



TCG's American Theatre Magazine Focuses on Diversity

Oct 16, 2011



In the midst of a year-long 50th anniversary celebration, Theatre Communications Group is celebrating four core values that they have identified as important to both the work of TCG and the theatre field: artistry, diversity, global citizenship and activism. The October issue of *American Theatre* explores diversity.



In "Diversity Squared," Teresa Eyring, TCG's Executive Director, writes:

"Our focus this autumn quarter is on the value of diversity. We believe that our theatre world is comprised of a rich and varied range of artists, administrators, students, educators, trustees, audiences, volunteers and donors?and that's just one kind of diversity. TCG plays an important role in encouraging and providing connection points for the field's variety of aesthetics, perspectives, races, classes, genders, ages and missions, as well as organizational sizes and structures."

"Bruce Norris in the Danger Zone," available online, is an interview by **Beatrice Basso and introduced by**

Dan Rubin

☒ Playwright and former actor Norris talks about *Clybourne Park* and his propensity to provoke: "Theatre has always been an expensive middle-class pursuit. It is a precious, pretentious thing for precious, pretentious people. You drive in your expensive car to the theatre, get it valet parked, and then watch a play about poor people. Why?"

As Jim Quinn writes in the Editor's Note: "The concept of diversity, in its myriad of meanings, pulses through the issue." Check out the print version for other diversity-related articles, including:

"At Home with Another Kind of Diversity: Abstraction" by Marissa Chibas

☒ Chibas shares insights gathered during "a passionate and well-attended panel" discussion at TCG's 2009 National Conference. "I sensed the exciting possibility of a tantalizing relationship between adventurous form and ethnic diversity: diversity more abstract forms appealing to multilingual audiences."



Zbib, moderated by Rob Weinert-Kendt

Sellars and Zbib discuss their involvement as mentor and mentee for the 2010-2011 Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. This relationship, which has included three meetings on three separate continents, is not one generation sharing experience, knowledge and access with another. Exposure to each other's politics and cultures has influenced each other's perspectives.

"Let me just say, I want to ban the term 'outreach' forever, because it's the dumbest thing on earth. It just shows how backward theatre is, that most theatres think of working in the community as outreach rather than has their core mission. Your *core mission* is healing your community, and the *show* is the outreach."

- Peter Sellars

"The Unequivocal Bill Cain" by Margot Melcon

☒ This essay looks at Cain's take on the role of the writer in American theatre. It showcases the diversity of thought about working styles:

"Bill doesn't necessarily view writing as an end, and the end is to create a theatrical event;" while Norris says: "A person writes a play, and then the other people are there to execute that play."

A Jesuit priest, Cain's works also feature religious themes and/or characters from such minority groups as people with mental and physical disabilities and military personnel. In reference to the reaction to his first work, Cain says:

"I looked around the room and realized all stratifications were gone. The difference between doctor, nurse, inmate, patient, and guard had vanished. I said to myself: This is what religion is. There's only one person in this room, and it's *us*."

"The Diversity Gamut"

[Facebook](#) fans answer the question: What does diversity in the theatre mean to you?"

"Tension and Release" by Rob Weinert-Kendt

This complementary piece to "[Danger Zone](#)" discusses *Clybourne Park* as "a bracing referendum on our polite, purportedly 'post-racial' discourse."

The online issue also features an article, "[Adopt a Theatre](#)" by Eliza Bent, which looks at how theatres appreciate their communities and communities appreciate their theatres. As you read this article, **consider what might occur if your theatre offers children-friendly performances and/or demonstrations at local cultural and heritage festivals, in addition to (or instead of) creating your own festival.**

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