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ATME

News

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Dancer, Artist, Performer
Margaret Severn at work on
a mask.

Photo from Jef Lambdin's
private collection

Contents

Letter from the President	2
Definition of Movement Specialist	7
From the Officers	10
2010 ATME Visiting Artist/ Scholar Fellowship Recipients	12
ATME in LA: Connections at the Core	12
ATME Business Meeting Minutes	15
Organizational Rep Reports	21
Article: Margaret Severn	26
News from the Membership	30
Summer Theatre Institute NYC 2011	31
Call for Submissions: ATME Digital Kinetic Journal	33
ATME Officers & Reps	34
ATME Postcard	37
Scholarship/Membership Forms	38
Images from ATHE 2011	40
A Final Word	41

Letter from the President

Dear ATME Colleagues and Friends,

I hope that your fall has been productive and rewarding. I would like to alter the format of my usual comments on the current agenda of ATME in order to share with you an interesting interview process that I have been engaged in over the past several weeks. *American Theatre* magazine is devoting an entire issue, January 2011, to Movement Training. I, as president of ATME, was contacted and interviewed initially by Randy Gener, Senior Editor of *American Theatre*, and then by Nicole Potter, the author of *Movement for Actors*. I thought you would find the interview questions and my responses, which I have included here and are actually notes that I made for myself during the process, of value. I fear that the article and my mentioning of ATME may be reduced to a paragraph! In light of this I send you the essence of the interview.

ATME is taking out a half page ad in the magazine, using our ATME postcard, which has information on our offerings and the date of the next ATHE conference in 2011.

NB: I sent Randy Gener and Nicole Potter our new "Definition of Movement Specialist" document and quoted from it often during this interview process. I worked on this document over the last months in consultation with you by way of the listserv and with the executive board of ATME. I hope you will find it useful.

1. Is there any approach to movement training that is now out of fashion?

Not that I am aware of. We love to “retool” existing approaches. If the basic principles of a training technique are solid but the mechanism of delivery is a bit dated we tend to evolve our teaching and coaching. Each day in the studio, which is our laboratory, we respond to our student/performers. As we experience what they are challenged by, we must respond with changes to our offerings. We must also practice the same skills that we are teaching in order to be effective agents of evolution or change for the students and artists that we are interacting with.

2. Is there a single location or center of that body that is the source of the actor’s physical power or energy?

I would say the area of the heart. Michael Chekhov tells us that this area is “the ideal center for the actor.” The heart then informs the will center, the pelvis, and the mind, the physical area of the head. Of course you can have a center for a character anywhere in your body – the palm of your hand is quite interesting. But for the actor as opposed to the character I would work from the heart.

3. Do you think that the achievement of a “neutral body” is something that the actor should strive for?

I would say this is essential. Tension is a NO to artistry. Students and performers confuse this with heightened life. It constricts the instrument and eventually shuts it down, while blocking true contact and the release of true experience. But how do you get there? A process is best that awakens the imagination and activates the body simultaneously so that the performer/student is encouraged to live in the “sensing/feeling/thinking” world rather than just the “thinking” world of everyday life.

We hope to work from an instrument that is physically and emotionally (including the many dimensions that affect these aspects of ourselves: psychological, spiritual, energy, etc.) free of the pedestrian mannerisms, societal constraints, and historical patterns that constrict, inhibit, and eventually “shut down” the body. These habits create a state of compromise that restricts the performer’s ability to truthfully respond.

I think this is where the concept of the “warm up,” which we probably borrowed from sport and dance, was implemented for the theatre. Our everyday bodies are cluttered, littered, with the debris of living in the world. This is not necessarily the world of the artist. In preparation for training or for rehearsal or performance we must clear the body of the “static” that comes from living. Generally this is done with a psychophysical process. Each person would do this on his/her own and in a group setting when working on a shared project. Generally a movement specialist will create a specific warm up process to address general psychophysical needs and then those of the unique production. Eventually, individuals must find their own process, but I think we each as trainers select what we feel is essential. I would always begin with “5 minutes that you give to yourself to do nothing,” a Loyd Williamson concept and best done on the floor where there is no

muscular commitment to supporting the body, but using a chair or even leaning on a wall, is effective. Then allow a focus on the breathing. Since the breathing response is the “moment of first motion” for a living being, it can also be thought of as the first order of business for a performer. Next, connect with the rhythm of the breath and build all other physical actions off of its receiving/inhaling action and its exhaling/releasing action. That is the basic polarity of the foundation of life. Without success in this basic physical process a performer will potentially present just themselves, and not even a deep and resonant part of themselves.

4. Does contemporary and post-Modern theater/film/TV require a different set of physical skills than a play written in earlier eras?

Ultimately truth, imagination, and physical responsiveness do not have a date code! Having said that I think that we are in an era of heightened responsiveness alongside one of a fascination with the contemporary habits of everyday life, with no filtering, in full view on the stage and television. We have broken free of “realism,” but I hope we have learned from it. The great clowns, which we think of as wildly inventive and behavioral, are deeply and authentically connected to the reality of human experience. But the body, the basic instrument, does not change.

5. Some people have a “tag line” describing what they consider a prime specimen of a physical actor—for example one who “fully inhabits his body,” or one who is “well integrated.” Do you have a summing up phrase like that?

Here are three responses that have stood the test of time and are very meaningful:

- Rudolph Laban: “Movement is functional and expressive. We move to fulfill a need, an inner impulse. That movement should fulfill our need/objective, and need not be the habitual response of our own pedestrian and possibly inarticulate body.”
- Loyd Williamson: “The body is a channel for processing experience into behavior which is motion and sound.”
- Michael Chekhov: “And then I saw that our profession is even more difficult than any other, because we have only one instrument to convey to the audience our feelings, our emotions, our ideas-----our own body. It is terrifyingly true.”

The process of training is to support an artist’s instrument in its evolution towards both heightened function and heightened expression. We must be able to walk, talk, reach, etc. with ease, and with attention to the character’s moment to moment intention, and each of these physical actions must express something of the specific moment. As Laban tells us, “When we move we reveal ourselves. We move to fulfill a need – an intention.” The instrument must be responding from the mind, the senses, and the contact with the people, places, and things of the imaginary world.

6. Any thoughts about physical training for the disabled actor?

I have not had this experience. I do feel, however, that we are all disabled at least psychologically. We have each experienced “wounds” within our lives that have not healed and that we must work through.

7. What movement disciplines do you feel are essential to actors training today?

Communication is a key goal here. What is essential is having a psychophysical process in place. I think if something is the “truth” then it is the “truth” regardless of the name attached. I believe we all are looking for the same things. The critical concern is that there must be a process for the pedestrian body to become the tool of the artist – an artist’s body - which is not the same as the pedestrian self. The body must communicate the experience of the moment.

In the Michael Chekhov and the Loyd Williamson trainings we employ sensory stimuli to ignite inner sensation and from this comes behavior, which is motion of some sort and sound. In the Williamson world, “The physical process of acting is the interaction of the actor’s body with the people, places and things of the imaginary world.” The mind and the body must both be engaged. We are charged with creating behavior that is attached to the world of the play or event and to the other people. We must have a process that allows the actor/performer to change, to receive, process and provide an authentic response, not manufactured, when meaningful contact is made.

8. Are there any current trends in movement training that are different from 10 or 20 years ago?

I think the fact that *American Theatre* is devoting an entire issue to physical training, not a dance magazine or a European publication, but “American” Theatre is doing this, illustrates a shift in values. Concurrently, the Chicago Humanities Festival of 2010 labels itself, “THE BODY ECLECTIC,” and writes, “... it’s an incredibly productive site from which to think and rethink history. Yet in the past 10-15 years, the body, which was for so long typically seen as the passive (partner in the mind-body relationship) is actually a site for all kinds of active interventions.”

This is a wonderful example of polarities – at a time when technology is the focus of most of our days we see this interest in “the body.” I think this is a balancing factor – ultimately we seek balance. We are engaged in survival and basic biology first and foremost. The body seeks equilibrium for optimum function and productivity. Existing in only one selective portion of ourselves, mind or body, is just not practical.

This new focus on physical expressiveness is a joy and an opportunity for most of us. We are now a part of the “conversation” more frequently and the conception of many standard plays has been expanding to allow more physical expressivity which performers and audiences tend to appreciate.

9. What disciplines do you draw from in your teaching? What is the core of what you teach?

Williamson, Chekhov, Laban, and Period Styles. The truth is the truth is the truth. Great pedagogy will always, in its own unique way address the same concerns, with its own unique language and exercises. All of the esteemed approaches deal with some focus on physical and expressive elements.

10. Do you think there should be a standard approach to “movement for actors”?

Not at all. We cannot all work from one “handout.” We may actually be doing similar things when you strip away certain language. *Please refer to “Definition of Movement Specialist” for the ATME response.*

11. What should a course called “Movement for Actors” comprise? Is there a specific set of skills that an actor should take away from such a course? What should the duration of such a course be? (a semester, two years, etc.?)

