Chorus or Stage Manager seats available this year in the Central Region.) In the **Western Region**, there is one seat in the Principal category, one seat in the Chorus category and two seats in the Stage Management category.

Candidate Qualifications

General Criteria: In order to be eligible to run for, and hold a seat on Council, a member must have been a member in good standing for the two years prior to nomination and currently be in good standing at the time of the election. Candidates must be at least 18 years old and not be in conflict of interest or be under fine or suspension. Candidates must reside in the region from which they are seeking election and must meet employment category qualifications for the position they seek.

Principal Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the Principal category must be a member in good standing who has performed principal work under no less than two Equity contracts, or who has worked no less than one Equity contract performing Principal work for no less than ten weeks.

Chorus Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the Chorus category must be a member in good standing who



Andy Grotelueschen (center left), the 2015 St. Clair Bayfield Award winner, along with Kelley Curran and Thomas Jay Ryan (flanking Arne Gunderson, Actors' Equity Foundation President), who each garnered the Joe A. Callaway Award presented by the Actors' Equity Foundation. To read more, visit actorsequity.org.

has performed chorus work within five years preceding the nomination or appointment to office (for the 2016 election, this date is June 1, 2011), provided the member has not worked as a Principal performer for a total of 52 weeks within two years prior to such nomination or appointment to office (for the 2016 election, this date is June 1, 2014).

Stage Manager Councillor Criteria: In addition to meeting the general criteria, a candidate running in the Stage Manager category must be a member in good standing who has worked as a stage manager five years preceding the nomination or appointment to office (for the 2016 election, this date is June 1, 2011): (1) under Equity contract for at least 30 weeks solely as a stage manager or assistant stage manager or

assistant stage manager.

Becoming a Councillor

All nominations to hold a seat on the Council shall be made by petition on the Official Equity Nomination Petition Form, which can be picked up in person at any Equity office or is available for download in Equity's Member Portal (members.actorsequity.org) beginning Friday, February 5, 2016, at 12 p.m. EST. If you wish to be nominated, you must obtain the signatures of 17 members in good standing from the region in which you reside. In addition to the petition, you must submit all administrative forms found in the packet to the Equity office in your geographic region. Additionally, if you are a member who already holds Emeritus Status on Council, you must indicate that you will be resigning that status in order to stand for election. You must submit your petition, signed by at least 17 members in good standing resident in the

applicable region, along with the other administrative forms found in your Candidate Packet by **Friday, March 4, 2016 (by 2 p.m. EST, 1 p.m. CST, 11 a.m. PST)**. If a document is mailed, emailed or faxed, there will be no presumption that it has been received by the union before the deadline. Therefore, the candidate who chooses to mail, email or fax his/her Nominating Petition is urged to do so with sufficient time for receipt by the established deadline and to check with the appropriate office to ensure that the Nominating Petition has been received. **Nominating Petitions received after the deadline will not be accepted and the untimely receipt of a Nominating Petition will invalidate the person's candidacy.**

For questions, contact Thomas Carpenter, General Counsel, at 212-869-8530, ext. 367 or tcarpenter@actorsequity.org.

	EAST	CENTRAL	WEST	TOTAL
PRINCIPAL	6	1	1	8
CHORUS	2	0	1	3
STAGE MANAGER	1	0	2	3
TOTAL	9	1	4	14

Tax News: Are You Ready? Are You Really Ready?

By Sandra Karas, Director, VITA Program

The camera pans out, capturing a long shot of your favorite VITA Volunteer, paraphrasing shamelessly from that great 1950 film *All About Eve*, reminding the members in the hallway who stood in line for appointments, "Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy tax season!"

Or not.

For those who follow the rules and regs, this year's filing season might turn out to be one of your easier skirmishes with the IRS. Easier, that is, if you've pulled your information together; easier if you actually know what information to pull together; easier if you have an idea as to how to organize it and present it to your tax expert.

The key to an accurate tax return (and arguably one with the best result) is using a good checklist to organize and assemble your records. At VITA, we use a one-page checklist that should cover the bases for any member who would rather be in rehearsal than knee-deep in a shoe box full of receipts. If you go through the following, you'll have virtually everything you need to complete your taxes.

Income:

W-2s: Go through all of your employee pay stubs to be sure you have received all of your 2015 W-2 forms.

1099-INT: Interest from your bank or credit union. Grab the year-end statement if the interest is less than \$10.

1099-DIV: Dividends from your investment accounts.

Again, the year-end statement serves for amounts less than \$10.

1099-G: Unemployment, state tax refunds and other government payments you received.

1099-B: Proceeds from sales of investments, stocks, mutual funds, bonds, etc. Bring the purchase information, too.

1099-Misc: Independent contractor fees, royalties and other "untaxed" amounts you received in 2015.

1099-R: Retirement income, distributions from IRAs, pensions, etc.

1099-SSA: Social Security benefits statement.

Other Income: Prize, lottery, jury pay, election inspector, scholarships, alimony, honoraria, sale of home, etc.

Rental Income: If you're a landlord, provide all income and expense records.

K-1 Forms: From trusts, estates, partnerships,

corporations, LLCs.

Expenses:

Medical, Dental, Vision & Long-Term Care Insurance premiums: Affordable Care Act requires that you carry health coverage, and you'll need to declare if you had insurance and provide forms, in some cases.

Medical Expenses: Out of pocket costs, co-pays, medical transportation.

Charitable Contributions: If by check or credit card, or gifts of clothing, furniture and other goods — get receipts.

Mortgage Interest and Real Estate Property Taxes: Form

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Area Liaison Hotline system

Call 877-AEA-1913

Equity has a national toll-free hotline system for members who live in area liaison and office cities. The number is 877-AEA-1913 (honoring the year of Equity's founding). Each Area Liaison city has its own extension, where members can access news and information in their region.

(1) Dial 877-AEA-1913

(2) Dial your city extension:

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

#EquityWorks Theatre News & Notes

Albuquerque, NM – Duke City Repertory Theatre will operate under a TYA agreement for its 2016 season. Its production of *Julius Caesar* will employ five actors, one actor/assistant stage manager and one stage manager, generating 63 workweeks.

Beverly Hills, CA – Theatre Fort's production of *The Manor*, on a LOA/Per Performance agreement, will boast a complete Equity cast, employing 18 members, and will feature a salary increase and new additional role increment at \$50 minimum per role.

