# PERFORMING ARTS RESOURCES

Web site links updated March 2011

#### **Tips for Creating a Performing Arts Access Checklist**

Performing arts activities may involve presenting, touring, residencies, classes, workshops and artist and teacher training. All programs should be accessible to performers, audience members, and staff. While many organizations may claim accessibility, each facility and activity should be carefully evaluated with a checklist and knowledgeable individuals **prior** to being opened to the public.

A Performing Arts Access Checklist may combine the following sections of the *Arts and Humanities Accessibility Checklist* (Step 6):

- **Assembly areas** includes integrated and dispersed wheelchair seating that is required throughout regular seating areas, as well as wheelchair accessible performance space, backstage, dressing rooms/restrooms, and orchestra pit.
- **Presentations and Programs** includes the full range of communication techniques to make programs accessible--including audio description and sign interpretation.
- **Registration, Box Office and Reception** includes access considerations for information and ticket purchase such as the height of the box office window (service counter) and a TTY telephone.
- **Food Service** includes access requirements for food service counters and bars, vending machines areas and restaurants.
- **Print Materials** includes ways to make publicity, brochures, programs and other print materials available to people who cannot use traditional print.

If you have a gallery or exhibition space, then see the **Exhibition and Labeling** sections of the checklist.

In addition, all organizations are strongly encouraged to complete the following sections of the Arts and Humanities Accessibility Checklist:

- Policies and Practices;
- Employment;
- Checklist for Existing Facilities (with Addendum);
- Interior Signage;
- Emergency Evacuation; and
- Marketing and Publicity.

For performing arts activities that take place in outdoor settings, see the publications *Design Guide for Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation* and *The Accessibility Checklist: An Evaluation System for Buildings and Outdoor Settings* (included in the Performing Arts Resource List).

# **Performing Arts Resource Directory**

## Actors Equity Association

New York, NY Phone: (212) 869-8530 Email: info@actorsequity.org

**Description:** The Actors Equity Association (AEA) is the union for Actors and Stage Mangers who work on the legitimate stage in the United States. Actors Equity represents more than 48,000 Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. They seek to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans, for its members. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

### Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts

New York, NY Phone: (212) 730-4750 Email: sjensen@inclusioninthearts.org

**Description:** The Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts (AIA) is the nation's leading advocate for full diversity and the only program of its kind. They actively engage artists and decision makers, forge partnerships, and create opportunities. They promote inclusive hiring practices and standards, diversity in leadership and balanced portrayals of persons of color and persons with disabilities. The Alliance advises casting directors, production companies, theatre organizations, film studios and television networks with a range of needs from consulting to casting; they convene artists and decision makers for symposia, working groups and educational forums; they solicit and publish Opinion Pieces to add new voices to the discourse on diversity and inclusion; and they convene DEAL - Disability in Entertainment and Arts Link - a working group and think tank that develops new strategies, new models, and a new framework for the inclusion of artists with disabilities and disability issues in the media.

## American Federation of Musicians

New York, NY Phone: (212) 869-1330

**Description:** American Federation of Musicians (AFM) is the largest organization in the world representing the interests of professional musicians. They negotiate fair agreements, protect ownership of recorded music, and secure benefits such as: health care and pension, and lobby legislators. They offer the Lester Petrillo Memorial Fund for Disabled Musicians, a charitable trust fund that provides financial aid to disabled

members. This fund is not intended to replace health insurance or provide general loans, but does supply modest amounts of assistance to qualified applicants on an emergency basis.

#### Art-Reach

Philadelphia, PA Phone: (215) 568-2216 Email: <u>info@art-reach.org</u>

**Description:** Art-Reach is devoted to bringing arts and cultural opportunities to the full range of underserved audiences. Each year their programs and services enable over 15,000 people with disabilities or economically disadvantaged to enjoy the beauty and richness of the arts. Art-Reach members receive deeply discounted tickets for museums, cultural institutions, and arts performances that are pledged by arts partners. They bring the arts to their constituents through in-facility events at participating agencies and schools; they serve as a resource for information on accessibility of local art venues; and they partner with both the arts and human service communities to develop ongoing programs intended to enhance individual's quality of life.

