Theatre for Youth
Annual Report
MISSION:

THE ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY THEATRE FOR YOUTH PROGRAM MENTORS AND PREPARES ENGAGED AND INNOVATIVE LEADERS IN ARTISTRY, SCHOLARSHIP, EDUCATION, AND ACTIVISM.

VALUES:

- We create theatre and performances to inspire, educate, transform, heal, and entertain.
- We cultivate creative capacity as a lifelong pursuit.
- We believe diversity is an asset.
- We strive for social justice.
- We value joy and play as essential to the well-being of individuals and communities.
- We practice honesty and transparency in order to foster reciprocity in our relationships and artistic endeavors.
- We support risk-taking and experimentation to inspire innovation in the field.
- We build public spaces of community and collaboration.
- We preserve and investigate our field’s past to progress into the future.
By the Numbers

MFA & PHD GRADUATE STUDENTS
19
Andrew | Chris | Claire | Danica | Donta | Eric | Grant | JiSun | Joseph | Kelly | Mark | Nicola | Sarah D-M | Sarah T | Thomas | Tiana | Tiffany | Xanthia | Young Nae

HOURS SPENT WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY
1,484
Graduate Students taught theatre classes, did resident artistry, community cultural development, and creative drama with all ages

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
45
Including local arts organizations, K-12 schools, libraries, museums, hospitals, faith communities, and civic organizations

NEW COMPANIES FOUNDED BY TFY STUDENTS
2
DogEar Theatre Productions
dogeartheatreproductions.com
Sleeveless Acts Drama Company
www.facebook.com/sleevelessacts/
By the Numbers

PRODUCTIONS
Theatre for Youth Graduate Students and Faculty produced, directed, wrote and performed in shows for, with, and by children and youth

AUDIENCE MEMBERS
Composed of Children, Youth and Families

SCHOLARSHIP & GRANTS
TFY Students also received two competitive arts residencies to develop new work, and multiple competitive fellowships and internships

CHILDREN AND YOUTH TAUGHT ACROSS THE VALLEY
PARTNERSHIP

Students partnered with the City of Apache Junction to work on building performance material from the city’s deep history of ghosts and superstitions. They performed site specific work.

TRANSLATION

Professors Mary McAvoy’s and Kristin Hunt’s book (w/Manon van de Water), Drama and Education: Performance Methodologies for Teaching and Learning was translated to Chinese.

NEW BOOK

Professors Stephani Etheridge Woodson and Tamara Underiner published a new anthology this year: Theatre, Performance and Change.

THE COMPASS

Professor Michael Rohd directed The Compass at the Galvin Playhouse which he developed over three years at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. In this inventive play, the audience acts as a jury — determining the fate of Marjan, a teenage girl on trial for actions she took after consulting the Compass app to see what life-altering decisions she would make. Should she be held responsible? Did the app make her do it? Do her motivations matter? The ethics of technology served as one of the starting places for this groundbreaking play, but Rohd said it’s about more than that. “It is about the relationship that young people have to adults, the relationship young people have to technology, the relationship we all have to how we make decisions for ourselves.” This show was also nominated for an AriZoni.
WITH EACH OTHER
RISING YOUTH THEATRE

Founded in 2011 with ASU TFY Alum Sarah Sullivan, Co-Artistic Director and PhD student Xanthia Walker’s company partnered on a Vitalist Health Foundation Grant with the ACLU of Arizona, Morningstar Youth Leadership Council and Black Mothers Forum to address educational inequities through the #demand2learn campaign. This company pairs youth and adult artists together to create theatre reflecting young people’s stories and experiences in the greater Phoenix community.

ARIZONA REPERTORY THEATRE FOR KIDS

Thomas Petrunaro serves as Artistic Director for this West Valley Company and in the 2017-2018 school year, ART for Kids worked with 238 youth artists ranging in ages 6 to 16. Currently, ART for Kids has after school production camps in six different elementary and middle schools throughout the Arizona East Valley.

YOUNG NAE CHOI

Young Nae Choi, a second year MFA student in TFY, has been awarded the Emerging Leader in TYA Fellowship from Theatre for Young Audiences/USA. Choi is working on a project that explores a dream narrative and surrealist aesthetics, combining creative practice and research. She worked on an interactive dance theatre piece exploring these issues with 150 adults and their young children during a daylong art experience with the City of Tempe. Tempe Director of Arts Engagement, Maja Aurora said, "This was a new kind of art practice for us, and we were excited by Choi’s ability to work with all the different age groups. We loved it."
**Doctoral Dissertations**

**REVEREND DR. TIFFANY TRENT**

*Spaces Speak: Radical Welcome in Youth Performance Spaces on Chicago’s Southside*

Tiffany Trent mapped assets of welcome in the built environment in youth performing arts spaces. She asked, What signifiers reveal how a physical space conceptualizes the child, reflects professed theological claims, and cues youth to practice ownership and experience belonging? Trent explored the cultural capital that emerges from the sites and asserted theological implications of the findings. Through mixed qualitative, quantitative, and arts-based methods, Trent employed asset-based and cultural mapping tools to collect data while parsing theories of space, race, and capital. Trent discusses theologies and theories about racialized, religious, public, and arts spaces. Her research shows that one ethnographic task for the arts groups is unearthing and embedding neighborhood legacy. Analyzing data showed the sites as conceptualizing the child in three change-making areas: the Child as Hungry, the Child as Village, and the Child as Visible. Child theology is the primary theoretical lens that Trent deploys to contribute to and intersect with performance studies theory, critical race theory, child drama, and childhood studies.