Dallas, TX – On a LOA/Per Performance to LORT agreement, **The Uptown Players'** *Aida* will feature four Equity actors and one union stage manager, with a three-contract increase.

Dallas, TX – Renewing its LOA to LORT agreement, **Dallas Children's Theater** will utilize four additional Equity contracts in its upcoming season.

Endicott, NY – The Cider Mill Playhouse joins the Equity family operating under a Small Professional Theatre agreement for its upcoming season, having utilized the Guest Artist contract in the past. By becoming a full-time Equity theatre, it also makes the company the first such theatre in Broome County, New York.

Los Angeles, CA – A free-to-the-public production of *A Christmas Carol*, offered by **Independent Shakespeare Co.**

(LOA/Per Performance), was presented with a full Equity cast.

Los Angeles, CA – Center Theatre Group's *The Christians* accrued 156 workweeks for the choir extras.

Las Vegas, NV – The sit-down production of *Rock of Ages* in Sin City renewed its contract through 2016.

Missoula, MT – Montana Repertory Theatre renewed its LOA to U/RTA agreement for its production of *All My Sons*, providing a 3% salary increase for members.

Mountain View, CA – Operating on a Special Appearance since 2013, **Pear Theatre** will transition to the MBAT with its production of *Uncle Vanya*.

New York, NY – For the first time, a contract was negotiated with **Manhattan Concert Productions** for its yearly musical, which this year is *The Secret Garden*. The show will play two staged concerts in February 2016 at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall.

New York, NY – Carnegie Hall's *West Side Story*, part of New York City's "The Somewhere Project," will be under an Equity contract at the Knockdown Center in Queens. This large-scale staging includes community members from across New York.

Palm Springs, CA – Dezart Performs will include one Equity stage manager and one Equity actor in its upcoming production of *Suicide Dogs*.

Pasadena, CA – For its first time producing in the Bay Area in Berkeley, CA., the **Pasadena Shakespeare Company**, will present *Shakespeare and the Tender Land* on an MBAT 1.

Sonoma, CA – Reduced

Shakespeare Company, the touring Shakespeare company, renewed its agreement for two and half years, complete with a 100% Equity ratio and salary increases for members as well as an overseas per diem increase.

Tucson, AZ – Invisible

Theatre's production of *Dealmaker* (on a LOA/Per Performance agreement), will have two actors and one stage manager under Equity contract.

Vallejo, CA – Bay Area Stage joins the Equity family operating on the MBAT 1 agreement for its production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*.

Washington, D.C. – Thanks to the input of an Equity member in the Baltimore/D.C. region, a developing theatre in the area will now properly label its production photos displayed in the lobby.

The **Casino Agreement**, which covers employment in any theatre or other performance venue within a casino/hotel property, has been extended through 2016.

Tracking What You're Owed

Staff in the Eastern Region noticed, upon reviewing contracts for a recent production, that members were not being properly compensated for rentals of certain costume pieces. After reaching out to the theatre, the issue was resolved immediately and members were reimbursed for the expenses.

Upon examining the weekly reports, Eastern Region staff discovered underpayments for three members working at a LORT theatre. After further research and working with the theatre, staff was able to achieve retroactive payments totaling over \$750 for the members.

A LORT theatre in the Eastern Region inadvertently missed a week of health payments for members in one particular production. Staff worked with the theatre to guarantee that the health payments were achieved for the members of the cast.

Due to accommodations made by the Business Theatre & Events Committee Chair, Eastern Region staff was able to successfully negotiate terms for a new product launch event, the **LG washing machine**, which took place in Times Square. Equity was able to achieve a total of seven contracts for this event and gained 21 workweeks for a total package of \$25,386.

Staff in the Western Region recovered \$440 in salary for members working in Bay Area Theatres.

Upon reviewing the Casino Agreement, staff in the West collected about \$600 for dance captains working under the agreement.

Western Region staff recovered \$24,000 in vacation pay as well as pension and health payments from Western Region developing theatres.

Over \$62,000 was recovered in salary as well as pension and health payments for members working under the HAT Agreement; \$84 was recovered in salary payments for members working on the WCLO Agreement; and \$1,418 was received for members working on the LORT Agreement in the Western Region.

Staff in the Western Region helped three members earn health insurance after collecting outstanding health payments from theatres where these members worked.

Tax News

(continued from page 1)

1098 and/or the statements your building provides.

Child or Dependent Care Costs: Provide payee's ID, address and receipt.

Retirement Contributions: Amounts you put into your IRA, ROTH, SEP, outside of your employment.

Business, Auto & Travel Expenses: Use the worksheets on the Equity website to list these separately to get all of your allowable deductions.

Moving Expenses: If you've moved more than 50 miles for your job.

Investment and Professional Fees: Related to your portfolio or other taxable income.

Higher Education/College Tuition: Form 1098-T required to claim valuable education credits.

Student Loan Interest Paid: If you don't get a statement, find it online.

Other Expenses: Alimony paid, gambling expenses, safety deposit fees, etc.

Simple, right? Right! Use these two lists and the special VITA worksheets to pull your tax information together and you'll be ready at tax time. A few other reminders:

Same-sex married couples have the same filing rights as all married couples. If you still have questions about how you may or should be filing your returns, contact VITA and we'll be happy to help.

Auto Mileage and Standard

Meal Allowances. These figures have been adjusted slightly. Business mileage is up to 57.5¢/mile; medical and moving mileage is down to 23¢/mile and charitable mileage remains at 14¢/mile. The meal allowance (for cities not on the higher cost list) was \$46/day through September 30th and went up to \$51/day on October 1, 2015.

Affordable Care Act Penalties. A reminder that, if you can afford to purchase your own medical insurance, and you don't qualify for one of the exemptions, you are expected to have obtained coverage. Every month in which you were uninsured carries a financial penalty of up to 2% of your income, or a calculation based on monthly rates and the cost of

certain plans. For 2015, you may be uninsured for two consecutive months and avoid the penalty.

Send out those 1099s! If you pay someone more than \$599 during the year to provide you services that you will deduct on your tax return, and that person is an individual (not a corporation, school, etc.), you'll have to send her/him a 1099 to report that money. Failure to do this could cost you \$250 in penalties for each missed 1099. Have your vocal coach, acting teacher and others complete a W-9 form and you'll be prepared to send the 1099 forms.