We train most effectively when we include the imagination along with the physical training of the body. How that is done and what elements are essential is a source of many pedagogical articles and conferences. *Please refer to “Definition of Movement Specialist” for the ATME response.*

12. Is there a need for such a course at this time, or should the movement disciplines be taught more “purely” (For example, is there any reason to study “movement for actors” when one could instead take a series of courses in different movement disciplines—maybe tai chi, modern dance, Alexander technique, etc.)

Yes. Skills must be attached to objectives and to circumstance. What does a “performance person” need that a “golfer” does not? Certain techniques might be appropriate for basketball players and CEOs of major business companies and performers, but will be most effective if shaped to the specific needs of the user.

13. If you have your own particular brand of discipline (i.e., Actors Movement Studio, Margolis Method, etc.) in what way do you think that your work has influenced the field?

Lloyd Williamson, creator of the Williamson Physical Training and the Actors Movement Studio in New York City, was a visionary and an innovator. He understood that in the physical training of actors, the issue involved the need for sensual contact with the world around us and that the body must be a processing tool in order to create authentic responsiveness, while also freeing us of societal constraints. As Bill Esper, famed Meisner teacher and author, states in referring to Williamson, “He understood that the issue was that there must be a tool that trains an actor while he is in the grip of murderous rage to not lock down and then ultimately collapse.” Williamson was uncovering this in the 70’s and no one was doing this that I am aware of. His teacher and mentor was the

brilliant choreographer and teacher, Anna Sokolow. Loyd Williamson says that “she taught him how to be an artist.”

14. Is the approach to acting/voice/movement more integrated than it once was? Do you think it should be?

Yes and it is essential that it is. The body does it feeling, moving and sounding all at once, as do performers. We should collaborate more with voice and acting teachers in the studio training.

15. Has technology had an effect upon how you teach and how actors learn?

What I find most significant is that people’s bodies are not as responsive, athletic, and kinesthetically expressive. Whether I am coaching a professional production or training undergraduates I find new challenges as we are all spending a greater portion of our time sitting or lying down while focusing our imaginations and bodies on a screen of some sort.

I wish you a meaningful holiday season,

Deborah Robertson
President, ATME

Definition of Movement Specialist

Association of Theatre Movement Educators

1. WHO WE ARE

We are a diverse group of professional educators, scholars, and practitioners whose mission is to foster artistic growth, personal freedom, and safe and respectful exploration of the physical components of communication, and effective, efficient motion. Each member, within his or her own unique specialization, may: practice creativity and freedom of expression; empower students/clients, themselves and the organization; promote research into related fields.

To achieve our objectives we will employ reasonable and accepted practices such as: visual demonstration and modeling, physical contact, written text, observation, and discussions that foster understanding.

Our members represent a wide range of somatic (of or relating to the body) disciplines and approaches. Our varied practices reflect these differences while always honoring the emotional, physical and psychological well being of our student/clients, ourselves, and the integrity of our profession.

A movement specialist possesses a fundamental knowledge of physical training pedagogies as demonstrated through study with various recognized physical training practitioners and institutions devoted to the study of physical pedagogies. ATME believes that familiarity with many systems can only aid the movement specialist's overall understanding of the expectations of the various aspects of the performer's profession and the further development of our discipline. A movement specialist will endeavor to stay current in new and or innovative approaches.

RELATIONSHIPS

- **STUDENT/CLIENTS** - To our student/clients we will provide: the creation of an environment that promotes creative expression and exploration; instruction; communication with the movement specialist; and the opportunity of empowered expression in relation to the self and to the art form. We will always respect confidentiality.
- **COLLEAGUES** - We will share information and resources, respect, learn and encourage. We will not shield a fellow member whose conduct is unprofessional or who is guilty of misconduct.
- **COMMUNITY/UNIVERSITY** - We will employ respectful practices, work within ethical standards, and remain accessible and available.
- **PROFESSION** - We will provide service to the profession and embrace current developments while respecting traditional practice.
- **SELF** - Create a positive environment that fosters personal and artistic growth, health, safety and artistic and professional freedom.

2. TYPICAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

PHYSICAL

We employ practices that assist with appropriate self-use and mechanical issues concerning the body (the instrument). These issues range from general care to corrective work. The movement specialist/teacher works with the development of the intuitive and kinesthetic understanding of the performer. A movement specialist will devise a process for creating an articulate body that demonstrates technical proficiency, full physical commitment and ease along with the integration of physical skills. This may include but is not limited to:

- Examination of the muscles and the skeletal aspects of the body to foster optimum alignment, which is the ability to maintain a vertical silhouette within the body that demonstrates ease and radiates an engagement with the self and with the environment.
- Tension release to facilitate ease of motion and the technical proficiency of the body.
- Understanding of the process of respiration that supports all physical processes.
- Teaching of movement skills and/or dance pedagogy to increase strength, flexibility, control, articulate self-use, and as elements of improvisation.
- Addressing physical mannerisms as they affect the student/client.
- Clarity and specificity in the physical shaping of movement dynamics.
- Physical definition of character – training the body to be emotionally and physically connected to the specifics of the text.

- Styles training – the ability to inhabit a physical and experiential reality other than one’s own, including styles that may range from Commedia dell’Arte and Restoration manners to twenty first century dance.

EXPRESSIVE

A movement specialist will assist the student/performer in the exploration of the body as an expressive tool of the creative imagination. This may include but is not limited to:

- Teaching physical articulation and the use of the body as an instrument of perception and expression facilitating the transformation of the body.
- Developing the ability to externalize and communicate the character’s goals/objectives and inner state through movement, with or without text.
- Increasing the powers of concentration, observation, and sensitivity to others; and applying these skills to working collaboratively in groups.
- Assisting in the achievement of attaining the skill, confidence and freedom of expression required to play diverse characters and to convincingly convey differences of age, physical condition, class position, historical period, and emotional attitude.

3. TECHNIQUES AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Movement specialists will often have received training in multiple approaches to the discipline. A few examples of these training methods are: dance, tai chi, yoga, period styles, combat, physical comedy, acrobatics, mime, mask, clown, or any one of many body use or movement techniques or approaches: Lecoq, Decroux, Bartenieff, Laban, Michael Chekhov, Alexander, Feldenkrais, Meyerhold, Suzuki, Pilates, Williamson, Bioenergetics, Commedia dell’Arte, Improvisation, Martial Arts, Viewpoints, and RasaBoxes. Theater programs embrace somatic training in some form. They embrace training styles using extensions of the body in the form of anything from masks to weapons in combat to the red nose of the clown.

4. THE MOVEMENT SPECIALIST’S WORK WITH STUDENTS/PERFORMERS IN PRODUCTION INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- Collaborating with the director and production staff to design a unique physical life for a production and a work process for the movement coach and or choreographer.
- Creating a process for the performing artist in which they create, enter and inhabit the internal and external elements of a performance space.
- Assisting in the ability of a physical instrument to maintain freedom from tension, vivid expression, a released and aligned vertical silhouette, and remain responsive to the world of the script while demonstrating specific physical character dynamics implementing the imagination.
- Coaching the physical and experiential crafting of a specific character life involving physical, vocal, and experiential choices that are related to the character, not the performer, including: rhythm, tempo, styles, strength and articulate character definition, and choreography.
- Developing a warm up process specifically designed to address the demands of the rehearsal period and the production.

5. THE MOVEMENT SPECIALST MAY ALSO BE ENGAGED IN:

- Consultations with professional artists, teachers, and other professionals from all walks of life in the public sector.
- Direction and/or creation of dramatic works, performance pieces of original work.
- Teaching of other approaches to performance including: acting, musical theatre, singing or performing in film, television or broadcast media, vocal approaches to character and style, textual analysis and interpretation.
- Research and scholarship including, but not limited to, historical investigations, pedagogical advances, and performance reviews.

From the Officers....**Annette Thornton, Vice President**

Dear ATME members,

Each time I experience a coming together of the ATME contingent, I am energized, awed and completely filled with respect for my movement colleagues. I had the pleasure of spending time with the ATME membership at the ATHE conference in Los Angeles. In addition, this year's pre-conference was a wonderful gathering of movement colleagues. Please see the description of the pre-conference in this newsletter. The next pre-conference will be in 2012 in Washington, DC. I encourage each of you to continue your active support of ATME. There are many ways to get involved, from being an organizational representative to participating in conferences to posting questions on the listserv that spark dialogue and discussion about our work.

Beth Johnson, Secretary

Dear Membership,

As many times as we hear the phrase "time flies," fall is always an abrupt reminder of the truth to that adage. It seems only yesterday that we were in LA for annual ATHE conference and our marvelous ATME pre-conference organized by VP Annette Thornton. The minutes for both of the AMTE business meetings have been posted on the AMTE website under News. You can check them out right now via [this hyperlink](#) or at your leisure.