**DR. ANDREW WALDRON**

*Identity Spectrums, Analytic Adolescents, and ‘Gays in Space!’: A Qualitative Investigation of Youth Queer Narrative Reception*

Waldron’s dissertation examines the interaction between youth queer narratives and young people through examining the core research question, How do young people engage, interpret, and respond to queer narratives? Applying a feminist narrative analysis to examine the qualitative data, he proposes a methodological research shift where the voices of youth are valued as content experts; an artistic shift that moves content-creation away from a top down traditional media model and towards a youth-centered new media approach for art making; an aesthetic shift away from over-used stereotypes, tropes, and stale representations and instead innovate to represent intersectional, spectrum-based diversity of the LGBTQ+ experience. His study utilizes questionnaires, focus groups, and case study interviews, to engage adolescent perceptions of queer narratives and to explore and examine LGBTQ+ themes, characters, plots in traditional and new media.
Mobilizing Hope: An Applied Drama Approach Toward Building Protective Factors in Behavioral Health

In his dissertation, Joseph Schoenfelder evaluated a hope-based applied theatre program and its effect on a behavioral health population. The population consisted of eleven adolescent males undergoing treatment in a residential facility. Schoenfelder’s goal in the research was to provide and evaluate a dramatic arts program aimed at enhancing protective factors like self-efficacy, resilience, hope and cognitive flexibility. 

Schoenfelder met with the participants for eight sessions of improvisation, verbal and non-verbal forms of theatre, and journal reflections regarding hope and the ways in which hope relates to the goal-pursuit process. Though the qualitative and quantitative data did not yield conclusively positive results, the pilot project showed potential for further research and future iterations. Each participant reported increased hope at the end of the program and clinicians reported observing an increase in confidence among those youth who participated in the program.
GRANT WAYMAN
Theatre and Performance for the Very Young

As part of his applied project, Grant Wayman devised a movement based and highly interactive solo performance for children ages 3-5. The piece, titled "Mr. Dave’s Treasure Chest," is an imaginative performance that offers young children ages 3-5 a unique and hands-on theatrical experience exploring interactive play, empathy and imagination. Grant played both himself as facilitator as well as Mr. Dave, a silly character who brought his trunk full of fun playthings to share with the audience. Once Mr. Dave discovered that his trunk contains ordinary household objects, he enlisted the help of the audience to use imagination and transform the objects into something more playful. The performance began with the audience watching but as the piece progressed, audiences were invited to participate, and at the very end they were on their feet as they co-created the experience along with the performer. The project culminated in a series of performance workshops with Coterie Theatre early childhood students as well as two on-site workshops, one at childcare center Foster-Knox on the campus of University of Central Missouri and the other with the Pre-K class at Maple Grove Elementary in Warrensburg, Missouri. This interactive performance piece explored the magic of the everyday with imagination.
MFA Applied Projects

CHRIS WEISE
Six Stories Tall

Chris Weise directed Six Stories Tall by Marco Ramirez for ASU’s mainstage season in the Galvin Playhouse. He emphasized and celebrated the ways in which the young protagonists boldly claim space within their communities. The play’s six narratives feature Latinx youth in unspecified locations and times. The production’s design aesthetic reflected the greater Tempe and Phoenix community. Weise explored, developed, and documented an active set of culturally responsive artistic practices for representing local young people onstage through his direction using culturally responsive artistry as coined by Roxanne Schroeder-Arce. Weise collaborated with a local youth community dramaturg as a full member of the artistic production team. This allowed for the creation of a unique space in which artistic practices function as adaptable directorial tools. In his research on the process and product, Weise concluded that culturally responsive theatrical spaces provided opportunities for the cultures and identities of local youth communities to rise up and be foregrounded.
For her applied project, Jisun Myung explored the intersection of food, space and culture. She directed a performance project called “In Between Food: intercultural place-making with young people.” Four young women — all living in between South Korean culture and USA culture explored their cultural identities through group sessions as they explored their feelings and understandings of food, cooking and eating together. With thoroughly curated keywords and food menu, the participants contemplated about various factors defining cultural identities. The group devised both storytelling performance pieces and a unique dish. The final performance combined storytelling, live cooking, live media, and communal eating.