Sandra Karas is Secretary-Treasurer of Equity, Board Member of the New York Local of SAG-AFTRA and Director of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program.

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



EMILY ROGERS

"When I tell people that I'm a swing, the response I usually get is a blank stare — and, if I'm lucky, that'll be followed up by a 'huh?'"



EQUITYNEWS

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2016 Annual Election Calendar

- Friday, February 5, 2016** Candidate Packets available beginning at 12 p.m. EST via Equity's website or by contacting any regional office
- Friday, March 4, 2016** Deadline for Nominations by Independent Petition (Materials due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. EST)
A list of all Nominated Candidates will be available in Equity's Member Portal by 5:30 p.m. EST
- Tuesday, March 8, 2016** Deadline to submit eligibility protests
- Wednesday, March 9, 2016** Deadline for Candidates' Statements for *Equity News*, Equity's Member Portal and Ballot Brochure (Due in all three Regional Offices by 2 p.m. EST)
- Friday, March 18, 2016** Deadline for registration to vote electronically
- Friday, April 8, 2016** Annual National Membership Meeting (all regions via teleconference)
Candidate speeches
- Monday, April 11, 2016** Distribution of Ballots (from balloting company)
- Tuesday, May 10, 2016** Deadline to request replacement paper ballot from balloting company
- Wednesday, May 18, 2016** Deadline for Receipt of Ballots
- Thursday, May 19, 2016** Tabulation Day
- Thursday, June 2, 2016** Deadline to submit election protests

Additional information about the elections process, including Candidate Packets available for download, a complete copy of the election rules and further information about how to run is all available in the Member Portal at members.actorssequity.org.

What Region Are You In?

Eastern Region	Central Region	Western Region
Alabama – AL	Arkansas – AR	Alaska – AK
Connecticut – CT	Illinois – IL	Arizona – AZ
Delaware – DE	Indiana – IN	California – CA
District of Columbia – DC	Iowa – IA	Colorado – CO
Florida – FL	Kansas – KS	Hawaii – HI
Georgia – GA	Kentucky – KY	Idaho – ID
Maine – ME	Louisiana – LA	Montana – MT
Massachusetts – MA	Michigan – MI	New Mexico – NM
Maryland – MD	Minnesota – MN	Nevada – NV
Mississippi – MS	Missouri – MO	Oregon – OR
New Hampshire – NH	Nebraska – NE	Texas – TX
New Jersey – NJ	North Dakota – ND	Utah – UT
New York – NY	Ohio – OH	Washington – WA
North Carolina – NC	Oklahoma, OK	Wyoming – WY
Pennsylvania – PA	South Dakota – SD	
Rhode Island – RI	Wisconsin – WI	
South Carolina – SC		
Tennessee – TN		
Virginia – VA		
Vermont – VT		
West Virginia – WV		
Canada		



Unsung Heroes

This month, Equity celebrated the first-ever National Swing Day (and if any non-theatre people out there are reading this, calm down — to quote Inigo Montoya: "I do not think it means what you think it means.") The celebration was the brainchild of our 2nd Vice-President, Rebecca Kim Jordan, who has spent most of her considerable tenure at Equity fighting for what we call Chorus Affairs. Since Equity's 1955 absorption of what was originally a separate union called Chorus Equity, chorus and principal constituencies have been represented within our Council by designated officers — as are stage managers. Although we all try to be mindful of the greater good of the membership, it's never a bad thing to have reminders of what is good for ensemble members. Or middle players. Or ASMs. Or, in this case, swings.

To me, swings are among the most fascinating creatures among us. These performers — who I tend to think of as superhuman — are collectively responsible for covering every role in a musical. It's one thing to understudy a single character; I've done that and it ain't easy. You have limited rehearsal time, you sit on the sidelines a lot, and when you do go on, you are often asked to stick as closely as possible to another actor's performance, so as not to disrupt the usual flow of the show. But swings go a significant step further than

swing is like gold to producers and stage managers, so when another actor leaves the show, it's much easier to train a new person to take over that one track than it is to promote and replace a swing who covers five, six or seven tracks. Being a swing takes talent, and it's under-the-radar talent that can go unrecognized.

Which is why I was so delighted to see — on Twitter and in the press and at the Broadway theatres and everywhere else I looked on January 13th — the absolute joy our community took in celebrating the most undercelebrated members of our casts. Over and over, it was enthusiastically acknowledged that without swings, our shows would simply not go on. Over at the Richard Rodgers, Lin-Manuel Miranda took time out of his pursuit of total world domination to tweet about each swing individually and their value to *Hamilton*. *Wicked* made fan art. Infographics bounced around the internet with terms like "MVP" front and center. It was pretty awesome.

It's basically my personal idea of a waking nightmare. But swings are a special breed of performers. Obviously it takes major chops to play numerous roles, often of varying ages and backgrounds, as well as a significant brain to maintain that kind of information. Being a swing also requires huge dedication to the well-being of the show, because a) you don't know if you'll ever go on, and b) if you do go on, and you're good, your chances of getting promoted actually *diminish*. A reliable

swing is like gold to producers and stage managers, so when another actor leaves the show, it's much easier to train a new person to take over that one track than it is to promote and replace a swing who covers five, six or seven tracks. Being a swing takes talent, and it's under-the-radar talent that can go unrecognized.

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We should actively remind ourselves to recognize our unsung heroes. In a culture that is, by any reasonable measure, remarkably and consistently star-obsessed, it's amazing to have a day dedicated to some of the hardest-working and least-acclaimed people on our stages.

Hug a swing, everybody. And don't be afraid to notice what he or she does for your show.

Mourning Former Councillor, Treasurer of Equity

Randy Phillips, a member of Equity for 60 years who served on Council and as Treasurer of the Association from 1965 to 1980, and, briefly on staff, died on March 13, 2015, at the age of 89.

Phillips was first elected to a two-year replacement term representing chorus after having served on both the Production Contract Committee and the 1964 Production Contract Negotiating

Committee as a non-Council member. After being elected to his first five-year term in 1967, he became Chairman of the Agency, Industrial Shows, Investment and Production Contract Committees and also served on the Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs and the President's Planning Committee, among many others. In addition, he was a Trustee of the Equity-League Trust Fund and Treasurer of the Actors Federal Credit Union. He

served on Council until 1972 when he accepted an interim appointment as Treasurer. He was elected to that post in 1973, serving until his retirement in 1980.