### ARTability: Accessing Arizona's Arts

Phoenix, AZ Phone: (602) 757-8118 Email: <u>artabilityaz@hotmail.com</u>

**Description:** ARTAbility Accessing Arizona's Arts serves as a bridge between arts organizations and the disability community by acting as a resource to arts and cultural organizations; providing technical assistance to organizations on accessibility; promoting accessible events; conducting customer service training for arts groups; distributing calendars of accessible programming; and by organizing, promoting and coordinating Audio Description, American Sign Language interpretation, and other accessibility services.

#### Arts Access, Inc.

Raleigh, NC Phone: (919) 833-9919 Email: info@artsacceessinc.org

**Description:** Arts Access Inc., is an organization whose fundamental goal is to encourage and enable persons with disabilities to have full access to arts programs and facilities. Arts Access advocates arts accessibility throughout the Triangle area of North Carolina; provides audio description for theatre patrons who are blind or have low vision; refers arts administrators to sign language interpreters; and provides accessibility training to arts organizations and arts accessibility information to the public.

#### Association of Performing Arts Presenters

Washington, DC Phone: (202) 833-2787 Email: info@artspresenters.org **Description:** Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) is the national service and advocacy organization with nearly 2,000 members worldwide, dedicated to developing and supporting robust performing arts presenting field and the professionals who work within it. Their members represent the nation's leading performing arts centers, municipal and university performance facilities, nonprofit performing arts centers, culturally specific organizations, foreign governments, as well as artist agencies, managers, touring companies, and national consulting practices that serve the field, and a growing roster of self-presenting artists. As a leader in the field, APAP works to effect change through advocacy, professional development, resource sharing, and civic engagement.

### Coalition for Disabled Musicians

Bay Shore, NY Phone: (631) 586-0366 Email: <u>CDMNews@aol.com</u>

**Description:** Coalition for Disabled Musicians (CDM) is a nonprofit organization of musicians with disabilities. CDM produces and performs music, conducts workshops, promotes community awareness, develops adaptive techniques to address physical limitations, and maintains a national referral service connecting disabled musicians around the nation and the world.

## Community Access to the Arts, Inc.

Great Barrington, MA Phone: (413) 528-5485 Email: <u>info@communityaccesstothearts.org</u>

**Description:** Community Access to the Arts, Inc. (CATA) nurtures and celebrates the creativity of people with disabilities through a shared experience in the visual and performing arts. The program takes place in healthcare, therapeutic, eldercare, educational, and cultural settings. They serve 600 individuals with developmental, physical, emotional, and/or mental disabilities representing 26 different human service and educational organizations, as well as individuals living at home. CATA offers several performing arts pieces which celebrate and acknowledge individuals with disabilities talent as dancers.

## John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Accessibility Office Washington, DC Phone: (202) 416-8727 Email: access@kennedy-center.org

**Description:** The John F. Kennedy Center (JFK) for the Performing Arts Accessibility Office supports the inclusion of people with disabilities into all aspects of the performing and cultural arts. They provide technical assistance on issues specific to making the cultural arts accessible; provide referrals to resources on a national, regional and state level; and conduct training. Annually they host the, "The Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability for ADA/504 Coordinators Conference". This conference provides training

on legal issues, universal design, programmatic access, employment, etc. The Kennedy Center offers several types of internships and fellowships for individuals at varying stages in their arts administration careers with and without disabilities.