Our membership has held steady in 2010 with 135 current members. We would definitely like to see that number grow this coming year. With the addition of PayPal in 2010, the executive committee elected to be fairly lenient with dues payment and membership. But with the establishment of this new payment option, we will be starting early with membership renewal for 2011. The good news is that the cost of membership will remain the same. The bad news, if you will, is that this will be a quick turnaround for members who recently renewed or joined. Our

membership year does run January to January, so I am using this as an opportunity to get a jump on the coming year. If you are unsure of your membership status please email me at atmesecretary@gmail.com. The 2011 membership form is available as part of this newsletter and is posted on the website as well. Currently, filling out this form is the only way to update your contact information. In the future you will be able to handle that online. You do not need to complete the form if your information hasn't changed. Payments can be made online or checks can be mailed to the address on the form.

Thank you for your time.
 You'll be hearing more from me soon,

Marianne Kubik, Treasurer

We currently have a balance of over \$19,000 in the ATME Treasury. As we turn the corner toward a new year, I ask each member to “phone a friend” and encourage just one fellow movement professional or graduate student to join ATME. If we each participate, we can essentially double membership while increasing connections in the theater movement field.

Two thirds of this year’s membership dues were deposited through Paypal, which proves this addition to membership services has been well received. We hit a few snags with the PayPal process, causing us to go off-line twice since initiating service in April; these errors have since been corrected. The website may soon include a “Donate Now” button, where anyone can go online and donate to the organization directly through PayPal.

ATME Financial Summary: Jan-Oct 2010

Income

Membership	\$ 4,505.00
Pre-Conference Registration.....	1,500.00
Dividend.....	\$21.62
Total Income:	\$ 6,026.62

Expenses

Fellowship Fund	\$ 3,000.00
Pre-Conference expenses	1,600.00
Corporation Fees.....	60.00
MOVE Workshop (mailings).....	70.40
Advertising (postcards).....	148.96
Website Maintenance.....	1,510.00
Office Expenses/Postage.....	73.85
Total Expenses:	(\$ 6,463.21)

Current Funds:\$19,475.32

2010 ATME Visiting Artist/Scholar Fellowship Recipients

We'd like to extend our congratulations to the following recipients of the Visiting Artist/Scholar Fellowships:

January	Yoav Kaddar	\$500
	Bethany Urban	\$500
April	Cara Rawlings	\$500
May	Jeff Casazza	\$500
	Tammy Meneghini	\$500

For those of you interested in participating in this program, ATME accepts applications on an ongoing basis. Check out the website for more information.

ATME in Los Angeles: Connections at the Core
by
Annette Thornton

This year's ATME conference in Los Angeles began two days early for about 25 movement specialists who participated in ATME's pre-conference, "The Body of the Text," August 2-3, 2010. Carlos Garcia of Teatro Punto joined us this year as our teaching guest artist. Carlos not only inspired us with his work in new commedia but also participated in all ATME events throughout the entire conference. The pre-conference provided nine presenters with an opportunity to share their work via DVD or demonstration, to lead workshops and discussions, and to network with colleagues in the field.

The first morning session began with Rebecca VerNooy (Ohio University), who started us off with a gentle reorientation of the body in her session entitled "The Intuitive Body: Authentic Movement and Embodied Text." VerNooy began with stretches on the floor following physical impulse, and continued into standing and moving from physical and vocal impulses. VerNooy's handout describes her work as "guid[ing] students into the inner landscape of their bodies – a place of rich imagery, imagination, and intrigue." Lori Torok (Mt. San Jacinto College) was the second presenter with her "Mind Mapping: An Experiential Approach to Multiple Texts in [Post-Structuralist] Movement Theatre." Torok explained her method of guiding students in their creative process with a non-linear and intuitive visual method of analyzing or understanding a text. In what Torok explained as a hypertext approach (i.e., the way that websites are created), mind mapping displaces a hierarchy of ideas and provides a strong visual aid of the interconnectedness of reader responses. The first session ended with Terry Glaser's (University of San Diego) workshop entitled "Dance the Scene." Glaser introduced participants to the series of exercises she developed based on the work of Michael Chekhov. Glaser's workshop covered creating psychological gestures, atmosphere, and metaphors, which she then applied to and coached participants in a scene from Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

After a short break filled with coffee and excited conversation, Heather Harpham (Action Theatre, NY) presented her DVD: “Excerpts from Solo Show ‘Happiness’” followed by discussion of her process. Harpham showed three sections from her 80-minute show, which she describes as being about “the medical debris and accidental wisdom that sear through one child’s dream of wellness.” In one memorable section about an adolescent girl attached to a breathing machine, Harpham described the process of not trying to tell the true story but rather the truth of the story as Heather received it from the young girl. Davis Robinson (Bowdoin College) followed with his DVD compilation entitled “Finding the Play Through Ensemble Collaboration.” Robinson shared work from four of his shows, from dance images inspired by Crazy Cats comic trip to Samurai stillness to Grand Guignol/Tennessee Williams to stylized music theatre with *Babes in Arms*.

Following a lunch break and more conversations/networking/connecting, Jeff Casazza (Indiana University / Purdue University Fort Wayne) led participants in a workshop entitled “Movement Scores Illuminating the Text.” Casazza’s work begins with the breath and creation of shape/gesture, followed by development of a movement score with emotion and language. Next, Tamara Meneghini (University of Colorado, Boulder) presented selections from her solo show, “The Goddess Here: Women of Choice.” Meneghini combined Rasaesthetics and mask work in a series of women’s monologues set in a shoe store. Meneghini’s work explores the moments that each character wears the mask and when she takes it off. Meneghini’s mask work was the perfect lead-in to Carlos Garcia’s workshop on modern commedia. Carlos, who aptly describes himself as a researcher, presented a lecture-demonstration of his work with García Lorca’s poetry. Carlos explained that the movement of the mask comes from the torso and he demonstrated how the lines of the mask are projected in and correlated with the lines of the body. Carlos refers to his approach as a “system of forces.” Carlos continued his discussion of modern commedia that evening during the reception. He also performed at the Fringe Festival that occurred later during the ATHE conference.

The second day of the pre-conference began with Cara Rawlings (Virginia Tech) leading a workshop on “Psycho-Physical Exploration of the Text.” Rawlings’ redirecting work – “water meets water” – using scenes, text, and intentions provided an active approach to action/response, listening, and resistance. Davis Robinson led a workshop entitled “Starting Out: A Whirlwind Jam on W.B. Yeats.” Robinson’s investigation into the basic patterns of movement and text work is combined with his scale from realistic to abstract – all while reciting Yeats’ verse! The morning continued with Sarah Barker (University of South Carolina) and professional actor Don Mackay in the workshop/demonstration entitled “How the Text Comes to Life in the Body of the Character: *A Winter’s Tale*.” Barker led participants in her work using movement/vocal explorations that unlock the actor’s creative process in interpreting Shakespeare text by identifying and exploring images that inform gesture and speech. Barker and Mackay demonstrated how this process was used in Mackay’s portrayal of Leontes. The final session of Tuesday morning was Lori Torok who shared her work with undergraduates in the DVD “‘Experiment in a Glass’: Movement Theatre and the Poetry of Tennessee Williams.” Torok and her students produced a post-structural approach to Williams’ poetry that incorporated multi-media projections, sculpture, original music, live and recorded voice. Torok’s work with her undergrads was the perfect way to end the pre-conference because it reminded all of us about why we are doing what we are doing: for the students.

We ended the pre-conference with formal introductions including school and artistic details that one might expect at the beginning of such a process. But the day and half of exploring, discussing, working, supporting and laughing that led up to the final circle of introductions allowed us to get to know each other in a profound way – at the core of our experiences – that was sweetened even more by each participant’s formal introduction.

For a report to ATHE regarding the importance of pre-conferences, I queried this year’s pre-conference attendees. The following are selected remarks:

Beth Johnson, ATME Secretary (Finger Lakes Community College): “As a participant the most important advantage is to have a full day and a half to investigate and study a concept or technique. The normal sessions at ATHE are too short for any true insight or development. Also as a focus group, I think the advantage to us is to be able to offer our members this type of experience at a relatively low cost. It creates an identity for ATME and I think the members begin to see the value of paying dues and what we can offer them on a professional level.”

Davis Robinson (Bowdoin College): “The pre-conference provides a very focused pedagogical boost to all of us as teachers, giving us several new exercises and approaches to bring back to our home institutions. By providing valuable professional development right beforehand, it helps to encourage movement theater people to attend the larger ATHE conference who might not attend otherwise.”

Terry Glaser (University of San Diego): “ATME's sense of community and sheer joy in the work and each other are very special. I don't know if this exists in other focus groups, but it's certainly vital for theatre practitioners. Otherwise, why would we be doing what we do?!”