As a member, Phillips worked in musical and dramatic stock, Industrial Shows, the National and Las Vegas companies of *The Pajama Game* and on Broadway in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *Hello, Dolly!*

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



RANDY AARON

"The last person that I told I was a swing was my sister — and she had no idea what it meant. Her response: 'What the hell does that mean? It's not kinky is it?'"

EQUITY TEAM S

Swing? What's a Swing?

By Rebecca Kim Jordan

Well.... In a musical:

- 1: A person who literally understudies all of the chorus and sometimes more!
- 2: Usually knows *all* the staging of the entire show.
- 3: Can, but doesn't, usually call the show.
- 4: Can tell if the lights have lost their focus, and
- 5: Knows every dead spot sound-wise on stage.

Seriously — this talented, uber-focused individual covers most of the vocal parts and choreography in a musical, often covering

many more people than fingers on a hand.

I have been doing research as to why a swing is indeed called a swing — to no great end.

It's one of those showbiz-isms that stuck!

But by the dictionary's definition, a swing means to:

"Move or cause to move back and forth;
Move by grasping a support;
Move quickly around to the opposite direction;
Move or cause to move in a smooth curving line;
Move or cause a move in thoughts and or opinion."

Yep. That defines it. I get it; the operative word is *move*. A swing is definably, and obviously, on the move.

Who Am I Anyway?

By Laurent Giroux

I was never expecting to be a swing, but it proved to be an opportunity that opened doors for my career.

My first job as a swing was for Bob Fosse's *Dancin'*. I covered nine men and 38 specialties. And before accepting my first swing gig, I asked my friend and "swing veteran" Debbie Lyman for advice. "Swinging a show can be a great job or it can be hell on a stick, depending on how you look at it," she said. And she was right! It was both. Don't get me wrong, it was tough, especially in the beginning (and the fact that I was on pretty much every night for two and half years), but that challenge kept me from doing the same track each night.

Years later I was asked to swing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. This time, I jumped at the chance. I swung three dancers, five singers, two character actors and (understudied) one of the leads. As if that wasn't enough, I was the assistant stage manager and the assistant dance captain. I was told that I probably might not go on for months, but instead, in true swing fashion, I went on two days later. As fate would have it, I went on for four of my tracks in previews and the female swing performed every track she covered before the show's opening date.

So what has swinging done for me? The job prepared me (without even knowing it) to

become the actor I am today. And as an actor, I am always aware of everything around me on stage; I am known for being able to block myself in scenes without being told where to go. As a director once said to me, "You always know where to go, when to move, how to take the stage."

Swinging gave me that valuable tool.

If you are new to swinging, remember this: Stage managers and dance captains are your best friends and crucial allies. I have been lucky to have amazing SMs and DCs throughout my career. I'm not sure I would have survived swinging without them.

So what advice can I give? Well, swinging ain't for the faint of heart. But if you like an amazing challenge (and occasionally an evening off [if you're lucky]), it's a fantastic job with many unforgettable and rewarding opportunities.



Giroux as "Duncan Tanqueray" (former heir to the gin fortune). The name was given to the actor by Rupert Holmes, *Drood* writer, as everyone in the show, including swings, had names as the "actors" they played. Photo by Jana Schneider

Saving the Show

Three former Equity swings talk about the rewarding, challenging, always on your toes job

Theatrical Band-Aid. Ultimate, costumed chameleon. Production lifesaver. Unsung hero.

Working as a swing is no easy feat. One of the cast's greatest secret weapons, an Equity swing can step on stage in a moment's notice. Even more, a swing can be on stage in any pair of shoes — literally.

With shows like *Chaplin*, having had 20 assignments for swings, or *Jersey Boys* (averaging 18 swing assignments for male swings) or *Chicago* (averaging 17 assignments for female swings), the contracted position is crucial to several shows across the country.

"Swings are the saving grace of any production," said member Rommy Sandhu, who first served as a swing in *A Christmas Carol*. "They possess the ability to fill in to almost any spot onstage, to create a seamless performance for the audience, to adapt to different styles and partners in the flash of a program insert."

A swing's primary role is to cover the chorus; however, for some swings, principal coverage is an additional duty. Each character, or each assignment, is known as (industry-speak) a "track." And depending on the show, a swing could cover any number of tracks. Sandhu once covered 22 tracks for a show, both male and female. And though he joked it was strange, he noted that it was totally



Greta Martin

manageable.

When it comes to the job, strong nerves, a sharpened pencil (maybe four) and a pad, a stress-management system and a working cell phone are just some of the tools to be successful.

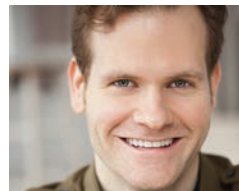
"Pay attention to everything and everyone (stagehands, too)," said Greta Martin, whose first swinging gig was in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, "at all times as much as you are able, and of course, do your homework — know your parts. That goes without saying."

"Do your research," said J. Austin Eyer, who first swung in *Curtains* (he went on to swing for that show on Broadway for three years) and author of the recently released *Broadway Swings: Covering the Ensemble in Musical Theatre*. "Be in the moment. Things can be very exciting if you look, listen and connect to the people around you. Being a swing promotes a necessary collaboration and patience for the actors around you."

For Eyer, swinging helped him cultivate a steady career on Broadway; more than half of the

shows he worked were as a swing. For Sandhu and Martin, the job has taught them to see the whole picture, understanding how each element and each character mesh together. The position has taught all three performers to be flexible, both personally and professionally, understand — and laugh at — spontaneity and appreciate the tedious nature of details. (That is making stage charts, memorizing all choreography, jotting down each and every set and pop move and completing several tracking sheets.)

In addition to the theatrically-clerical duties of the job, the role of a swing can be a bit of an



J. Austin Eyer

emotional rollercoaster.

"You wonder if you'll be in the show opening night or when the show is archived for the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, if you'll get to be on the cast album, the Tonys or *The Morning Show*," Eyer said. "Sometimes you forget that you are actually a performer."

