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THEATRE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

LEARNING FOR A LIFETIME

"Theatre in higher education creates not only strong theatre artists, articulate theatre educators, but also effective public leaders and compassionate visionaries in all professions."

**\*A publication of The Association for Theatre in Higher Education\***

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"Theatre is a clear window into the mind, the soul, the heart of humankind--the study of which should be the aim of higher education. Theatre brings life to learning."

JANE ALEXANDER  
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts  
Professional Actor

"To teach and to learn theatre,  
is to learn and to teach humanity."

DR. AUGUSTO BOAL  
Author, "Theatre of the Oppressed"

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THEATRE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
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An education in theatre and performance studies gives students useful tools to contribute to and create positive changes in the public as well as the private sphere. Theatre in higher education creates not only strong theatre artists and articulate theatre educators, but also effective public leaders and compassionate visionaries in all professions.

Theatre in higher education encourages students to understand the unique history, theory and practice of theatre and performance through intellectual and experiential investigation. Students engage in academic coursework in the history and theory of theatre and drama, the study of acting and directing, the exploration of performance and cultural studies, the art of theatrical design and stage technology, the business of theatre administration, and the examination of related interdisciplinary topics such as anthropology, music, English, psychology and dance. Theatre in higher education enables students to learn about diverse historical eras, communities, styles of production, technologies, and playwrights through various types of artistic productions. Theatre in higher education creates opportunities for crossing cultures within the theatrical experience. It challenges students to investigate cultural performances onstage and off, and to imagine new avenues for the creative spirit. The major in theatre arts or performance studies prepares students to pursue professional goals as artists and educators. They may choose careers as teachers, actors, directors, playwrights, critics, dramaturgs, designers, administrators, and managers. These careers can be pursued within the academy, performing arts organizations, related non-profit organizations, and the media.

Theatre in higher education also provides students with crucial life skills which they can use in a wide range of professions as well as in their day-to-day relationships with others. Theatre and performance studies allow students to think precisely in the moment, to speak confidently in public, to write with clarity and intelligence, and to work productively with others, thereby providing them with useful skills for a host of other professions, including business, government, law, journalism, the natural and social sciences, economics, languages and literature, the fine arts, industry, and related disciplines. Theatre and performance studies majors learn to grasp complex problems and produce imaginative solutions, to explore alternative goals and investigate the various means of achieving them, to establish long-range objectives and develop the discipline, organizational skill, artistry, and self-assurance to achieve those objectives. Because the theatre is a collaborative art, students acquire skills in interpersonal communication and group problem-solving. Because performance is an interdisciplinary pursuit, students learn to coalesce research and insights from a rich variety of sources. Theatre in higher education answers today's market demand for skills in creative, critical, and collaborative thinking.

Theatre in higher education increases the students' cognitive abilities. Students' intuitive, perceptive capacities--qualities highly valued by the best business managers--are awakened by theatre training. Psychologist Howard Gardner posits a theory of multiple intelligences which states that each individual learns through seven intelligences: linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Theatre education cultivates all of these intelligences. Through experiential learning, students increase their interpersonal skills, including the ability to notice and make distinctions among others' moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions. They also build strong intrapersonal skills, including the ability to access, understand, and discriminate among one's own feelings. This process creates self-aware, motivated, perceptive and passionate communicators. As a result, students have a sense of connectedness to their own lives and the lives of others.

Theatre and performance can help transform human beings by acknowledging and celebrating the cultures and contributions of diverse communities; helping people learn to live in relation to one another; empowering all participants in the art--creators and audience members--to act on and change the conditions of their lives. Creating and participating in theatre is an act of courage--each human being who encounters theatre is encouraged to imagine. And through the imagination, we can make significant, constructive changes in our communities.

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\*\*\*\*\*"WHY PROFESSIONALS BELIEVE  
IN THEATRE STUDIES"\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*STUDENTS ACQUIRE SKILLS IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND GROUP  
PROBLEM-SOLVING FOR THEATRE IS A COLLABORATIVE ART FORM.

"Theater is about problem-solving... In a theater work, there are problems that presuppose various solutions, each quite different from the other, but all equally credible. Theater teaches us that there is more than one way to describe the same issue, equally revealing, equally compelling. It is another form of tolerance and understanding. Theater is about making choices!"

DEAN DONALD HARRIS  
Dean of the College of the Arts, Ohio State University

\*\*\*THE MAJOR IN THEATRE ARTS OR PERFORMANCE STUDIES PREPARES STUDENTS TO  
PURSUE PROFESSIONAL GOALS AS ARTISTS AND EDUCATORS.

"Young people who learn the arts do better in every phase of their lives."

MERYL STREEP  
Academy-Award Winning Actor  
Lead Actor in "Sophie's Choice," "The Bridges of Madison County,"  
and  
"Marvin's Room"

"My theatre education at the college level has given me the desire and respect for research, as well as the discipline and techniques which I apply to my work today."