Holly Cate (Muhlenberg College): “For me, as a first-time ATHE attendee, the lovely little community that we forged in that room through the pre-conference was really important to me as I ventured out into the larger conference. It was invaluable in making me feel more comfortable in the panels I went to as I encountered my ATME buddies again and again, and it was really helpful in giving me a little structure with which to navigate the size and looseness of the larger conference. I went to the pre-conference because the topic was so much in line with my own work, but I ended up being so, so grateful on many levels that I attended, not only because my teaching toolbox was so enriched but also because I felt like I had found my 'tribe', so to speak. Coming into ATHE for the first time, I was having trouble figuring out what the focus groups were all about. It's all just a mishmash of labels until you actually get there, even with my experienced colleagues at Muhlenberg trying to explain everything to me. If I were to give advice to another first-time attendee, I would say, "Find a focus group that interests you, go to their pre-conference if they have one, and take it from there." It's just so much easier to navigate ATHE with the support of a focus group, and the ATME pre-conference made that possible for me.”

We hope to see you in Chicago for ATHE in 2011 and then in Washington, D.C. in 2012 for the next pre-conference!

Check out Annette’s photos from the conference on page 40.....

ATME Business Meeting #1
8/4/10 11:30 am Directors II
23 members in attendance

Introductions and General announcements

Note of apology from President Deborah Robertson who could not attend the meeting due to a family emergency.

Vice President Annette Thornton, Secretary Beth Johnson, Treasurer Marianne Kubik (also unable to attend), new focus group rep. Bethany Urban, Web coordinator Judith Chaffee, Past-President Sara Romersberger, and our new conference planner Rachel Bowditch were introduced. Followed by self-introductions of all in attendance.

Sarah Barker announced that she is looking for editors for digital journal. Please contact her if you are interested.

Reports

Pre-conference: ATME just finished a fabulous day and a half of our biennial pre-conference on the theme “The Body of the Text.” There were approximately thirty participants who enjoyed workshops and DVD showings, whereby the presenters shared their processes for working with various types of text. Guest Artist, Carlos García Estevez, from Teatro Punto, Madrid, Spain, also shared a special presentation that was followed by a wine and cheese reception. We look forward to the 2012 Pre-conference in Washington, DC. Please be thinking of ideas that you might be interested in and send them on to Annette and Sara.

M.O.V.E. : There will not be a MOVE training this coming January in Arizona, but two of our members (Judith Chaffee and Rebecca Vernoooy) are looking at planning an event in Boston, probably in May or June.

Membership Report: Prior to the pre-conference there were 104 paid members plus our lifetime members (6), which sets us at around 110. Several people did pay at the conference as well as a few new members who hope to join. These numbers are still down from the last two years. The big push to renew dues was delayed this year, as we were holding off until the Paypal option, online dues payment, was linked to the website. Since then we have had a few issues with their recognition of our non-profit status causing them to deactivate the link on our website. Currently the button is working and we are reviewing the documentation they require. A brief discussion followed of how we might increase membership.

Treasurer’s Report:

The Treasurer sent in her report, read by Beth. Highlights from the report follow.

As of August 1st \$3,500 has been received in dues. This is down \$200 since 2009. Please encourage your colleagues to join. If you haven’t renewed, please do so.

2/3 of the membership paid via Paypal. A breakdown of expenses will appear in the upcoming newsletter.

The current cash flow, including the estimated Pre-Conference cash flow, is \$18,270.00

There have been 5 recipients of the 2010 ATME Visiting Artists/Scholar Fellowship: Yoav Kaddar, Bethany Urban, Cara Rawlings, Jeff Casazza, and Tammy Meneghini

Conference 2011 Chicago:

Rachel Bowditch is replacing Bethany Urban as the new Conference planner for 2011. After requesting a volunteer, Natalie Turner-Jones stepped-up. Thank you again Natalie! The dates for the Chicago conference are August 11-14. The conference is moving back to a weekend schedule (Thursday – Sunday) instead of the weekday schedule of the last two years. The theme for the conference is *Performance Remains, Global Presence: Memory, Legacy, and Imagined Futures*. (See page 12 in the conference booklet.) 2011 will be ATHE's 25th anniversary. The conference hopes to honor the legacy of ATHE while envisioning its future. The conference will be designed to enable globalize dialogue about the central question of “how theatre is necessarily present, and how does the live moment remember the past and imagine the future?”

There will be a change in multi-disciplinary and plenaries, the goal being to craft them around this central idea, as opposed to just random collections of focus group members and/or friends. An all-conference plenary will focus on *Interdisciplinarity in the Global Context at ATHE*. Then break out groups will be formed around this main theme for each focus group (automatic session up to 10 people). ATME will be guaranteed four sessions (two bus meetings, break out session [see above] and the debut panel). We can also anticipate another three sessions.

November 1st is the deadline for proposals

Contact Rachel about your proposals – before you apply (hopefully by October 1st)

Everyone must be registered for the conference. Guest passes are reserved for independent artists there for the one session and is based on financial need. Each pass is worth \$260.

If you are accepted you have to make a commitment to attend. A number of accepted presenters did not make it to the conference this year.

Accepted panels will be notified by March 1st. Presenters must commit to attend by May 1st.

A discussion about how to connect with other focus groups followed. During which a possible panel topic emerged: *You Can't Copyright Time and Space; Viewpoints Shmiewpoints*.

Gwendolyn Alker, co-chair of ATHE 2010 stopped by with further information on the theme for 2011. She really pushed TRUE MULTI-DIS panels where all the members would discuss the same idea from different perspectives. You can email her at Gwendolyn.aker@nyu.edu or both co-chairs (Josh Abrams is the other co-chair) at the conference site Conf2011@athe.org

Gwendolyn described a performance/demonstration for the keynote address, and three types of plenaries. The 25th anniversary all conference plenary and smaller breakout groups which she is calling plenorette, or in this case plenorettes. There is then a second set of plenorettes with global representatives (read from other countries outside the US)

Our new Focus Group Rep. Bethany Urban will make a report at Friday's Business meeting.

Member News:

Heather Harpham, Bill Bowers, and Carlos García Estevez will be performing during the Fringe Festival. Bruce Lecure has his movement-training program set up in the exhibit hall.

atmeweb.org:

The redesign of ATME's webpage is up and running. The member's only area is still under construction, pending a discussion of what types of information members would like to see there and how best to control and filter member's contact information.

Please note that the electronic newsletters are posted on the site. Judith did a great job of updated all the members links to their website (except for .eddo sites). She would like to connect the upcoming definition of a "Movement Specialist" to the site and have the member names under specialties listed there.

Promotion and Tenure:

Colleen Kelly and P&T Committee are still working on the documents. They are getting close to a final draft for review.

Definition of a Movement Specialist:

Deborah Robertson and Tammy Meneghini have synthesized the definition of Movement Specialist. The executive committee is currently reviewing the document.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Johnson, Secretary, ATME

ATME Business Meeting #2 August 6, 2010
Submitted by Natalie Turner-Jones

Membership: If someone new wants to join ATME before the end of the year, we will give them the lower price offered to members at the conference.

Newsletter: We need reps. If everyone looks at the last newsletter to see who's representing what, we can see where we need other reps. Regional reps weren't as successful, but reps for different practices lets people know in their particular area of study what's happening in ATME, and lets ATME know about developments in their area of practice. People from different areas have sent beautiful reports with photos that bring a lot of vibrancy and possibility.

Extending membership abroad: Natasha and Natalie know a lot of practitioners in Britain – can they be included? Please consider the following: how to plant a seed to enable the Brits to join us in DC.

2012 Conference: If anyone has any ideas for the DC pre-conference, please let Annette know about the ideas you may have. In Chicago, we should make a clear decision about what those ideas should be focused around. Sara R and Annette will be the DC pre-conference organizers. Next year is Chicago (2011), then DC (2012), then Orlando (2013).

Missed sessions: A 5:15 ATME session didn't happen. Two single person sessions that were scheduled did not have presenters. How did they get accepted in the first place? Bethany believes that it was a panel that was originally rejected, but put in at the last minute because another one was withdrawn. She is checking and will let us know before end of meeting if she finds anything in her notes.

Warm-up Sessions for Chicago: Judith Chaffee raised the issue of warm-ups. Senior faculty ended up doing a lot of them this year. It used to be that in November when the planners put the schedule together, we ask junior faculty to put together warm-ups and put them in the program – especially if they don't have a chance to share their work. We need to get the names of the warm-up leaders in the program for next year, which may encourage more people to volunteer. Rachel will announce via the listserv that she needs people in October. Judith wonders if there's a big demand for it – and also would it be better if we moved it to the middle of the day? The Denver conference was bigger, and we can anticipate more people in Chicago. Natalie suggested more detail would help as she was afraid to lead a warm-up thinking it could be 150 people and very intimidating. Rachel says she's "on it" for Chicago!

Mentoring program: Annette says it is in need of rejuvenation – we need more senior faculty to mentor. We need folks to help junior faculty with the tenure process. Perhaps an email on the listserv could go out? It's not only for junior faculty members, but also to help develop review panels for tenure. If we could get a list of senior mentors who would be available for review of CV's, to write portfolio letters, etc, it would help.