For others, there is the stigma that being a swing meant they "weren't good enough."

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



SATOMI HOFMANN

"When I am a swing the conversation usually goes like this: Them: 'So, what do you do in the show?' Me: 'I'm a swing.' Them: 'Oh. As in swing...er?'"

W I N G !!

Being offered the job is often met with "I wanted to be in the show," "I guess I was their last choice," "I must not be as good," but the truth is, you will be in the show — as a matter of fact, you'll be in all of it.

A swing is *never* the last choice, but rather, one of the most important choices. And, if done correctly, you are one of the best. As a swing, you're versatile and, hopefully, one of the calmest people in the theatre, as a swing's job is never really done.

A lot goes into putting a musical together. What keeps it together is an intricate relationship between actors, musicians, stagehands and the nuance of a skillful call over the PA system from the stage manager. But swings, they are the *how* it can be done eight shows a week.

Swings have the company's back.

"On the contrary," said Martin. "It was because you were good at many different aspects of being in the show that they didn't know what to do with you and didn't want to lose out on your talent."

The talent of a swing is clearly recognized as a key part of the



Rommy Sandhu

cast. A swing, naturally, is often a triple threat, getting the opportunity to keep his or her dancing, acting and singing chops sharp while covering his

or her several tracks. The surprise and anticipation of the "who" a swing might play that night might mean that he or she will be dancing heavily, belting loudly or sobbing as a specific character.

Swings might have to quickly space out a scene during intermission, try that lift in the wings, give that monologue one last shot in the minutes leading up — it is, to say the least, certainly not dull work.

"The key to happiness onstage and off as a swing or fulltime ensemble is to enjoy your life and find pleasure in the day-to-day tasks," Sandhu said.

"It's a tough job," Eyer said. "I encourage you to reach out to past swings and take solidarity that you are one of a long line of swings that kept the curtain up. You are the unsung hero of the theatre."

Annual Report to the Council from the Equity Pension & Health Trustees

Below is a transcript of Madeleine Fallon's, Chair of Equity League Pension & Health, presentation to Equity's National Council.

The status of the Pension Plan continues to be positive. Under the guidelines of the Pension Protection Act, our fund remains firmly in the green zone. For the most recent fiscal year, which ended May 31, 2015, the actuarial valuation shows the plan funded at 120.8% with assets of \$1.64 billion. These figures do not reflect the pension improvements, which recently took place as they became effective in the current plan year of June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016.

As you probably know, two pension improvements are now in effect. For those who were collecting a pension on or before July 1 there was a 10% increase in the monthly payment. For pensions beginning August 1 or after, the additional increment for each vested year increased from \$11 to \$12. These improvements were adopted after conducting an extensive Asset/Liability Modeling study, which analyzed varying financial scenarios over a 30-year period. Our professional advisors were in agreement that the improvements are sustainable and that the Pension Plan is likely to remain over 100% funded for the foreseeable future.

In an environment where failing pension plans are frequently in the news, many Equity members are uneasy about the health and longevity of their pensions. However, our plan benefits from a steady stream of weekly contributions (approximately 1,800 contributing employers each year) and a well-diversified, robust investment strategy. It is also worth noting that employer contributions for the plan year were \$38.6 million, up 5% from the previous years.

The Equity-League Health Plan remains stable. As of the plan year ending May 31, 2015, we show assets of \$92.5 million and 15 months of reserves. The Fund Trustees continue to work with plan professionals to

contain costs without compromising care. Out-of-network claims are one area of concern. In the coming year, we will be working with CIGNA to identify the out-of-network providers most utilized by our participants and ask for a significant effort to bring them in-network.

As you are certainly aware, as a result of the recently ratified Production Contract, the Trustees were able to approve a change in eligibility that results in six months of coverage for 11 work weeks and one year's coverage for 19 weeks, down from 12 and 20 weeks, respectively. Under this new eligibility rule, work on any contract, which pays into the health plan, will be counted. These metrics are in place for the duration of the Production Contract, which expires in September 2019. The effects of the enhanced eligibility will be carefully monitored; it is unclear at this time if the 11/19 formula will be sustainable past that point.

During this past plan year a new participant portal was introduced through the Equity-League website. The ability to self-monitor pension and health credits has produced favorable feedback. Since then we have begun work on a new communications initiative. There will be a fully redesigned website, an improved "Now Playing" newsletter and a social media component. The Trustees are aware that we need significantly better communication with our participants. One of our challenges is to make it clear that the Equity-League Trust Fund is a separate organization from Actors' Equity Association. It is our hope that in the future, members will understand that issues related to their benefits are decided by the Equity-League Trustees and not by Actors' Equity. Unions (any union, not just Equity) are responsible for negotiating contributions for the benefit funds and for appointing the union half of the Full Board of Trustees. But unions are legally prohibited from making decisions regarding how the monies contributed are used for benefits. Far too often Equity is

blamed for policies or practices that it cannot control.

There will be several other components to our communications outreach. All plan documents will be re-examined and whenever possible will be rewritten to be more reader friendly. (This will be a challenge since Benefit Trust Funds are heavily regulated by federal agencies and there is a lot of boiler plate language.) We will also step up our efforts to get our participants to keep the Fund informed of their contact information. It is dismaying how many people do not pay their premiums on time and lose coverage. In addition to bills mailed to the most current address on record, the Fund office will send out email and text reminders if that information is supplied. There is also an issue of people who are not aware that they had earned a pension. If a person is reaching the age of 70½ and has not claimed his/her pension, the Fund office is required to locate that person and to pay what is due. So we want members to know that they should keep their contact information up to date, even if they leave the business. Another communications effort will be geared to offering wellness information and how to most effectively utilize the health plan.

The landscape of the employee benefit world is complicated and contains a lot of moving parts. With the help of our plan professionals, we have to respond to changes in legislation and the market place. In conjunction with the Employer Trustees, who are appointed by The Broadway League, we will continue to monitor the factors that affect the status of the pension and health funds with the goal of providing quality benefits for the greatest possible number of working members. On behalf of my fellow Equity Trustees: Doug Carfrae, Brian Myers Cooper, Steve DiPaola, Malcolm Ewen, Thomas Joyce, Francis Jue, Mary McColl, Ira Mont, Nick Wyman and Mark Zimmerman, I submit this annual report.

