

Mississippi Theatre Association Business Meeting
January 14, 2007
South End Zone- Hemmingway Stadium
Oxford, MS

Meeting was called to order by President MJ Etua at 1:15 p.m. Current officers were introduced. President Etua thanked the officers and board members for their work and a special thank-you was given to Tonya Hayes for her 12 years of service on the Board.

Motion was made by Suzanne Allmon and seconded by Stephanie ? to dispense the reading of the minutes from the June 17, 2006 Board meeting in Oxford. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's report by Chris Wooten. July-November balance was \$7,000. Report included grants given as part of the Katrina Fund. Three theatres, Wings, Bay St. Louis, and Biloxi received grants of \$1,000 each. Additional money is still available and the Board will allot additional grants in the future.
No new business was presented.

Festival participants were asked to complete the MTA surveys and MS Arts Commission Surveys. The surveys will be used by the MAC in establishing their goals and priorities for the next five years. Theatres in MS need to be heard and the surveys give us an opportunity to give information to the Commission that will benefit us in the future.

The proposed officers and board members for MTA for 2006 were proposed by Peppy Biddy and Suzanne Allmon. Motion made by ? and seconded by ~~John Davenport~~ to accept the slate by acclamation. Motion was unanimous. (See attached of this report for proposed Board members.)

Location for the 2008 Festival was still under consideration and will be decided on at the next Board meeting.

Divisional Reports were given next. (Only 2 Division reports were received by me to be included in this report.)

University/College Division- Peppy Biddy:

The KCACT Festival 2006 was hosted by MSU. Festival 2007 is still seeking a host institution. If interested, contact Peppy at MUW. The committee also discussed the growth and success of the College auditions at MTA. It was suggested that an "auditions director" be appointed, and that auditionees be assigned numbers, and that the Division Chairs express to each high school teacher the need to follow strict guidelines on time of audition materials as next year a time-keeper will be added to the audition process.

SETC Report- Sam Sparks:

The SETC Annual Convention will in Atlanta on March 7-11 at the Downtown Hilton. This is a very accessible location for Mississippians. MTA would like to thank SETC Rep Jack Benjamin for attending our Festival. Jack would like to thank those who participated in the SETC Focus Group Discussion. The discussion centered on what we as theatre artists need and what we need from our theatre arts organizations..

SETC is currently inviting responses to a long-range planning survey from both members and non-members. This survey is designed to improve current services and to gather ideas for new services.

SETC State Auditions were held on Dec. 9 at Millsaps College in Jackson. 117 students from states in the Southwest and 61 students from MS auditioned. Adjudicators were: Francine Thomas Reynolds, Josie Helming, and Chris Kinsley.

In Other Business, the announcement was made that those interested in playwriting competition should check the Website beginning March 1.

Also, if you are interested in serving on any MTA committee, see Stephen Cunetto.

CEU credits for the Festival should be addressed to Stephen also. At approximately 1:45 p.m. a motion was made and passed to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by
Ronnie Miller, MTA Secretary

REPORT ON THE 2007 TEN-MINUTE PLAY FESTIVAL

January 12-13, 2007, University of Mississippi

Chair: Deborah Craig; Co-chair, Melissa Sparks;

Assistants: Alex Craig, Joe Amacker, Lauren Roberts, and Patrick Kell

This year our ten-minute play contest had a total of 54 students from 11 different Mississippi high schools. Friday night began with icebreaker games, selection of topics, the playwrights' time at the Yerby Center to write the plays, the actors' auditions, and a variety of theater games until the distribution of scripts on Saturday. Saturday the rehearsals began with 8 plays, four dramas and four comedies, with the tech directors getting five minutes to select 4 props and 6 costumes from the assortment each school brought in. Rehearsals ensued, with dress rehearsals beginning at 5:50 PM. The plays were presented at 7 PM to a standing-room only audience, and ranged from poignant to absurdist theatre. Our thanks to MTA for providing the great pizza dinner on Friday night, which was enjoyed by everyone.

SOME THOUGHTS ON MODIFYING/IMPROVING TEN-MINUTE FOR NEXT YEAR

1. Send out more specific information about the ten-minute's required commitment to the 24-hour period of Friday and Saturday. One of the reasons a few of the St. Martin students were unhappy was because they thought they could attend plays and workshops on Saturday instead of rehearsing.
2. Take digital photos of everyone in each play and then a cast and crew picture for each play for the marquee and posters; Polaroids are too expensive; print out the digital photos Friday night on a printer; allow the playwrights to take the posters and marquees home with them.
3. Since the playwrights need something to do after the rehearsal process, have them and the tech directors design and make the poster marquees for the plays (instead of Melissa and me making them which took a lot of our time on Saturday); it will give them something structured but creative to do during rehearsals; perhaps giving an award for the best marquee design.
4. Collect \$7 from each student on Saturday morning for a lunch and supper buffet, (one of my parents will go to Wal-Mart) so we will not have to worry about leaving for lunch and dinner during the rehearsal process; let them know this before the event; many students who left for dinner came back late; this has been an issue the last three years or so; a sandwich buffet with fruit, cookies and chips is something they all will enjoy.
5. Provide more privacy for rehearsals if at all possible; although I thought the space this year was great, and most of the kids were okay with dividing the room into sections, Renee Dawson from St. Martin HS said her kids felt it was cramping their styles; I guess the best situation would be to have separate classrooms in one hallway for easy supervision, then go to the rehearsal hall for the dress rehearsals and performances. However, I think everyone understands that this is

an event where one has to be flexible in adjusting to whatever the environment may be.