Legacy Project: Sarah Barker brought up the legacy project. Annette wants to review that again. Deborah and Annette were discussing interviews with founding members, etc for the Chicago ATHE conference, as a springboard for re-starting the legacy project. There was another panel where they honored their master teacher and taught some of their exercises at the pre-conference. Annette wants something on the website that brings more attention to it. Rachel suggested a double-panel of 8 who discuss their master teacher and then teach an exercise. Several agreed that that would be a great idea, which is very important to help ATME's identity grow as we continue to recognize a large body of masters. Sarah B says she hesitates to put up too many panels on history and there are a lot of folks who need to do more with their own work or practical work, which counts more toward tenure. Annette suggests that perhaps paying tribute to their master, but then put an emphasis on how they've moved forward. Sara R says we should put more emphasis on doing/sharing the work rather than talking about the work.

Conference Spaces for 2011: Next year we need to look at spaces and stay focused on how to get what we actually request – we need larger spaces and preferably one without carpeting or quite so many chairs. If we could consistently have a few spaces that are for practical sessions only, rather than paper-oriented presentations, that would help. Bethany expressed difficulty with getting them to hear the concerns about rooms and concurrent sessions. Sara R asked the conference committee for specific rooms, and Nancy wasn't helpful except to say that she would handle it as she saw fit and that technology needs were the reason for some of the scheduling.

Facebook/Social Networking & Conference Communication: ATME has a Facebook page. Bethany reported that at the ATHE meeting, the first issue discussed was communication, which took up the first half of the conference organizers' meeting. They're working on the communication between the members and focus groups. Bethany thinks that we managed to communicate well within our own focus group about the conference in comparison to other focus groups present. She will make sure that as a rep for ATME, she will continue efforts to keep communication on track. She also reports that ATHE wants us to use Facebook and share info through social networking both as a focus group as well as within ATHE. We need to be linked to the ATHE Facebook through ATME, and we then need to be linked to the ATHE website as well. IF we can link through all of these mediums, we can market better and stay in touch, improve communication, etc. Maybe people could put what they're doing on the Facebook ATME page as a means of reporting and showing our activities? Additionally, we want to have members that will be active -- we have a lot of inactive members. Getting a Facebook post out to grad students who might be interested in joining would also be really helpful. We should join both ATHE and ATME Facebook pages so that we can increase visibility. People tend to get into ATHE through the focus groups, and FB is one way we can really do that.

ATHE News: From the ATHE news, most people are reading articles that have to do with focus groups -- they encourage us to send in articles about our focus group. If we don't want to write our own article but have news to report, we can send info to Bethany and she will submit it. ATHE wants submissions, so we are strongly encouraged to send things in.

International Connections: We're focusing on international and global connections. If we want to think about international artists we want to bring in for Chicago or DC or both -- we should bring in suggestions and encourage international artists to come. Carlos will help, and Rachel will follow up on it. Bethany said that if we could get those suggestions to Gwendolyn or (the other one organizing whose name I didn't catch), it would be extremely helpful -- speakers, practitioners -- all could be included.

Members at Large: In the focus group rep meeting, they were encouraged to find members at large for each focus group. If anyone is interested in being a member at large, we need to know ASAP. Apparently "members at large" are liaisons between the focus groups and the governing council -- they vote on particular areas that they are asked to be informed about, the reps don't. Members at large vote on things like budgets and money, and advocate for the focus group. We're a group taken very seriously because of our international connections, organization, website, etc. It would be a great opportunity for someone wanting to move up. Outreach and Operations are the two areas that will be open next year to new members at large. Outreach is struggling right now -- it's not really well defined. If you're a hard worker and a networker, it's an effective way to advocate for the focus group -- if you're not, it isn't. Regarding outreach: Mini-fringe could be an opportunity to bring in new people who want to see shows if it was made accessible to people outside the conference.

Communicating our needs to ATHE: if you have any requests give them to Bethany who will pass them on.

Organizing for 2011: Natalie has volunteered to be the Co-organizer with Rachel and Sarah from Loyola will also assist. Both members live and work in Chicago.

ATHE 501C3: we're discussing whether or not ATHE will serve as an umbrella organization for focus groups. Annette said that our status affected Paypal.

Journal Submissions: Theatre Topics is really seeking submissions from theatre practitioners. They are also interested in book reviews on topics other than acting or directing. Annette and Bruce and Sara have all published in theatre topics and can help. Theatre Journal has also encouraged faculty and advanced grad students to submit and publish.

General FYI: ATHE may add a communications position.

The New ATHE Strategic Plan: It is being worked on and will come out after the Chicago conference -- be on the lookout for it.

Tenure Review: It is being worked on by Colleen Kelly and her committee.

CCC: is no longer going to be involved -- (Complete Conference Coordinators) - big change that they hope goes smoothly.

Website Links to ATHE: Do we have pages linked to the ATHE website? Also -- does ATHE have a link to US? We can now build anything we want for their site. However we need to make sure we monitor and control our own information and website. There is a webmaster that can be contacted about this. We discovered we really need an update -- during meeting we found out of date information on the website. Bethany will be doing the changes, but will work on it with Judith.

ATHE wants to know about the pre-conferences. Is anybody willing to write something up? Annette said she'd do it. We said it's an opportunity to have deeper conversations, focus, and a chance to exchange info near another conference, cutting costs and inconvenience to members.

Sponsorships: For Chicago -- do we want to get sponsorships? WE need monetary sponsorships from Chicago-based companies. They are also looking for underrepresented countries.

January ATHE Planning Meeting: There is a request from the membership to get a movement person for the January planning meeting (probably Natalie). Sara R says that in past that those who are obligated to do meetings have needed to back out, so we have had back-up folks on stand-by who were able and trustworthy to handle things in place of others. It makes things easier and is enabling to our organization.

Final Business at the end:

The legacy project (Annette is investigating) is hopefully going to be reinstated soon.

We also need to be on the lookout for nominees for awards, which is complicated because it needs to be someone noteworthy enough that people really universally know who they are.

Annette has encouraged all of us to use the listserv for exchanging more ideas.

Rachel suggested that for 2011, since it's the ATHE 25th anniversary, it might be a good idea to put together a panel of past ATME presidents – it could be an opportunity for looking back at the organization in order to look forward.

We have also been encouraged to think in terms of what we can do within ATME in order NOT to isolate ourselves simply as movement educators and reach out more.

Organizational Rep Reports

Jennifer Mizenko *American Dance Festival Association*

American College Dance Festival Association (A.C.D.F.A.), is a well established, and distinguished organization, that encourages and perpetuates faculty and students in the college or university environment to share dance in annual regional conferences across the US. These conferences are also open to theatre students and faculty who too are willing to share and study movement and dance for the stage, and actor. Over 100 classes are offered over a three to four day weekend once a year, ranging from a myriad of dance technique classes in Modern Dance, Ballet, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Tap, Contact Improvisation, Movement for the Actor, Theatre and Dance Improvisation, African and several ethnic forms including; non-dance Somatic forms such as Yoga, Feldenkreis, Pilates, etc... Levels are offered on the beginning to the advanced. Daily adjudications for school dance entries such as completed choreographic compositions are presented with a culminating Gala Concert for the finalists. Workshops, lectures, panelists by professionals are offered aside from technique classes. These conferences are mostly for students who can study with other teachers and professionals offering their artistic interpretations that may not be offered at a student's college or university. Social events and dinner parties are prepared for the students so that may congregate and bond for a fun evening. Please see the website for more information: www.acdfa.org

Submitted for A.C.D.F.A. organizational rep by Dr. Barry Fischer, new faculty member at Central Michigan University. Dr. Fischer has served on the Board of Directors for A.C.D.F.A. for three terms, attended over 20 regional (and non-regional) conferences, participated as a guest teacher or performer and is a Lifetime member of A.C.D.F.A.

Erika Bergland *Body-Mind Centering Association*

The 26th Annual Body-Mind Centering Association Conference will be held on October 21-24, 2011 at the Summit Conference Center, Browns Summit, NC (45 minutes from the North Carolina Triangle area). The conference is titled "Exploring our Somatic Roots" and will

feature the founder of Body-Mind Centering(R), Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. Keep posted by logging on to www.bmca.org. ATME members, Erika Berland and Wendell Beavers have submitted workshops on the relationship of Body-Mind Centering to theater and performance.

Davis Robinson *Celebration Barn Theatre*

Celebration Barn Theater will celebrate 40 years in 2011! Next season's complete workshop and residency schedule will be posted soon at:
www.CelebrationBarn.com <<http://www.CelebrationBarn.com>> .

Here's a sneak peak:

- Joy of Phonetics
Workshop with Louis Colaianni, June 20-25
- Celebration Intensive: A 2-week Intensive in Movement, Physical Graphics and Devising with Davis Robinson & Karen Montanaro, June 27- July 9
- Eccentric Performing with Avner Eisenberg & Julie Goell, Dates TBA
- Performance for Musicians with Deborah Henson-Conant & Karen Montanaro, Dates TBA
- Art of Movement Workshop with Karen Montanaro & Christine Sullivan, Dates TBA

Additionally, internship opportunities are available for the 2011 season.

For more information,

check out <http://celebrationbarn.com/-internships.html>



Joan Schirle*Dell'Arte International*

Dell'Arte International heads into the 2010-2011 season with a class of 36 students in the one-year certificate program, and four new MFA's. This year's students come from India, Canada, Brasil, Korea, Russia, Croatia and the USA.