Fraternally yours, Madeleine Fallon

When I think of a SWING, I immediately think...

We asked members on social media to tell us what they think of when they think of an Equity swing. We heard,



...and of course, "When you throw your keys in a bowl and go home with a different wife."

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



SAM TANABE

"When I tell people I am a swing, they usually assume I understudy just one person. They are then baffled when I explain that in *Allegiance*, which I'm currently in, I cover the *entire* male ensemble: young and old, Asian and white."



Photo: TheatreSpotlight

45 Years of Brave Contemporary Theatre in Salt Lake City

We asked the staff at the Salt Lake Acting Company to tell us about the company; this is what they had to say:

Since 1970, Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) has been producing thoughtful, provocative new work for Utah audiences. From its humble beginnings in the basement of the First Unitarian Church, SLAC has grown into a nationally recognized company and one of the Mountain West's premier new play hubs.

The company's 45-year history is reflected in the expansive body of work it has produced and in the long-standing support of its most open and adventurous audience. SLAC produces seasons of regional and world premiere plays; nurtures, supports and develops a community of professional artists; and makes a significant contribution to its community and to American theatre by commissioning, developing and producing new works. SLAC reaches an annual audience of over 37,000 (including a season subscriber base of more than 3,300) and supports over 150 professional theatre artists annually.

Since 1997, SLAC has proudly operated under an Equity Small Professional Theatre agreement. One of only two Equity theatres in Salt Lake City, SLAC employs primarily local artists. Executive Artistic Director Cynthia Fleming said, "SLAC is a vital part of the theatre ecosystem here in Salt Lake, and we are proud to be able to offer our actors and stage managers the benefits and professional recognition that come along with working in an Equity theatre."

"I love working for Salt Lake Acting Company," said Equity member Justin Ivie. "They produce challenging, exciting



Equity members Tracie Merrill, Robert Scott Smith and Nell Gwynn in SLAC's production of *Rapture, Blister, Burn*.

material with top-notch production values and they always create a warm and supportive atmosphere for their artists. They've maintained a proud relationship with Equity over the years, even during lean times. SLAC's dedication to fostering a professional community here in Salt Lake has made it possible for me and others to keep afloat in this small and challenging market."

SLAC has earned a loyal following by providing audiences the opportunity to experience new plays in Utah. Producing challenging and diverse new work is just one facet of SLAC's commitment to engaging and enriching the community through brave, contemporary theatre. Additionally, SLAC makes significant contributions to arts education and new play development through programs like its "Title 1 Matinee" series, which allows underprivileged K-2 students to see SLAC's annual youth play at no cost and its exciting new Playwrights' Lab, which brings together artists from across the country to spend an intensive week investigating and developing new scripts.

Since 1970, SLAC has produced and presented over 200 regional premieres of this country's Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning playwrights, and has commissioned, developed and produced an impressive body of world premieres, many

of which have gone on to further productions throughout the world. SLAC's founder Edward Gryska (who passed away in 2015) said of the company's beginning: "We were throwing stuff out there that the audience had never heard of; they didn't know what it was and we educated them. We did the traditional stuff, but we'd always try to do a new play, something very different to balance that out, and I think that got the audiences in. And the audiences grew. I think that SLAC was always growing and becoming more and more important to this community and it still is."

In 1978, SLAC moved to the Glass Factory Theatre, which it called home for five years before returning to a church. Today SLAC's home is the historic 19th Ward House of Worship, originally built in 1896 by early settlers with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, in the Marmalade Hill District of Salt Lake City. Fully-renovated, it includes two flexible spaces: the 114-seat Chapel Theatre and the 160-seat Upstairs Theatre (which accommodates 206 for the summer cabaret, *Saturday's Voyageur*).

Salt Lake Acting Company has been called a jewel of its community. The company proudly holds a special place in its community and plays a vital role in the American theatre scene.

NATIONAL NEWS



Photo: Dana Gennaro

Haddam, Connecticut

A Wonderful Appeal at A Wonderful Life

In only 12 performances the company of *A Wonderful Life* at Goodspeed Musicals in East Haddam, CT raised an astounding \$12,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. The annual "BC/EFA Week" campaign brings regional theatres into the fundraising family circle, appealing to audiences around the country and helping AIDS and family service organizations in their own community at the same time. The cast of *A Wonderful Life* appealed directly to audiences following each performance and sold autographed posters. Equity member Frank Vlastnik, in the role of "Clarence," did the nightly appeal. "Doing the 'spiel' and

seeing how wonderfully generous people can be, even after they've shelled out money for the show, restores my sometimes wobbly faith in humanity," said Vlastnik. "We had a gentleman who gave a \$100 bill for a peck on the cheek from a member of our cast. Did we feel like panderers? Yes. But for the best possible reasons."

In 2015, BC/EFA awarded over \$80,000 to 10 AIDS and family service organizations across Connecticut; in Hartford, New Haven, New London and Stamford, as well as \$5,000 to Camp AmeriKids and to a \$7,500 meal program of the Interfaith AIDS Ministry, both in Danbury.

Minneapolis/St. Paul

Welcoming New Members and EMCs

On December 14, 2015, over 30 members gathered for the Minneapolis/St. Paul membership meeting at which they spoke about several issues of importance to the community. Before the meeting began, nine new EMCs gathered and were given EMC pins.

Guest speakers were Sean Taylor, Central Regional Director, Christian Hainds, Senior Business Representative, and David Kolen, Business Representative. Members raised questions about the national debate on gender parity within the industry, stage managers increasingly expected to re-search and act as a dramaturg for new scripts and how to ensure that Equity members were hired on the Equity contracts required by producers.

Taylor noted that many of the concerns and questions raised by the membership are being addressed by the Central Region staff. He also noted that he is incredibly pleased with the growth in work weeks and increased salaries that have been achieved for the membership by Equity staff over the past year.

Five new members were selected to the Liaison Committee: Jen Burleigh-Bentz, Peter Moore, Megan West, Tiffany K. Orr and Zach Curtis. A new committee chair will be selected sometime in early 2016.

In 2016, the Twin Cities liaison committee hopes membership will participate in the Twin Cities Actors Expo in April as well as the Labor Day Parade at the State Fair in St. Paul.