## National Arts and Disability Center

Los Angeles, CA Phone: (310) 825-5054 Email: <u>bstoffmacher@mednet.ucla.edu</u>

**Description:** The mission of the National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) is to promote the inclusion of audiences and artists with disabilities in all facets of the arts community. The NADC is a university based organization that has two major focuses: careers in the arts for people with disabilities and making the arts accessible to people with disabilities. The NADC provides a resource on <u>US and International Theatre</u> <u>Companies with Performers with Disabilities</u> as well as technical assistance in this area.

#### **Cultural Access Network**

West Orange, NJ Phone: (973) 731-6582 Email: <u>info@njtheatrealliance.org</u>

**Description:** The Cultural Access Network resource is used to connect New Jersey arts patrons and organizations to a wide range of information about accessibility in the Arts and to assist to make New Jersey arts events more accessible. They assist organizations to build an ADA work plan. Their web site provides ADA materials, and general information pertaining to accessibility, and tools to assist organizations in

improving the accessibility of their programs.

## Performing Arts Studio West

Inglewood, CA Phone: (310) 674-1346 Email: <u>info@studiowest.com</u>

**Description:** Performing Arts Studio West (PASW) mission is to provide an environment where adults with developmental disabilities can enhance self-esteem, social skills, and employment opportunities through participation in a performing arts curriculum combined with a vocational training component. They provide hands-on individualized training, career management, and on-location support for performers with developmental disabilities that work in television, film and commercials.

#### **Survivors Art Foundation**

Westhampton, NY

Email: safe@survivorsartfoundation.org

**Description:** Survivors Art Foundation (SAF) is a non-profit organization committed to empowering visual, literary and performing artists with effective expressive outlets, via an online gallery, national exhibitions, outreach programs and publications. SAF's goal is to provide entertainment, education, exposure to the arts, and public awareness, while mainstreaming trauma survivors with physical and mental disabilities into the arts.

## **Theatre Communications Group**

New York, NY Phone: (212) 609-5900 Email: <u>tcg@tcg.org</u>

**Description:** Theatre Communications Group (TCG) is the national organization for the American theatre. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; grants approximately \$2 million per year to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level and serves as the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community.

#### Theatre Development Fund

New York, NY Phone: (212) 912-9770 Email: info@tdf.org

**Description:** Theatre Development Fund (TDF) is the largest nonprofit service agency for the performing arts in the nation. Its mission is to foster works of artistic merit by supporting new productions and to broaden audiences. TDF offers a discount ticket program to bring the theatre to those who ordinarily could not afford attendance. In addition, they offer a mailing list for low vision, blind, hard-of-hearing, and deaf patrons; wheelchair users receive mail offers for discounted tickets; and Sign language interpreted or open-captioned performances are offered for some of their shows.

#### <u>VSA</u>

Washington, DC Phone: (202) 628-2800 Email: info@vsarts.org

**Description:** VSA is an international, nonprofit organization where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Programs are implemented through a network by State affiliates in over 60 countries worldwide. VSA produces numerous publications geared toward assisting professional and aspiring artists with disabilities that are posted on their web site as well as an Artist Registry. The VSA Playwright Discovery Program invites middle and high school students to take a closer look at the world around them, examine how disability affects their lives and the lives of others, and express their views through the art of playwriting. Playwrights may write from their own experience or about an experience in the life of another person or fictional character. Scripts can be comedies, dramas, or even musicals. Young playwrights with and without disabilities are encouraged to submit a script. Entries may be the work of an individual student or collaboration by a group or class of students.

# **Selected Examples of Accessible Performing Arts Venues**

## Arena Stage

Washington, DC Phone: (202) 554-9066 x 234

#### Email: <u>access@arenastage.org</u>

**Description:** Arena Stage has played a pioneering role in providing access to all productions for people with disabilities. Audio description was conceived and developed at Arena Stage in conjunction with the Metropolitan Washington Ear and has since been adopted by media, arts, and theatre organizations throughout the world. Access services and programs include wheelchair accessible seating; infrared assistive listening devices; Braille, large-print, audio description and sign interpretation at designated performances; and a dedicated box office TTY line. A script loan program and a unique sign master program is also part of the organization's sign interpreted series.

#### Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities

Arvada, CO Phone: (720) 898-7200

**Description:** Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities offers 14,000 half-price tickets to disadvantaged children, serves kids who are hard of hearing of deaf with one of eight shadow-interpreted shows annually, has an ADA compliant Web site, and offers assisted listening devices and a wheelchair ramp to their theatre stage. The Arvada Center improved our services to those with disabilities through the purchase of new assisted listening devices and a wheelchair ramp to our theater stage. Through collaboration with VSA Colorado, SCFD and Denver Center Media, the Arvada Center helped to develop the *Beyond Barrier Free* video to assist in training our staff and volunteers in welcoming people of all abilities.

#### **Citi Performing Arts Center**

Boston, MA Phone: (617) 482-9393 Email: info@citicenter.org

**Description:** Citi Performing Arts, Inc., continuously strives to make the arts accessible to all. Careful attention has been and continues to be given to ensure that all program areas of their theatre are accessible. Door entrances, restrooms and performance polices have been modified for greater accessibility and alternate format programs, assistive listening devices and American Sign Language interpreted and audio described performances are available. Open captioned performances offered as well.

#### **Guthrie Theater**

Minneapolis, MN Phone: (612) 225-6000

**Description:** The Guthrie Theater is devoted to the traditional, classical, repertoire that has sustained its foundation and the exploration of new works from diverse cultures and tradition. The Guthrie Theater is wheelchair accessible and offers American Sign Language interpretation, assistive listening system, audio description, Braille and large print programs magazines and brochures, and 2.8X magnification sport glasses. The theater has trained audio describers and supplies smaller arts organizations with the technology needed to provide audio description to visually impaired patrons.

## John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Washington, DC Phone: (202) 416-8727 Email: BRSiegel@kennedv.cen

Email: <u>BRSiegel@kennedy-center.org</u>

**Description:** The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is committed to including individuals with disabilities at all levels of participation in performances and events. The John F. Kennedy Center strives to be a performing arts center that provides arts for everyone and work is ongoing to ensure that programs, performances, events and facilities are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Basic accommodations such as wheelchair access, sigh language interpreters, captioning, assistive listening devices, large print, Braille playbills, and audio description, are available.

#### Mark Taper Forum

Music Center of Los Angeles County Los Angeles, CA Phone: (213) 972-7376 Email: <u>marketing@ctgla.org</u>

**Description:** The Mark Taper Forum is wheelchair accessible, offers audio described performances for patrons who are blind or who have low vision, as well as American Sign Language performances and Phonic Ear assistive listening devices for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

#### Paper Mill Playhouse

Millburn, NJ Phone: (973) 379-3636 ext. 2666 Email: <u>mmooney@papermill.org</u>

**Description**: Paper Mill Playhouse has an extensive program of award-winning community services including: sign-interpreted performances, open-captioned performances, wheelchair seating, audio description, infrared listening systems, Braille and large-print programs, and discounted tickets. Sensory seminars are also offered to allow patrons with vision loss to feel props, set pieces, and costumes in order to give them a better understanding of a character's body type and personality, the spatial relationship of the set, and the time period of the production. Paper Mill Playhouse's award-winning Access brochure - "Theatre for Everyone" - is free of charge, and is also available in large print and Braille.

#### Triumvirate Pi Theatre Company (Tri-Pi)

Culver City, CA Phone: (310) 836-2961 Email: <u>triumviratepi@earthlink.net</u> **Description:** Triumvirate Pi Theatre Company (Tri-Pi) has been dedicated to producing provocative live theatre that breaks down perceived barriers of race, gender, and disability, for all Los Angeles audiences and artists. They only produce in wheelchair accessible venues and provide open captioning at all main stage performances.

