



DAILY DISCUSSION GUIDE • JUNE 11, 2008



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Welcome to the beginning of a process that we expect to guide, enliven, and sustain our performing arts community through the roller coaster ride that is 21st Century life! This is the first of four daily Newsletters you will receive that will provide you with essential information to enable you to participate in a highly purposeful and dynamic process to move our community forward. But first of all, what is our community?

OUR PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY:

We gather here in Denver as members of different performing arts disciplines—each of which has its own community. However, as the world and its options grow more complex, we recognize that if we work and act together, we can build an effective cross-discipline community, united by common goals. Together we can nurture and construct the future we want for the performing arts.

This is a very new venture. And every new venture needs a vision to rally around. To draft a vision of an ideal future, a group of people from across the performing arts spectrum has spent the past six months working together. By merging their expertise and canvassing leaders and stakeholders in the performing arts world, they've come up with a starting place for our discussions—and here it is; a starting vision of a future that we may hope to achieve:

We are a performing arts community, inclusive of all the disciplines, which coordinates and collaborates effectively at both national and local levels to multiply the public benefits of the performing arts and to enhance each art form. We create optimum value for our constituencies and their communities by ensuring:

- *Highly innovative and sustainable institutions*
- *Fully supported artists*
- *Meaningful opportunities for education in the arts for all children and lifelong learners*
- *Robust artistic collaboration among the disciplines*
- *Strong and effective advocacy for public policy conducive to the full spectrum of the performing arts*
- *Authentic and diverse public participation in the performing arts*
- *Deep and widely acknowledged contributions to the public good by being vitally connected to other individuals, groups, and organizations*
- *Relevance through our presence in the marketplace of culture and ideas.*

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? This lofty vision, however, is not only about the future. To achieve it, we have to start now. And, in fact, many things are already happening that demonstrate the potential to achieve this vision through collaboration.



How We Got Here

by Eric Booth

Researchers tell us that Americans work more hours a week than medieval peasants did; and performing arts professionals work harder than most U.S. workers. Imagine someone said to you, "I know you have a lot to do, but as a little side project, in your spare time, would you create the largest gathering that your field has ever seen?" That's what the leaders of our service organizations did, over the course of years to create this convention. I'm the "outside" consultant who helped them through the process, so I get to embarrass them by pointing out to convention-goers what it took—hundreds of conference calls, thousands of additional meetings (how fun does that sound?), tens of thousands of details stuffed into their already overstuffed lives. They did it because they believe this convention matters. They believe we have a historic opportunity to change the place of the performing arts in American culture. And they believe that the only way we can make this change is if we can function as an effective community. So they had planning meetings while their children's fencing matches were audible in the background, and while they drove out of cell phone range in Arkansas, and on Saturday nights, to create the chance for us to join them and create change.

The leaders and staff of the organizations held themselves to two core commitments:

1. Be the Change—they had to authentically become an effective community in the planning, both to find out if it can be done while leaving relationships intact, and to model what it would look like.
2. Take action—we must go beyond talk and actually do things together; take risks in dialogue and action, build confidence that we can succeed as a community through shared experiments, honest assessment and accountability to one another.

I got to be the witness and coach to this astonishing act of generosity, stamina, courage and belief as they give each of us this chance to take the baton of change and run. I know you too have an overpacked worklife, and I hope you share the courage and belief they have demonstrated for years to add a few new performing arts community building actions to your busy days.

Caucus and Town Meeting Schedule

Add your voice as we work together to create a vital performing arts future.

Miss one meeting? Just come back the next day!

Wednesday: 4:00 – 5:30pm

Thursday: 10:15 – 11:30am

Friday: 10:00 – 11:30am

Saturday: 10:00 – 12:30pm
(including closing session)

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY IN THE ARTS TODAY

Here is a list of many of the organizations that are collaborating successfully to create a new, vibrant future for the arts—locally, regionally, virtually, and nationally.

LOCALLY

- **United Arts Funds**
Leveraging resources to support the performing arts
- **Local Arts Alliances**
Influencing policymaking at the local level for members
- **Arts Service Organizations**
Maximizing member capacity through leadership and professional development
- **Cultural and Arts Districts**
Amplifying public access to the performing arts through civic partnerships

REGIONALLY AND AT THE STATE LEVEL

- **Regional Arts Organizations and Alliances**
Bringing the performing arts to wider audiences through block booking and touring; raising public awareness of the arts; and advocating regionally for greater support of the arts, providing funding, services to the field, and opportunities to influence public policy
- **State Arts Agencies**
Providing funding, services to the field, and opportunities to influence public policy

VIRTUALLY

- **Web-Based Arts Forums, Blogs and Magazines**
Sharing news and critical questions about the state of the arts in America

NATIONALLY

- **Performing Arts Alliance**
Raising our voice before Congress, the White House and the Administration through coordinated advocacy among performing arts organizations
- **Cultural Advocacy Group**
Influencing federal arts policy through advocacy in partnership with the full array of arts and cultural organizations (including the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Americans for the Arts, the museum community, and more)
- **Arts Education Partnership**
Supporting research and advocacy for arts learning, in partnership with education, foundation, and arts stakeholders
- **Americans for the Arts**
Providing arts industry research, professional development for community arts leaders, and national convening and advocacy
- **Pennsylvania Cultural Data Project**
Improving the quality and accessibility of information about the state of the performing arts sector
- **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**
Uniting, representing and serving the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies, and advancing the arts as an essential public benefit

- **National Performing Arts Convention**
Taking action together!