6. Have a handout for the directors, on the rehearsal process---reading the script, discussing characters, blocking, then rehearsing for character development, going off-book, then polishing.
7. The adjudicators were great, though on a few plays they really didn't have much to say.
8. Try to steer the students away from totally absurdist drama with random events, these were the plays the adjudicators had a difficult time giving adjudications for; try to get the students to develop a play with a conflict and a resolution.
9. Keep the college assistants as a permanent part of the festival; they were able to keep circling each play group and give advice for a variety of things.
10. Have the directors meet apart, somehow, from the actors, and sit down to discuss their plays and then select, one at a time, the actors for their plays.

**Mississippi Theatre Association
2007 Festival Reports**

Secondary Festival report:

Nearly 15 school directors attended
Things they would like us to consider:

- If we are going to keep the schedule with having the High Schools go back to back (which some liked and some didn't...I LOVED IT) then they ask that we put workshops on the second day as well. Apparently there was not enough time to go to the workshops and they were very disappointed. Suz and I agree with this. We liked the schedule but thought the kids may like the workshops on Saturday as well.
- There was talk to David about the IE'S and what needs to be done to fine tune that.
- I discussed the workshop we had last fall and asked what they wanted for this next year. They were excited to hear that I would have it here again and asked for lots more time in each workshop because there was so much they wanted to get from the presenters. So...if we could get maybe a little funding for this I would be willing to make it a two day event and work with hotels and things here to get some discounted rooms. this year's was a big success and i was excited to hear how they wanted more of what we gave them!
- They were unhappy with the Kids Social it seemed..but hey...can't win them all
- Pretty much that was it...This was the first year that I have been in that meeting (my 3rd time) that it wasn't a big gripe and bitch session..everyone seemed happy! Maybe we should have it in Oxford more often...haha!

John

Theatre for Youth festival

Festival report: (if you need a list of awards and names email me and I can give it to you!)

The **Theatre for Youth festival** went extremely well this year. It was the first year for us to offer awards and that seemed to be very well received. We had record registration and we hope to be even larger next year. I would like to invite everyone to participate in next year's festival. Come experience the magic of children - it's a blast!

Minutes:

- Discussion of awards ceremony : decision to put it with all other awards on Sun instead of after the festival on Friday. Would like to have a representative from each group stay for awards on Sun. open to discussion with MTA board though - reason : feel like children's festival is left out if done separately.
- Record registration and record drop out - would like to add a nuisance fee to groups who register and then pull out after deadline to discourage drop outs.
- Also want to add contact phone # to registration form. (preferably cell #.)

- Received questions about fees from people still - need to "Idiot proof" what theatre for youth have to pay on website.
- Rules for theatre for youth should be established and put on website with the registration form. Such as time limit, age appropriateness, etc.

If growth continues future concerns would be longer festival.

If you need anything else - just let us know!

-suz and ben

Individual Event Festival

David Boone

The Individual Events Festival was a tremendous success this year. Our number increased dramatically from last year and we offered 10 events. In this year's festival we offered: Male Monologues, Female Monologues, Duet Acting, Scene Performance, Solo Musical, Duet Musical, Original Student Scene, Scenic Design, Costume Design and Poster Design. I would like to thank Renee Dawson for all of her help this year in working as the Assistant Chair. I also want to thank M.J. Etua and Stephen Cunetto for their hard work and dedication to providing some excellent IEF events. Directors in the Secondary Meeting commented on how much quicker the event went this year and how they feel it was ran smoother. They loved having the musical events. Suggestions for next year include revising the rubric in some areas for music and performance. I also want to thank all of our judges for the IEFS and thanks again for making my second year a great success.

College/University Division

The University/College Division of MTA met and discussed the following: The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Fall 2006 was hosted by MSU. Festival 2007 is still seeking a host institution. If interested please contact Charles Bosworth at William Carey University or William Bidy at Mississippi University for Women. The committee also discussed the growth and success of the College auditions at MTA. It is suggested that: an "auditions director" be appointed, that the auditionees be assigned numbers, and that the Division Chairs express to H.S. teachers the need to follow strict guidelines on time of auditions materials, as next year a time-keeper be added to audition process.

Peppy Bidy