Our **Study Abroad: Bali** program takes off on January 5. Three articles about our Bali program have appeared in the UK publications *TOTAL THEATRE*, and *ANIMATIONS*, a magazine about puppetry. Visit dellarte.com/bali <<http://dellarte.com/bali>> for Bali info and application details. This program is open to anyone with an interest in the performing arts of Bali.

School Director **Joan Schirle** directed a Goldoni play for Colorado University in Boulder this Fall, and taught a course in Acting Through Mask while in residence at CU. The residency came about thanks to ATME: CU faculty member **Tamara Meneghini** met Joan at the ATME pre-conference in Denver a few years ago.

The **Dell'Arte Company** presented "Blue Lake: The Opera" by Lauren Wilson at DAI's Mad River Festival last summer. The Company was represented at September festivals in Bogota and Santa Marta, Colombia by "The Only Friends We Have," an original piece by Under The Table, a trio of DAI grads; DAI's "Tartuffe" toured to Reston, Virginia.

Our Fall season started off with two visiting ensembles: The Independent Eye in an evening of original puppet works, "Hands Up"; and Portland's Hand2Mouth Theater in "Everyone Who Looks Like You." The Dell'Arte Company premieres the devised "Musicians of Bremen" for it's annual holiday tour in Dec., and opens the new year with "Three Trees: A Clown Play with Rats and Guns."

News about next summer's workshop offerings, including the popular one-month Dell'Arte Intensive, will be on our website in November:
<http://dellarte.com/dellarte.aspx?id=12>

Maiya Murphy*Graduate Student Representative*

Thank you to all the faculty members who have been connecting me with graduate students who may want to join ATME. Please feel free to continue to do so.

At this summer's ATME Debut Panel, we were able to showcase two of our graduate students. As one of the presenters, I encourage other ATME graduate student members to take advantage of the upcoming Debut Panel in Chicago, as the experience was extremely useful. ATME made it a very supportive process and a great way to begin presenting work in a professional context. If you are interested in presenting in Chicago, please contact our conference planner, Rachel Bowditch. The official call for proposals will arrive after the November 1st deadline for the standard proposals. Take advantage of this opportunity to share your work with the wider profession.

Kari Margolis *Margolis Method*

The Margolis Method Center has much great news to report!

2010 Summer Program

The Center had its most successful Summer Program to date, with thirty-five artists from around the country and abroad participating in ongoing workshops from June through August. Artist Housing is a beautiful 1890's farmhouse overlooking the pristine Delaware River. Over the summer, the farmhouse's huge wrap-around porch saw many evenings of thoughtful discussion, musical merriment and of course barbecues. Long days of hard work were often followed by time spent in and along the river.



a day on the river

Classes meet five hours per day, Monday through Friday. Several times a week there are practice and discussion labs that meet after formal class time to go over notes from the day, ask questions and work on projects. The training artists present original work every second Monday. These works are created in response to specific parameters given by Kari Margolis.

In June, the training artists present at the Center created a short film that won First Prize at the Digital Art Festival in the neighboring river town of Narrowsburg, NY. Several of these artists also participated in the front and backstage mounting of the MB ADAPTORS production of IN SEARCH OF TONTO BLUE, presented at the Tusten Theatre, NY.



a workshop in action

New Programs

Kari, company members and faculty are responding to many requests for expanding programming and are presently working on the development and details of two new programs -- a two-week University Professor Certification Program and a Full-Time Training Program that would run year round.

The University Professor Certification Program will run the first two weeks of June. The Program will offer

participants an opportunity to experience the Margolis Method from a student's perspective, as well as focus on in-depth analysis and practical application skills for integrating the Method into a working syllabus. The course would include detailed exercises and improvisational structures, vocabulary lists and videos. Participants would leave this workshop with a level-one University Professor Certification Certificate.

The Full-Time Program would start mid-June, run in conjunction with the general Summer Program and then continue through the year. With this program in place, the Center would also be able to accept training artists for periods of one month or longer in the fall and winter months.

As these are new and developing programs it would be helpful and appreciated if you let us know of any interest you might have in participating.

Margolis Method on the Road

Now that the summer is over Kari will be offering a series of fall workshops and residencies. Contact us at margolismethod@mac.com for more information or to book a residency.

1. Baltimore Theatre Project, Weekend Workshop: Oct. 9th and 10th
2. Tapestry Center, Minneapolis /Weekend Workshop: Oct. 16th and 17th
3. Commonweal Theatre, Lanesboro, MN
4. Minnesota State University, Moorhead / Full-day Intensive: Oct. 21st
5. Viterbo University, La Crosse WI. / Two day Intensive: Oct. 25th and 26th
6. University of Wisconsin, La Crosse / Two 3hr. Workshops: Oct. 27th
7. Association of Professional Actors and Directors, Barcelona, Spain /Two Week Intensive Workshop: Nov. 8th to 19th

Leslie Bennett *Michael Chekhov Association (MICHA)*

MICHA, the Michael Chekhov Association, is a not-for-profit organization that links the artistic vision Michael Chekhov created with the work of actors, teachers and directors of today. Their comprehensive website is michaelchekhov.org.

Every summer, MICHA organizes an international workshop. A rotating [international faculty](#) conducts classes for approximately 70 participants. Weekend workshops are offered throughout the year in various locations. For a detailed account of the workshops please read one of our [newsletters](#). For answers to Frequently Asked Questions please read our [answers](#).

Upcoming Workshops include:

2011 SUMMER WORKSHOP *at Emerson College, Paramount Center, Boston MA.*

July 31 arrival- August 8 departure

Classes August 1-5, Theater of the Future Weekend August 6-7

ADVANCED TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVE

June 9-12, 2011 - Location: New York City (exact location TBA)

WEEKEND WORKSHOPS

January 2-3

Michael Chekhov Technique in Rehearsal with Dawn Arnold and Anne Gottlieb
Chicago, IL

January 8-9

The Psychological Gesture with Joanna Merlin and Jessica Cerullo
California State University, Long Beach, CA

January 15-16

Investigating, Exploring and Creating a Character with Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan
TBA studio in Boston, MA

Beth Johnson *Two-Year College Program Focus Liaison (ATHE)*

The Two-Year College Focus Group enjoyed another successful year at the ATHE conference in LA. The conference provides the group a valuable opportunity to connect with their peers at other 2-year or small 4-year theatre programs. At this summer's business meeting we edited and voted on our focus group bylaws. We also elected officers and created a new position, titled Communications Officer. Currently members are starting to make connections and share ideas to present at next year's conference in Chicago. If you would like to be a part of the group or are working on a session for next year's conference that might appeal to smaller institutions, you can contact the focus group rep., Chase Waites, at chase@lonestar.edu. You can also find the group on Facebook at "athe 2year college".

Margaret Severn
(14 Aug. 1901 - 7 July 1997)
by
Jef Lambdin

Imagine a time when Americans saw live performers on a regular basis, sometimes five times a week. Imagine a time when the dance style of ballet not only was not thought of as "classical," but it was not thought of at all because there was no working ballet company in the United States. Into this time prances a young dancer. At a tea party in New York City, she sees beautiful masks and asks to use them in an upcoming Broadway show. She is the hit of the show and goes on to perform her mask dances intermittently until her retirement 25 years later. This was the world of American theater in the 1920's, and that young dancer was Margaret Severn.

Severn always thought of herself as a dancer: studying dance at the age of ten in Denver, then in London with Edouard Espinosa, in New York with Luigi Albertieri, and later in New York with Fokine, and in Paris with Egorova, Preobajenska, and Legat¹. At the Denishawn school in

Californina in 1916 she particularly enjoyed working with Ruth St. Denis, proudly performing in several dances of the Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis production of *A Dance Pageant of Egypt, Greece and India*, including as a Priestess of Bacchus².

Severn particularly appreciated the work of St. Denis, being enthusiastic about her impressionistic dances using Oriental, Spanish, and East Indian themes. This appreciation led her to create her own themed dances as early as 1917 for a cabaret show at the Brighton Beach Hotel, *Andre Sherri's Patriotic Revue*³. It was these themed dances, which she would costume herself, which kept her working in Vaudeville, nightclubs, pre-Broadway, and Broadway for the next few years.

While dancing in a John Murray Anderson revue at the Palais Royal Hotel in 1920, Anderson invited her to perform in his *Greenwich Village Follies of 1920* at the Greenwich Village Theatre in Sheridan Square. This is where her training, creativity, drive, chutzpah, and timing, along with pure serendipity came together to affect movement theater.