ISALIAH WASHINGTON  
Studied at Howard University  
Lead Actor in "Clockers," "Get on the Bus," and "Love Jones"

"Although I have read all the modern plays I could lay my hands on, and many books on the subject of drama, I realize how inadequate such a haphazard, undirected mode of study must necessarily be. With my present training I might hope to become a mediocre journeyman... I want to be an artist or nothing."

EUGENE O'NEILL

Playwright "Moon for the Misbegotten," "Desire Under the Elms,"  
and "Long Day's Journey Into Night"

(A letter written to George Pierce Baker in 1914 asking to be  
admitted to the theatre program at Harvard University)

\*\*\*THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSSING CULTURES  
WITHIN THE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE.

"Each time that I plunge into a new theater experience whether in the classroom or in a professional theater situation it becomes immediately a provocation to learning or to learning anew from the starting position. I must then reexamine or reabsorb my own culture or a new one. Theater provides a bridge with which all persons should cross for on the other side lies civilization."

LLOYD RICHARDS

Artistic Director, The National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene  
O'Neill Theatre Center

Former Artistic Director, Yale Repertory Theatre

Director of Broadway Productions of August Wilson's "Fences,"

"Joe Turner's Come and Gone," and "The Piano Lesson"

\*\*\*THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH CRUCIAL LIFE SKILLS  
THAT THEY CAN UTILIZE IN A WIDE RANGE OF PROFESSIONS INCLUDING BUSINESS,  
GOVERNMENT, LAW, THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INDUSTRY.

"Higher education in theatre and the other arts provides students with crucial life skills that are fundamental to success in the business world, regardless of whatever career choice an individual decides to pursue. Effective interpersonal communication, group problem-solving ability, organizational skills, creative thinking and enhanced self-esteem are all benefits of a quality arts education experience."

RICHARD S. GURIN

President & Chief Executive Officer, Binney & Smith Inc.

(Makers of Crayola Products)

I am trying to bridge the gap between psychologists and software design engineers. I draw heavily on my theatre background for this work. I bring what I learned in theatre studies about people to my work in technology. I value and consciously apply aesthetic criteria and intuitive thinking to my work. I've found that the most highly skilled engineering designers depend on both."

SUSANNE JUL  
PhD Candidate in Computer Science with an Undergraduate Focus in  
Theatre  
University of Michigan  
(quote Strings Magazine)

\*\*\*THEATRE TRAINING AWAKENS THE STUDENTS' INTUITIVE, PERCEPTIVE CAPACITIES  
AS WELL AS THEIR LOGICAL, ANALYTICAL CAPACITIES.

"Theatre studies taught me to overcome fear, speak with  
authority, and probably most importantly practice empathy. I could not  
have become a successful financial planner without the application of that  
creative process to my work with clients."

MAUREEN ACETO  
C.F.P. (certified financial planner), Vice-President Benefits, Inc.  
Graduate: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee BFA 1971

"The influence of theater in my education manifests itself  
everyday in my executive work life. Especially important to my career  
success has been developing the art of self-expression. My theatre  
training has given me the critical communication skills and confidence to  
present with clarity, poise, and impact."

LIN WILENSKY  
Project Consultant, The Walt Disney World Resort

\*\*\*THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE  
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH  
INTELLECTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL INVESTIGATION.

"Theatre, one of the oldest and most enduring forms of art, enables us to  
understand not only the past but also the present. Theatre history and  
dramatic literature are embodiments of the cultural assumptions and values  
that in each era have made theatre a mirror of society and this mirroring  
can bring the concerns of the time to the forefront."

DR. OSCAR BROCKETT  
Author, "History of Theatre"  
Z.T. Scott Family Chair in Drama and Director of the Center for  
Dramatic and Performance Studies,  
Department of Theatre and Dance, The University of Texas at Austin

\*\*\*EACH HUMAN BEING WHO ENCOUNTERS THEATRE IS ENCOURAGED TO IMAGINE. AND  
THROUGH THE IMAGINATION, WE CAN MAKE SIGNIFICANT, CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGES IN  
OUR COMMUNITIES.

"Some of us make theatre: that's our profession. All of us 'are' theatre: that's the essence of our human condition. As human beings we are 'actors' (we act out our lives) and 'spectators' (we observe ourselves in action) - We are 'playwrights' of our own words and 'directors' of our deeds. To be human is to be able to invent the future and not merely to wait for it. To teach and to learn theatre, is to learn and to teach humanity."

DR. AUGUSTO BOAL  
Author, "Theatre of the Oppressed"  
Founder and Artistic Director of the Centers for the Theatre  
of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro and Paris

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"Theatre studies provide students with a range of skills that can be usefully employed across occupations. Engaging with theatre arts shapes people to be articulate communicators, effective listeners, perceptive thinkers, and task-oriented leaders. Performing in the theatre or spending an evening as a spectator creates a sense of community that can ripple into wider social spheres. Theatre education prepares citizens to function effectively and joyfully in cultural life."

JILL DOLAN  
President, ATHE

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The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) is an organization of individuals and institutions that provides vision and leadership for the profession and promotes excellence in theatre education. ATHE actively supports scholarship through teaching, research and practice and serves as a collective voice for its mission through its publications, conferences, advocacy, projects, and through collaborative efforts with other organizations.

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