# **Selected Examples of Accessible Dance Companies**

## AXIS Dance Company

Oakland, CA Phone: (510) 625-0110 Email: mollie@axisdance.org

**Description:** Founded in 1987, AXIS Dance Company creates and performs contemporary dance that is developed through the collaboration of dancers with and without disabilities AXIS teaches dance and educates about collaboration and disability through outreach and education programs in schools and in the community. AXIS is committed to promoting and supporting this form of dance locally, nationally, and internationally.

### **Dance Detour**

Chicago, IL Phone: (312) 225-8824 Email: <u>dancedetour@aol.com</u>

**Description:** Dance Detour, is a professional "diverse-abilities" dance company. Their work is dedicated exclusively to the art of integrated dance and collaborations that include dancers with and without disabilities who explore movement possibilities together as equals.

## Full Radius Dance

Atlanta, GA Phone: (404) 724-9663 Email: fullradiusdance@aol.com

**Description:** Full Radius Dance is a professional modern dance organization dedicated to exploring new movement possibilities through physically integrated (dancers with and without disabilities) dance. In addition to the performance company, the organization offers education and outreach programming designed to reach broad sections of the community, with a particular emphasis on persons with disabilities.

## Infinity Dance Theater Company

New York, NY

Email: <u>chris@infinitydance.com</u>

**Description:** Infinity Dance Theater is a non-traditional dance company committed to expanding the boundaries of dance by featuring dancers with and without disabilities. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kitty Lunn, who founded the organization in 1995, Infinity achieves parity in the world of dance while maintaining high standards of artistic quality. The company aims to inspire people with and without disabilities,

encourage their artistic and other professional aspirations, and empower them through the organization's <u>educational</u> and <u>performance</u> programs.

## Joint Forces Dance Company/ DanceAbility International

Eugene, OR Phone: (541) 342-3273 Email: jointforcesdance@yahoo.com

**Description:** DanceAbility is a unique dance method founded in 1987 by Alito Alessi and Karen Nelson and has been under Alito's leadership since 1989. DanceAbility uses improvisational dance to promote artistic expression and exploration between people with and without disabilities. Through experiencing movement together, misconceptions and/or prejudices that able-bodied or disabled people might have about themselves and each other are uprooted. DanceAbility workshops provide a supportive atmosphere for attitudes to change, and for people to learn about the beauty and joy of communicating through movement.

## The Dancing Wheels Company and School

Cleveland, OH Phone: (216) 432-0306 Email: info@dancingwheels.org

**Description:** The Dancing Wheels Company & School is America's first physically integrated dance company. The Company's extensive repertory from the nation's leading choreographers, offers a wide range of compelling and diverse works offering passion, strength and tenacity to every performance. Dancing Wheels continues to travel the globe advocating disability awareness and entertaining over 70,000 people each year. With a repertory of over 40 works from nationally-esteemed choreographers and a message of inclusion and accessibility, the Company continually expands the reach of artistic possibilities while celebrating the universal spirit of dance.

# **Selected Examples of Accessible Theatre Companies**

# Amaryllis Theatre Company

Philadelphia, PA Phone: (215) 564-2431 Email: <u>info@amaryllistheatre.org</u>

**Description:** Amaryllis is an inclusive professional theatre company whose mission is to produce new forms of theatre and encourage a richer sense of community by bringing together artists and audiences from all of Greater Philadelphia's diverse communities, including the Deaf community and the communities of people with disabilities. They preclude discrimination on the basis of physical or cultural difference, and produce new plays, new forms of theatre and new translations of classics into American Sign Language.

**Changing Perceptions** 

Los Angeles, CA

# Phone: (310)428-4696

# Email: cre@cretheatre.com

**Description:** Changing Perceptions, a program of CFRE Outreach, provides theatre experience for individuals with loss of vision or who are blind. Changing Perceptions instructors work with the students from three different age groups from the Braille Institute. Youth (ages 8-12), Teens (13-18), and adults work on creating original works of theatre that are performed at the conclusion of the session. From story and character creation, to writing original songs and assisting in backdrop creation, the students have a role in the entire process from beginning to end. After creating the story and rehearsing for 12-16 weeks, the participants memorize their lines and learn correct stage placement through sound cues from other students. Changing Perceptions currently creates and performs 2-3 original plays per year.