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



STEPHEN CERF

"When I tell someone I'm a swing they think it either has something to do with an actual swing, like on a playground, or they think I'm telling them I'm a swinger. I'm pretty sure I've had to fully explain what I actually do every single time."



Seeing as they played conjoined twins in last season's *Side Show*, Dr. Barry Kohn gave flu shots to Erin Davie and Emily Padgett at the same time.

Los Angeles & New York City

Broadway Gets Immunized 2015-16

As the flu season arrives this winter, Equity members on Broadway, Off-Broadway and beyond are prepared as the Physician Volunteers for the Arts provided over 5,100 free seasonal flu vaccinations this season to the theatre community. This annual free flu shot program, now in its 19th year, is sponsored by Actors' Equity and funded by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Dr. Barry Kohn, Medical Director of Physician Volunteers for the Arts, made "house calls" to over 170 venues, including Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, nonprofit theatre companies, theatrical union offices and other theatre related offices, including TDF, The

American Theatre Wing and The Broadway League.

Free flu shots were also provided to all members of the theatre community on a walk-in basis at the Actors' Equity offices in New York and Los Angeles on predesignated days throughout the fall and winter.

The cost of the flu vaccine was funded by a generous \$65,000 grant from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Flu shots for the 2016 flu season will begin in September 2016. Once the date of availability for the 2016 -17 flu vaccine is determined, scheduling will begin for the fall free flu shot program. More information will be available on the Equity website.



Photo: Dana Gamarra

Equity Senior Business Representative Christian Hains presented Purple Rose Artistic Director Guy Sanville with a proclamation for the company's 25 years as an Equity theatre.

Detroit, Michigan

Celebrating Purple Rose Theatre Company

On Monday, November 16, 2015, the Detroit Membership Meeting was held at the Purple Rose Theatre Company in Chelsea, MI. Members were enthusiastic and enjoyed the meeting and reception, which was hosted by Equity staff members, Christian Hains, Senior Business Representative, and Cynthia Hanks, Business Representative for Southeast Michigan.

During the reception, a congratulatory proclamation was presented to Guy Sanville, Purple Rose's Artistic Director, celebrating 25 years as an Equity theatre. The mission of the company remains "to create fresh, original productions that get

our audiences talking among themselves and feeling something new," with a promise to artists to help "achieve your professional and creative potential doing work that you love."

During the meeting, members received updates on the Equity-League health plan, information about new Equity theatres in the area and learned about the Equity and Friends Fight AIDS campaign and the Adopt-a-Child program.

Selections were held; the following members were reelected to the Area Liaison committee: Megan Buckley, Dana Gamarra, Henrietta Hermelin, Peggy Thorp, B.J. Love and Hank Bennett.



New York City

Christmas Eve Makes Wishes Come True at Holiday Hunkfest

The incomparable Ann Harada returned to spread holiday spirit and invited some of Broadway's sexiest leading men to join her for *Christmas*

Eve's Holiday Hunkfest, a one-night-only benefit for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS on December 14, 2015.

Harada stepped back into the

iconic character of "Christmas Eve," the hysterically inappropriate yet sincere therapist from *Avenue Q*, the role she originated on Broadway and the West End. Christmas Eve asked Santa to grant her one holiday wish: to sing with Broadway's hunkiest leading men. To the delight of a sold-out audience at New York City's The Cutting Room, her wish came true.

In an audaciously entertaining evening of song and dance, Harada welcomed Equity members John Bolton, Joe Carroll, Jordan A. Gelber, Dan Horn, Adam Jacobs, Telly

Leung, Jose Llana, Kevin Munhall, Joel Perez, Michael Rupert, Robert Sella and Howie Michael Smith.

Harada and her hunks provided their take on the Broadway songbook, putting Christmas Eve's unique twist on songs from a variety of shows, from *Chess* to *Cabaret*, *Les Misérables* to *The King and I*. The evening ended on a sweet holiday note with a festive, full-cast rendition of "All I Want for Christmas is You."

For a full story and more photos, go to broadwaycares.org.

Los Angeles
LA's Musical Theatre West Joins in Annual Appeal for BC/EFA

It was "lovely" in California as the company of *My Fair Lady* raised more than \$17,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Musical Theatre West, located in Long Beach, has long been a supporter of BC/EFA and its mission to help others less fortunate. After every performance of a three-week run, cast, crew and staff came together to appeal to sold-out audiences. With a house that holds upwards of 1,000 seats, audiences did not disappoint when it came to the spirit of the season.

Equity actors Martin Kildare and Debra Cardona, who performed the roles of Henry Higgins and Mrs. Pearce respectively, called BC/EFA a logical extension of the show's own message of helping someone change a current situation. "We gave a brief speech about helping those in need with the things that often get overlooked, like transportation or grocery shopping and invited everyone to contribute to the baskets," Kildare said. Cardona added, "We were overwhelmed by how kind and giving the audiences were."

The actors also saw the fundraising as another connection with the audience. "As actors we are generally insulated from our audience," said Kildare. "Raising money for BC/EFA lets us interact directly with the people we work so hard to reach through the stories we present." Through its National Grants Program, in 2015, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS awarded more than \$325,000 in grants to more than 40 social service organizations in Los Angeles County, including the Bickerstaff Pediatric and the Family HIV Center in Long Beach.

When you tell someone you're a swing, what do they actually think you do?



PHYLICIA PEARL

"Most of the time I get blank stares or a rather lackluster 'Oh...congrats,' because people have no idea what a swing is. When I explain that I cover most of the roles in the female ensemble of *The Lion King*, people are either in awe that I know so much or just ask me, 'who plays Nala?'"

Equity Members Celebrate Fundraising Success with Memorable Gypsy of the Year

For the 27th year, the best and brightest Broadway "gypsies" showed off their talent and dedication with funny, dramatic, emotional and thought-provoking numbers at Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS' annual *Gypsy of the Year* competition.

More than 150 Equity members performed original dances, songs and skits to the cheers of standing-room only audiences. Six weeks of energetic fundraising efforts by 54 Broadway, Off-Broadway and national touring companies led to an incredible \$4,786,239 being raised for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

The grand total was revealed by special guests Michael

Cerveris, George Takei and Julie White (1) following two festive afternoons of performances on December 7 and 8, 2015, at Broadway's New



1

Amsterdam Theatre.

