

Annual Report for the 2014-2015 Season

Theatre for a New Audience
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Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, Theatre for a New Audience is an internationally renowned producer of Shakespeare, classical drama, and contemporary plays. Its mission is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. The Theatre's work is guided by five core values: a reverence for language, a spirit of adventure, a commitment to diversity, a dedication to learning, and a spirit of service. These values inform the Theatre's work with artists, how it interacts with audiences, and how the Theatre manages its organization. The Theatre mounts three to five productions each year, creating a dialogue between Shakespeare and other authors about our lives today. In addition, the Theatre develops and cultivates audiences through extensive audience outreach programs and the largest in-depth arts in education residencies to introduce Shakespeare and classical drama in the New York City Public Schools.

Theatre for a New Audience's 2014-2015 Season was an artistically vibrant success. In its second year based in the Brooklyn Cultural District, the Theatre produced four acclaimed productions attended by more than 45,000 individuals. Since opening Polonsky Shakespeare Center in the fall of 2013, the Theatre has enjoyed a period of sustained growth, serving an audience of more than 100,000 people in its first two seasons there, including more than 12,000 students and individuals aged 30 and under through its \$20 discount ticketing initiative. This is twice the size of the audience served in the two seasons prior to opening our new home.

The Theatre's arts in education residencies served all five boroughs. Reaching nearly 1,600 New York City Public School students and teachers, the Theatre continued to deepen the impact of its arts in education programming for underserved schools in its community. The Theatre's Humanities programs also expanded in both scope and reach—more than 1,800 people enjoyed 22 free and low-cost Humanities events this season, the programs' largest audience to-date and an 80% increase in attendance from the prior year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2014-2015 SEASON:

- Attendance for the Theatre's four productions in the 2014-2015 Season was 45,732 in total;
- Three productions—*Tamburlaine the Great*, *An Octoroon*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*—were named *New York Times* "Critics' Picks" were extended past their original runs due to audience demand;
- The Theatre's productions this Season received numerous nominations and awards including:
 - "Obie Award for Performance," John Douglas Thompson, for his roles in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Iceman Cometh*.
 - *2015 Drama Desk Awards*:
 - Arthur Solari & Jane Shaw, *Tamburlaine the Great* for "Outstanding Music in a Play."
 - And a special award: "To John Douglas Thompson: For invigorating theater in New York through his commanding presence, classical expertise, and vocal prowess. This

season he demonstrated exceptional versatility in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Iceman Cometh*.”

- 2015 Drama Desk Award Nominations:
 - *Tamburlaine the Great* for “Outstanding Revival of a Play.”
 - Cesar Alvarez, *An Octoroon* for “Outstanding Music in a Play.”
 - Mimi Lien, *An Octoroon* for “Outstanding Set Design.”
- 2015 Drama League Award Nominations:
 - *An Octoroon* for “Outstanding Production of a Broadway or Off-Broadway Play.”
 - *Tamburlaine the Great* for “Outstanding Revival of a Broadway or Off-Broadway play.”
 - John Douglas Thompson for the “Distinguished Performance Award” for *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Iceman Cometh*.
- The Theatre’s Annual Gala Celebrating Shakespeare’s Birthday grossed more than \$600,000 to benefit the Theatre’s artistic and educational programs.

THE THEATRE’S 2014-2015 ARTISTIC SEASON:

The Theatre’s 2014-2015 Season of innovative and inspiring productions was acclaimed by audiences and critics alike. In the first show of the Theatre’s season, internationally renowned theatre artists Peter Brook and Marie-Hélène Estienne returned to the Theatre after co-directing *Fragments* in 2012 and 2013. Peter Brook is a long-time collaborator of the Theatre, having also directed *Love is My Sin* in 2010 and *The Grand Inquisitor* in 2009. The Theatre’s production was the American premiere of this breathtaking new play written and directed by Brook and Estienne.

The Valley of Astonishment is a kaleidoscopic journey into the mysteries and wonders of the human brain, inspired by years of neurological research, true stories, and Farid Attar’s epic mystical poem “The Conference of the Birds.” Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* called *Valley* a “wonder-struck contemplation of the enigma of the human mind,” and Tom Sellar of *The Village Voice* praised Brook as “the great magician of the modern stage.” *The Valley of Astonishment* was attended by 6,229 people.



Kathryn Hunter, Marcello Magni, Jared McNeill, Raphaël Chambouvet and Toshi Tsuchitori in *The Valley of Astonishment*, photo by Pascal Victor



John Douglas Thompson and Keith Randolph Smith in *Tamburlaine the Great*, photo by Gerry Goodstein;

Written by Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine Parts I and II*, published in 1587, was an epic theatrical spectacle that had a profound impact on Elizabethan drama and theatre in the 1590s. This tale of a Scythian shepherd that became king of half the world through the force of his ferocious will had not had a major production in New York since it debuted on Broadway in 1956. In the second production of the Theatre’s season, audiences were given the opportunity to see this rarely performed masterpiece directed and edited by Michael Boyd, former artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Boyd adapted this two-part, seven hour play with 60 characters into one, three-and-a-half-hour production with a cast of 19, entitled *Tamburlaine the Great*.

A *New York Times* Critic’s Pick in 2014, Ben Brantley called John Douglas Thompson as *Tamburlaine* “truly titanic” and “mesmerizing,” and praised the production’s “coruscating

theatrical wit.” *Tamburlaine the Great* was extended for two weeks beyond its scheduled run and was attended by 12,988 people.