## Deaf West Theatre Company

North Hollywood, CA Phone: (818) 762 -2998 Email: info@deafwest.org

**Description:** Deaf West Theatre Company (DWT) mission is to directly improve and enrich the cultural lives of the 1.2 million deaf and hard of hearing individuals who live in the Los Angeles area by providing exposure and access to professional theatre, filling a voice for deaf artists and audiences.

# Firehouse Theater Company

Los Angeles, CA Phone: (310) 659-6744 Email: <u>oppenheimz@aol.com</u>

**Description:** Firehouse productions are particularly noted for including writers and performers with physical or sensory disabilities. The Firehouse offers the disabled community free, accessible instructional workshops and private consultations. In these efforts, the Firehouse views its role as a liaison between the disabled and mainstream theatrical communities. In addition, the Firehouse has worked extensively with children and teenagers involved in public school performing arts programs. Here the goal has been to offer instruction and performances by professional artists who serve both as role models and mentors.

# National Theatre of the Deaf

West Hartford, CT Phone: (860) 236-4193 Email: Info@NTD.org

**Description:** The National Theatre of the Deaf aim to produce theatrically challenging work of the highest quality, drawing from as wide a range of the world's literature as possible; to perform these original works in a style that links American Sign Language with the spoken word; to seek, train and employ Deaf artists; to offer our work to as culturally diverse and inclusive an audience as possible; to provide community outreach activities that will educate and enlighten the general public, opening their eyes and ears to Deaf culture and building linkages that facilitate involvement in our methods of work.

## **PHAMALY**

Denver, CO Phone: (303) 575-0005 Email: <u>info@phamaly.org</u>

**Description:** PHAMALY was one of the first disabled theatre companies founded by actors with disabilities that only casts individuals with physical, mental and/or cognitive disabilities. Founded in 1989, the company now enters its 22nd season of providing critically acclaimed and professionally produced plays and musicals to enthusiastic audiences in the Denver Metro area.

### **Theatre Breaking Through Barriers**

New York, NY Phone: (212) 647-1733 Email: <u>ischambelan@nyc.rr.com</u>

**Description:** Theatre Breaking Through Barriers (TBTB) is an integrated company of blind and sighted artists dedicated to finding, developing, and exhibiting the talents of theater artists who are visually impaired.

#### Wheelock Family Theatre

Wheelock College Boston, MA Phone: (617) 879-2147 Email: kelliott@wheelock.edu

**Description:** Wheelock Family Theatre (WFT) is a professional equity company in residence at Wheelock College. WFT mounts family -oriented productions - musicals, children's classics, modern dramas, and original works - and provides educational programs for the greater Boston community. WFT has a national reputation for its pioneering work in nontraditional casting and for its long-standing commitment to accessibility. All productions are interpreted in American Sign Language for patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and audio-described for patrons who are blind or have difficulty seeing.

#### Wild Swan Theater

Ann Harbor, MI Phone: (734) 995-0530 Email: <u>wildswan@wildswantheater.org</u>

**Description:** Wild Swan Theater has been delighting family audiences since 1980 with performances that blend storytelling, movement, and music into magical, accessible experiences. Premiering productions in its home base of Ann Arbor and touring them throughout Michigan and the Midwest, Wild Swan has enchanted hundreds of thousands of play-goers of all ages in theaters, schools, libraries, and museums of all sizes. Wild Swan Theater is nationally known for its ingenious artistry, its innovative <u>audience accessibility program</u>, and its projects for participants with disabilities.

## See also:

The <u>National Arts and Disability Center</u> to search for additional resources and information related to the Performing Arts.