The company of *Kinky Boots* took honors for best onstage presentation for a freestyle rap led by the show's newest star, Wayne Brady, with cast members Ellyn Marsh, Kyle

Taylor Parker and Jennifer Perry (2). Surprise guest rappers Christopher Jackson and Lin-Manuel Miranda from *Hamilton* joined in the fun, showing off

their improvisational chops by topping each other in a rap based entirely on words spontaneously provided by the audience. The cast of *The Lion King* was runner-up with a gripping dance number

choreographed by Ray Mercer and featuring the spoken-word poetry of cast mate L. Steven Taylor

Gypsy of the Year, opened with the tap-happy journey of a stage manager, played by Ryan Kasprzak, who reluctantly ditches his headset and clipboard to step into the spotlight as a last-minute replacement (3).

Finding Neverland's Laura Michelle Kelly led "We Can Be Kind," a poignant response to the recent escalating unrest at home and abroad, featuring a chorus of kids from the companies of *Finding Neverland, Fun Home*,

and *On Your Feet!* (4).

Other shows presenting included *An American in Paris, Avenue Q, The Book of Mormon, Chicago, Finding Neverland, Fun Home, Hamilton, Les Misérables, On Your Feet!, The King and I* and *Trip of Love*.

Nineteen national touring shows playing across the country raised more than \$2.1 million of the campaign's grand total. A special number recognizing their efforts was directed and choreographed by Geoffrey Goldberg.

Goldsberry, as well as Camryn Manheim from *Spring Awakening*, Lesli Margherita from *Dames at Sea*, Brad Oscar from *Something Rotten!*, Christopher Sieber from *Matilda The Musical* and Brandon Uranowitz from *An American in Paris* at the event.

This year's top Broadway musical fundraiser was *The Book of Mormon*, which raised an incredible \$313,857, followed by *Hamilton* with \$271,666, *Jersey Boys* with \$264,374, *Beautiful - The Carole King Musical* with \$168,955 and



3

Seth Rudetsky, the afternoon Broadway host on SiriusXM and co-writer and star of the upcoming Broadway musical *Disaster!*, made his eighth annual appearance as *Gypsy of the Year's* master of ceremonies.

Kinky Boots with \$161,242. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* was the top Broadway play fundraiser with \$78,258. *The Humans* became the top Off-Broadway fundraiser bringing in \$34,122. *The Book of Mormon - Latter Day Tour* took top national tour honors, raising \$344,643; followed by *Kinky Boots* with \$290,339, *Wicked - Munchkinland* with \$284,399, *Beautiful - The Carole King Musical* with \$191,901 and *Newsies* with \$159,915.

Gypsy of the Year was directed by Kristin Newhouse with Jason Trubitt serving as production stage manager, leading a team of 11 expert stage managers, and Ben Cohn as music supervisor.

For videos, a complete story and more photos, go to broadwaycares.org.



2

Anne Fortuno Recognized with Foundation's Outstanding Service Award

On January 8, 2016, the Actors' Equity Foundation acknowledged an Equity staff member who has been devoted to maintaining the Foundation for over a decade. Anne Fortuno, Assistant to the President of Actors' Equity Association, was honored by the Foundation with its first-ever Outstanding Service Award.

Fortuno had been working for the union for a number of years when Carl Harms, President of the Foundation, since it was formed in 1962, accepted her help with various administrative functions. As Arne Gundersen, current Foundation President explained, "Carl did everything himself," and when he passed on in 2005, it was Fortuno who "straightened it all out. She was the backbone of the Foundation." She acted as a liaison between the union and the Foundation, and working alongside the Foundation's Board, she would assist in planning and executing volunteer activities as well as the numerous awards and theatre grants.

"This award is very well deserved," said Sandra Karas, Secretary/Treasurer of Equity and Treasurer of the Foundation.

Noting Fortuno's great love of Equity and the Foundation, she said, "If you want to get on her bad side, say something bad about Actors' Equity." Fortuno would always try to get people to pitch in and help with various drives and projects, but "she did much of it single handedly," said Karas, "because that's how much she loves us, that's how much she loves this community."

"Yes, it's true I do love Actors' Equity very, very much and I love the Foundation very, very much," said Fortuno. "This union has had the good fortune to have wonderful people working together for it from the very beginning. The individuals I worked with were so dedicated they inspired me. I think the people of this union are incredible."

"Annie worked for over a decade in the unofficial capacity of administrator and 'shepherdess' of the Foundation," said Joan Glazer, Managing Director of the Foundation. "She handed over the role last November 2015 to me and has mentored me for a year. With this award, the Board thanks her for so many years of dedication and service above and beyond her role with the union."



4

The King and I, Kinky Boots, Les Misérables, The Lion King, Matilda The Musical

and Miranda also joined their *Hamilton* co-star Renée Elise



IN MEMORIAM

Ron Johnston, a consummate character actor and my dear friend, died on October 24, 2015.

He began his career as a dancer, appearing in the movie of *The Music Man* at age 17. An Equity member since 1958, he worked with Jerome Robbins on "N. Y. Export: Opus Jazz" and was in the original production of *West Side Story*.

Ron's many roles in regional and Off-Broadway theatres included *Hercule Poirot, Fezziwig, Peer Gynt, Mr. Van Daan, Sir George Crofts* in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Inspector Rough* in *Angel Street* and *Widdecombe* in *Stage Struck*. He toured in Peter Hall's production of *Amadeus* and appeared on Broadway in *Born Yesterday* with Ed Asner and Madeline Kahn and in *Wild*

Honey with Ian McKellen. His prodigious talent was matched by his generosity, kindness and warmth. For those of us lucky enough to have enjoyed his company, the world is now a less jolly place.

For information about a celebration of his life to be held in the coming months, please contact me at rememberron58@gmail.com.

— Alice Rosengard

Letters to The Editor

Letters received from paid-up members on subjects of concern to Equity members will be considered for publication in *Equity News*, provided that they are no greater than 175 words in length. Letters selected for publication may be edited for space requirements. Actors' Equity Association reserves the right to decline to publish letters at its sole discretion. When multiple letters on the same topic are submitted, the Editor may decide to select a smaller number of representative letters for publication. Letters must be signed and must provide preferred contact information for verification purposes, but names may be withheld from publication in certain limited circumstances, at a member's request. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of Actors' Equity Association.