Collaborations like these have produced real results:

Leveraging new forms of public and private support for the performing arts

Revitalizing communities and neighborhoods

Advancing arts education as a core subject of learning for every child

Improving the artistic vibrancy and health of the performing arts through shared best practices



Photo credits from left: courtesy of AmericaSpeaks, by Steve Crecelius and courtesy of Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, and courtesy of AmericaSpeaks.

So now that we know where we have been and where we're going, let's focus on what we're going to do during this conference to help us make a leap forward toward our vision.

OUR PROCESS DURING THIS CONFERENCE:

Our goal here is simple—to identify common goals and develop action steps that we can all work to implement over the coming years; steps that move us ever closer to our vision of a robust, sustainable and supported arts community that is relevant to the wider society around us. To do this we will have four sessions—one each day—that will each be focused on a single question, with each question building on one another:

- Wednesday: (4:00-5:30 pm) Where are we currently most and least successful in reaching our vision?
- Thursday (10:15-11:30 am) What are the most important opportunities/challenges for community to address in order to better reach our vision?
- Friday (10:00-11:30 am) What are the strategies we need to follow in order to advance our vision?
- Saturday (10:00-12:30 pm) Which strategies will we commit to?

Each of these sessions will be highly participatory: Wednesday through Friday you will be seated at discussion tables with up to 9 other participants in a number of different session rooms—people drawn from a range of performing arts disciplines. In between each of the sessions, a “theme team” will synthesize the results across all our caucus rooms as a basis for beginning our next discussion session. And remember, if your busy schedule causes you to miss a session, please come and participate the next day.

On Saturday everyone will gather for a special 21st Century Town Hall and Closing General Session; all of us will gather in a single location, the Korbel Ballroom. We will again be seated at round tables, but will be assisted by a state-of-the-art wireless keypad voting technology so that all will have a vote in the final results. This entire process is designed and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks, a group that has conducted many such processes on a wide range of topics.

We have planned what promises to be a highly energizing and productive experience as together we forge the future of our performing arts community. Be part of the process! Let your ideas, opinions and hopes help shape the ideas, opinions and hopes of others.



Dianne Reeves will help us bring down the curtain at the Closing of this last General Session, performing an acoustic set with her favorite guitarists to end the 21st Century Town Meeting.

We are profoundly grateful to the exceptional foundations, corporations, sponsors and individual donors whose generous support of the 2008 National Performing Arts Convention will strengthen the field for years to come.

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The “Theme Team”

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Haley Gordon
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David McIntosh
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Olive Mosier



Part One: What is our feedback on the draft vision for ourselves as a vital performing arts community?

Community includes: professional and amateur artists, administrators, production personnel, arts organizations (presenters, producers, distributors, services), unions, supporters/funders, volunteers, audiences, media/critics

Part Two: What are the 3 ways we have been:

Most successful in reaching our vision as a community?

Least successful in reaching our vision as a community?

NPAC would like to thank the many people who have made these caucuses and the Town Hall possible. There are so many of them that we will be breaking the facilitators list up and running it in alphabetical order over the four issues. The first group follows:

NPAC Town Hall & Caucus Table Facilitators LaRue Allen • Tamara Alvarado • Alicia Anstead • Allison Ball • Rick Barbour • Salima Barday • Julie Baron • Eve Beglarian • Jennifer Bielstein • Gigi Bolt • Susan Booth • Donna Bost White • Anastasia Boudanoque • Stacy Brightman • Charles Bruffy • Anne Marie Cammarato • Joan Channick • Jane Cho • Edward Clapp • Andrew Clark • Laura Colby • William Cole • Kenneth Cole • Chris Coleman • Robert Cooper • Richard Corley • Joanne Hubbard Cossa • Deborah Crocker • Julie Crosby • Yolanda Cursach • Sean Daniels • David B. Devan • Andrea Dillenburg • David Dower • Dorothea Endicott • Todd Estabrook • Susie Farr • Scott Faulkner • Evan Fein • Corty Fengler • Colleen Flanigan • Paul Flores • Natalie Forbes • Paula Fowler • Angel Francis • Jim Fullan • Karen Gahl-Mills • Kate Gale • Tracy Galligher • Nicole Garneau • Bridget George • Christina Giannelli • Vanessa Gilbert • Bethany Gladhill • Ruth Glenn • Linda Golding • Deborah Harrison • Diana Hossack • Jonathan Herman • Jeff Herrmann • Susan Hoffman • Paul Hogle (*to be continued*)

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