In her own words,

“The first place I got to actually was an afternoon tea at the Gramercy Park studio of W.T. Benda, a well-known illustrator. Mr. Benda was displaying the masks he created for his own pleasure and amusement. They were magnificent works of art, constructed out of cardboard and paper, painted with oils in exquisite detail and often lined with pure gold leaf. Some represented horrifying deep-sea monsters; others were beautiful maidens or ladies wearing elaborate headdresses. And there was the fatuous ‘Silly Doll,’ who was to become famous when I endowed her with life. As soon as I saw these masks I wanted to dance in them and did so at once, much to the delight of Benda and his friends.”⁴

She took Anderson to see the masks and he insisted she use them in some way in *The Greenwich Village Follies*. They arranged to rent the masks from Benda for use in the production, and the designer for the production created costumes to go with the masks.

For opening night, August 30, 1920, Severn prepared four dances with the Benda masks to the musical accompaniment created by Charlie Previn. The masks she chose to use were a very lifelike Oriental face, an enchantingly sad Princess wearing a tall golden headdress emblazoned with peacock feathers, a mask representing Death which looked like a terrifying old man, and the “Silly Doll.”

Between numbers onstage, a young girl would approach Severn, Severn would remove the mask and hand it to the assistant while another young girl would bring onstage and hand to Severn the next mask. Each night the audience would gasp audibly as the first mask would be removed.

The mask was such a lifelike image of an Oriental woman that for a moment it appeared that she was decapitating herself! The impact on the audience was electrifying.

“...the masks took possession of me and empowered my body to express eloquently their different personalities.

One could imagine that each mask housed a disincarnate spirit that then gleefully possessed the body of its wearer. Or you could reverse this idea and say that the appropriate movements of the dancer gave life to the mask. Or that elements ordinarily hidden in the subconscious mind of the dancer, who was now disguised by the mask, could be freely expressed without inhibition.”⁵

In a letter to her mother, Severn explained,

“...I am improving the mask dances. I find it impossible to do them properly without acting them- if I do the same steps and do not feel, I fail to get the response from the audience that I get when I am thinking the thoughts that go with the masks.”⁶



Severn with Silly Doll Mask. From Jef Lambdin's collection

The Greenwich Village Follies of 1921 was a hit, and Margaret Severn was one of its stars. Her picture (and the Benda masks) appeared in all the major magazines of the time, including *Vanity Fair* and *Cosmopolitan*. The production transferred uptown and ran at the Shubert Theatre for 192 performances. A week didn't go by that her picture was not in newspapers in the U.S., Paris, London, Berlin, and even Tokyo.

Mask performance became a sensation, and Severn was interviewed for a piece in *Theatre Arts Magazine*, October 1920, titled, "The Use of Masks in Dancing". She was honored by the Drama League. She was hailed variously as the creator of a new art or the rejuvenator of an old one. She was a frequent guest at banquets and clubs, where she often gave demonstrations of her work with masks. Dramatists joined the fray with dissertations airing their theories about masks and actors, as well as theater from other lands.

For Margaret Severn, this attention was both a blessing and a curse. For many years she was unable to get work as a dancer, but she performed these "Mask Portraits" to audiences worldwide. She learned to make masks herself, including a copy of the Benda "Silly Doll," and

that became her trademark piece. She was often billed as “The Enchantress of Dance” or the “Maid of Moods”. The program from her performance as part of the Orpheum Circuit’s, Orpheum Theatre St. Louis week of October 22, 1922, lists her mask dances as, “a. Vampire, b. Fear, and c. Silly Doll.”⁶

Finally in 1932 Severn fulfilled her dream of dancing in a real Russian ballet company when she appeared with the Compagnie des Ballets Russes de Bronislawa Nijinska at the Opera Comique in Paris. She continued performing until she retired from the stage in 1945, even appearing in the 1944 season at Jacobs Pillow.

In 1981 at age eighty, Severn worked with filmmaker Peter Lipskis to create *Dance Masks: The World of Margaret Severn*. In this film, she looks back on her career, performs "token portraits" of her mask dances and comments on photographs and film clips of performances during the peak of her career.

This young dancer, Margaret Severn, profoundly affected American theater in the 1920s with her innovative combination of masks, dance, and music. Her cross-discipline approach would later become commonplace, but during the Roaring 20s, she was truly a groundbreaking performer. We are forever grateful to her!

Notes:

¹ Severn, Margaret(1987) 'Dancing with Bronislava Nijinska and Ida Rubinstein', *Dance Chronicle*, 11: 3, 333 — 364

² Severn, Margaret(1992) 'Scenes from a dancer's life, part one: 1910-1919', *Dance Chronicle*, 15: 3, 253 — 290

³ Letter from Margaret Severn to her mother, Dr. Elizabeth Severn: June 6, 1917

⁴ Severn, Margaret(1993) 'Scenes from a dancer's life, part two: 1919-1921', *Dance Chronicle*, 16: 1, 73 — 114

⁵ Severn, Margaret(1993) 'Scenes from a dancer's life, part two: 1919-1921', *Dance Chronicle*, 16: 1, 73 — 114

⁶ Letter from Margaret Severn to her mother, Dr. Elizabeth Severn: September 6, 1920

⁷ Orpheum Theatre, St. Louis, program dated Week of October 22, 1922

News from the Membership



This summer through the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the Kennedy Center and the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, **Dody DiSanto** trained a cohort of theatrical acting cultural visitors from Colombia, Egypt, India, Philippines, Syria, Thailand, Ukraine and Venezuela in neutral mask and gestural language. She will be leading workshops in NYC in 2011 in Buffoon, Gestural Language and Neutral Mask.

Sheila Kerrigan latest performance *Mime Explains String Theory*, or *Mime Explains Life, Death* was presented in early November in Durham, NC. This performance for adults starts before birth, ends after death and toddles unsteadily through the thirteen stages of woman. The mime wants to talk. A puppet tells her she should be seen but not heard. She falls in love, raises a child, accidentally uncovers the meaning of life and valiantly struggles to communicate it.



Jeff McMahon presented his original creation, *Straight Talk* in New York City at Dixon Place this past July. The photos are by Robert Flynt.



Daniel Allen Nelson & Mikeah Earnest Jennings

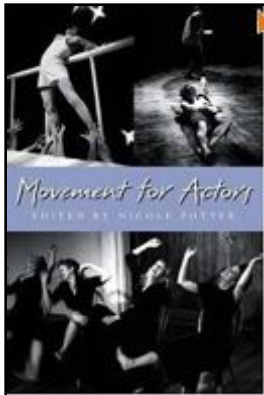


Grace Abbott, Alenka Kraigher, Saltly Brine, & Daniel Allen Nelson

Summer Theater Institute NYC 2011 *Open the doors to your imagination!*

ATME Member Discount 250.00 *NEW Summer Theater Institute Guest Artist Faculty*

Award-winning theatre artists and Master Teachers; Kari Margolis and Paula Murray Cole, Shelly Wyant, Nira Pulin Featured In "Movement for Actors" book by Nicole Potter



The Curriculum includes a wide variety of both Traditional and Innovative physically based methods and techniques for training actors. Working with Master Teachers and founders of new innovative Movement Pedagogies; **Williamson, Viewpoints, RasaBoxes and Margolis Method, Viewpoints, as well as traditional forms of movement training for actors; Mask, Mime, Clown, Laban and Michael Chekhov Technique, and more...** The program is specifically designed to expand the actor's physical technique and tool box, and to develop the actor's creative imagination, vocal range and expressive body, the total Instrument.

The program culminates in a three hour fully costumed Period Style Salon © (Williamson Technique), "A Grand Ball in the Bell Epoch". Using Williamson Period Style Movement and Michael Chekhov Character Transformation participants will create a historical character from the Edwardian Era, through the application of Chekhov's Imaginary Body, Character Centers and Character Atmospheres along with Williamson's in depth exploration of the imaginary world

of the character, the polite world of manners, etiquette and period dance, the qualities of movement of the period, as well as entering the experience of the world of the historic fantasy place, along with Chekhov's Character and imagination exercises.

www.actorsmovementstudio.com/summer

A Month June 1- July 1 of Physical Training with Master Teachers and Guest Artists

- *Williamson Physical Technique©*
- *Williamson Period Style Salon and Period Character*
- *Fitzmaurice Vocal Technique©*
- *Michael Chekhov Technique*
- *Character Mask*
- *Mime and Pantomime*
- *Viewpoints and Composition*
- *Feldenkrais Movement*
- *Laban Fundamentals*
- *RasaBoxes*
- *Clowning*

Student Testimonies

"I really think EVERYONE should get the chance to go through your program; it is probably some of the best money I've ever spent on theatre education, which says a lot since I loved my university!, AMS was the most mind-blowing, soul opening, and empowering single month for me as a young actor. I am eternally grateful to have had the chance to work and train with such amazing professionals/teachers/performers." I am still trying to process all the information I took in, and am loving delving further into the areas you opened my eyes to. It was at times as spiritually awakening as it was acting education. Our art is part of our soul and your program touched us all deeply. I am still in contact with many of my classmates, my friends. Go Mountain Sharks!!

~Teagan Wilson AMC Summer Intensive Class of 2009

"I just wanted to thank you all for a wonderful summer. I had so much fun and learned so much. I also gained so much not just as an actor but as a person. And thanks to all of the wonderful teachers I went into the auditions for the plays at the University of Toledo where I attend I used what I learned and went in there and auditioned with no apologies, and landed the role of Dunyazade in "Arabian Nights." Everyone here at Toledo have noticed a difference in my acting also and keep commenting on how much stronger I've gotten. You guys have an amazing place that I would recommend to anyone in a heartbeat. Keep up the amazing work! "

-Margaret Lute AMC Summer Intensive Class of 2008

"I just finished my first round of auditions for my school's department shows since my summer at AMS and I had to write to you immediately and thank you, because the institute this summer completely changed me as an actor. I did a full Williamson warm-up before my audition, and felt loose and confident and ready when I entered the room. It was a group audition, which I used to feel really shy about, but today I had so much confidence and was so open and had no apologies. Everything we did this summer fed into this audition and no matter what happens with it, I had fun with it, and know that I am a different and better actress after studying with you and your staff this summer. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I can't say it enough. Love"- Kiki Samko Summer 2007

Thank you so much for the beautiful opportunity and all the wonderful memories! I recently finished "Anna in the Tropics" at FIU and I could never have tackled the role of Ofelia (a 50 year old Cuban Woman) without the skills I developed at your school! I hope we can work together again very soon ! Also, many of my classmates are very

interested in your Summer Intensive after seeing the transformation the six of us had last summer. - **Emily-Jayne Frail, Florida summer 2006**

"The Actors Movement Studio Summer Conservatory was a unique experience because not only did it allow me to tap into emotional resources I had not previously explored, but it also provided a one-of-a-kind bonding experience that has yet to be repeated. I am fascinated by Michael Chekhov technique and I still use viewpoints in my current projects. It was a pleasure to play Oscar Wilde in the Salon because not only did it give me a chance to really perform, but it also gave me the opportunity to learn a lot about what went on in the personal life of a genius whose work is a classic and a must for everyone who's interested in theater and life in general. My experience that summer is one I could not speaking of for several months after it was over and it is one that I still think of when people ask me for recommendations for where to spend their summer." - **Amir Levi AMC Summer Intensive Class of 2005**

For twenty-eight years, Actors Movement Studio Home of the Williamson Technique © and Period Style Salons © has offered Movement and diverse physical training for the actor, and has been featured in SHOWBUSINESS, The Soul of the American Actor, and the critically acclaimed book by Nicole Potter, **Movement for Actors.**

Located in the heart of Manhattan's theatre district, students will experience the professional atmosphere of the performing arts capital of the world. Affordable Manhattan student dorm housing is available!

**For more information call us at: 212 736-3309 ams@actorsmovementstudio.com
www.actorsmovementstudio.com/summer**

Janice Orlandi
Artistic Director
Actors Movement Conservatory
302 West 37th Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10018

Call for Submissions for Publication to the ATME Digital Journal

The editors of the ATME Digital Journal encourage you to use the journal to publish your creative research. The visual medium is an excellent way to share your ideas and your process with your colleagues and the theatre community at large. Review of submitted articles is on a rolling schedule and ATME membership is not required.

By now we hope that all of you have seen Jennifer Martin's article published on the ATME website. We'd love to get your feedback on the article.

To begin the process of submitting a digital article, contact Sarah Barker at sabarker@sc.edu. All you need is an interesting idea and a passion for sharing it. If you are well on your way in production you can address technical questions to Nick Erickson at nickwe@mac.com.

If you are planning to make a DVD presentation at the ATME Pre-conference this would be a good place to start. Let us hear from you soon.

Editorial Position Open: If you are interested in serving on the Digital Journal Editorial Board please send you vita to Sarah Barker. We have a few openings.

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ATME membership offers you:

- ATME kinetic digital journal
 - Promotion and tenure support
 - Physical training bibliography & biennial newsletter
 - Conferences / workshops / training on pedagogy
 - TALK_ATME listserv access: announce your upcoming events and communicate with other artists & physical training professionals
 - 2010 conference in Los Angeles
- Please find our membership application at:*
<http://www.atmeweb.org/membership/application.php>



<http://www.atmeweb.org>



ATME - shaping the future of kinesthetic & aesthetic education by:

- Promoting the highest possible standards for theatre movement training & the application of those standards to educational & professional theatre
- Facilitating collegial support, faculty exchange & networking
- Promoting the recognition of theatre movement educators as vital & equal partners in the training of actors
- Communicating the latest research, methods of skills integration & career planning strategies

Design by Bess Mueller

PHOTO: HEYOKAH/HOKAHEY - Written and Directed by Bill Bowers - University of Wyoming - Dept of Theatre/Dance 2009

ATME Visiting Artist/Scholar Fellowship Program

The goal of this Fellowship is to facilitate opportunities for collaborations, scholarly research, creative work, conference attendance, and enrichment for our members as stated in the ATME Mission Statement:

- Promoting the highest possible standards for theatre movement training and the application of those standards to educational and professional theatre;
- Facilitating collegial support, faculty exchange, and networking;
- Promoting the recognition of theatre movement educators as vital and equal partners in the training of actors; and,
- Communicating the latest research, methods of skills integration, and career planning strategies.

You will need to have been a member in good standing of ATME for two consecutive years to apply for this Fellowship. Each Fellowship recipient will be required to write an article for the ATME Newsletter describing the nature of the project and their experience. ATME Visiting Artist/Scholar Fellowship funds up to \$500.00 of your budget.

Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Proposed Date(s) of Project: _____

Address: _____

Affiliation (University, School, Company): _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

1. Project Overview

Describe the proposed artistic/research/pedagogic activity in 250 words or less. Briefly indicate the nature of the project objectives and the anticipated outcomes.

2. Project Description (one page)

Summarize the purpose of the project, describing how it will be conducted and include a timetable of various activities. Indicate how the proposed project is expected to enhance your artistic/research/pedagogic experience.

3. Proposed Budget (Fellowship budget is a maximum of \$500.00)

Please itemize your estimate for transportation, food, lodging, registration fees, etc. Each Fellowship recipient winner will be required to write an article for the ATME Newsletter describing the nature of the project and your experience.

4. Statement of support from your partner institution or supervisor if appropriate.

Written statement of support from entity that you propose to visit.

Please direct your questions and electronic submissions to Deborah Robertson at drobertson@niu.edu

ATME Membership New & Renewal Application

ATME Renewal Dues for January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

- \$45.00 (in U.S. Dollars from a U.S. certified bank)
- \$25.00 for students --
 - Include a photocopy of current student ID with application.

Please fill out the form below and mail with a check made out to ATME or pay online via PayPal. A PayPal account is not required for the transaction. This form may also be submitted electronically to the email address provided:

Beth Johnson, Ph.D. Sec. ATME
Finger Lakes Community College
3325 Marvin Sands Drive
Canandaigua, NY 14424

atmesecretary@gmail.com

585/785-1242

Title/Rank/Tenure? _____

First Name _____ **Middle** _____ **Last** _____

Home Address

Street Address 1 _____ **Street Address 2** _____

City _____ **State/Province** _____

Zip/ Postal Code _____ **Country** _____

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WEB Page URL _____

Subscribe to ATME Listserve? **Yes** **No**

Preferred Mailing Address? **Home** **Work**

Images from ATHE Conference 2010



Carlos Garcia



**Holly Cate & Jeff Casazza
dancing the scene from
STREETCAR**



**Terry Glaser leading
a workshop**



**Heather Harpham demonstrating
girl in breathing machine**



**Davis Robinson
explaining his work**



**Lori Torok explains mind-mapping;
Beth Johnson participant**

A Final Word.....

In the June 1998 issue of *ATME News*, an announcement appeared that read:

“Wanted: New ATME Newsletter Editor.”

I was intrigued. I could do that for a year or two! And since I was currently working with a department chair who thought Ballroom Dance in PE was a good substitute for a Stage Movement class, I thought it might give me some support. I could hear myself saying, “Really, since the Association of Theatre Movement Educators Newsletter comes from EIU, it would look awfully bad if we didn’t at least offer *one* course!”

Twelve years and twenty-four issues later, I’ve come to a crossroads. I’m currently sitting in that former chair’s position – and still teaching my former course load, including that Stage Movement class! – and I’ve come to the realization that something has to give. So, it is with great reluctance that I place this announcement:

“Wanted: New ATME Newsletter Editor.”

The ride has been grand, and I’ve loved doing this. I’ve met many wonderful people, and am continually astounded at the wealth of talent that is out there. And I’ve met a number of fellow travelers with department chairs who think that Ballroom Dance in PE is a good substitute for a Stage Movement class.

So if you’re looking for some support, and think you might like to try this for a year or two, keep an eye on the listserv. Specifics on how to apply for this job will be forthcoming. And I guarantee you that the next twelve years will fly by.....

Jean Wolski
Former Editor (alas)
ATME News

We Want to Hear from You!

Let us know what you’ve been up to!
Send in photos of your work/projects!
Or, if you are interested in submitting an article or book review
for the Spring Issue of *ATME News*, please contact:

YOUR NAME HERE!
Editor, ATME News

Deadline for submissions is February 15, 2011