An Octoroon by talented new playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins had a critically acclaimed and sold-out world premiere at Soho Rep. in the spring of 2014. Following its run at Soho Rep.—a small venue with limited seating capacity and a run of just a few weeks—the Theatre was given the thrilling opportunity to bring this singular work to a wider audience in 2015. In *An Octoroon*, Mr. Jacobs-Jenkins takes on Dion Boucicault’s *The Octoroon*, and “uses the plot of the Irish playwright’s 1859 antebellum melodrama...as the starting point for a bigger, wilder play” (*The New Yorker*).



Austin Smith and Amber Gray in *An Octoroon* photo by Gerry Goodstein

Directed by Sarah Benson, *An Octoroon* explores our modern relationship to race and identity through the lens of history. The play’s mix of timeless and timely made it a perfect fit for the Theatre’s modern classical aesthetic, and it attracted new audiences that are diverse in both age and race. The production was particularly popular with New Deal ticket buyers, accounting for 30% of all *An Octoroon* ticket sales (New Deal is the Theatre’s discount ticket initiative serving those under 30 years old and full-time students of any age). The production extended three weeks due to popular demand for tickets, and ran from February 14 through March 29, 2015. The production was seen by 13,028 people.



Zachary Fine and Andy Groteleuschen in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, photo by Gerry Goodstein

The Theatre’s 2014-2015 Season ended with Fiasco Theater’s lively production of William Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, directed by Jessie Austrian and Ben Steinfeld. Theatre for a New Audience previously collaborated with Fiasco Theater on *Cymbeline* in 2011, and, once again, the company’s acute understanding of text, spare design and brilliantly versatile use of props, accessories, and original music combined to create a charming, nuanced and magical experience. In his review, Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* praised Fiasco Theater as “a force to reckon with in American theater.”

The production ran from April 24 – June 20, 2015, and was seen by 13,487 people, including the nearly 1,100 students and teachers that attended five special matinee performances through one of the Theatre’s arts in education programs, the World Theatre Project.

ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

In-School Residencies: In the 2014-2015 Season, the Theatre’s 13-week arts in education residencies—World Theatre Project (WTP) and New Voices Project (NVP) served more than 1,600 New York City Public School students and teachers from schools in all five boroughs. Participants in WTP studied *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in lessons led by the Theatre’s Teaching Artists, using the Theatre’s Curriculum Guides that are aligned with New York State Common Core Learning Standards and the New York City Blueprint for Theatre Education. The five student matinees were followed by talkbacks with the cast. At Culminating Events held in each participating school, students presented original scenes inspired by the play as well as performed

excerpts from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In fall 2014 and spring 2015, students in NVP studied the craft of playwriting with the Theatre’s trained teaching artists school’s Culminating Event. Program participants include special needs students and English language learners.

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) Summer Arts Institute:

In addition to its in-school residencies, the Theatre has partnered with the New York City Department of Education since 2005 to lead the Drama Studio at the Summer Art Institute—a free, four-week arts program for Public School students entering grades 8 through 12. From July 1 – August 10, 2016, a group of 25 students participated in the Drama Studio led by a Department



Actors Zachary Fine (Valentine) and Emily Young (Lucetta/Sylvia) pose with students from P.S. 235 following a student matinee and talk back for Fiasco Theater’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

of Education arts specialist and a Theatre for a New Audience Teaching Artist. Students worked on building a portfolio or audition skills for their next level of study at an arts-focused high school, college, university or conservatory. Additional resources for the Drama Studio, such as tickets to shows and sessions with guest artists were and in groups wrote their own short plays, which were performed by professional actors at each provided by a group of partnering cultural organizations: American Ballet Theatre, Midori & Friends, Roundabout Theatre Company, and Tribeca Film Institute.

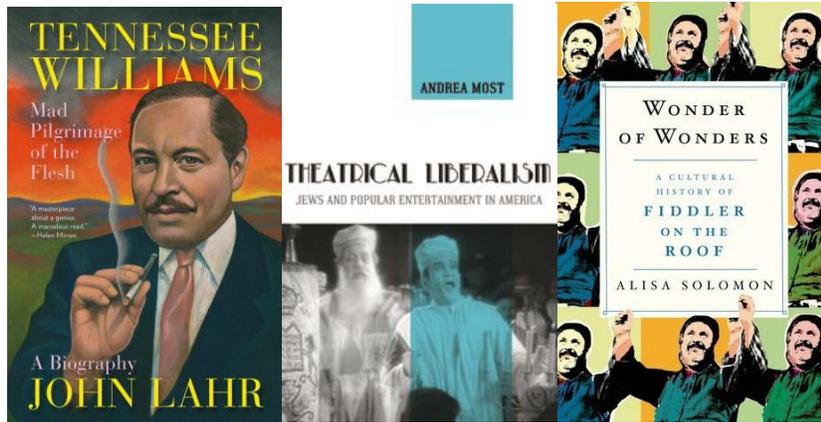
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute: From July 18-29, 2016 the Theatre hosted a two-week Summer Institute for 25 middle and high school teachers from across the country funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Institute, entitled “Scholarship and Performance: A Combined Approach to Teaching Shakespeare’s Plays,” integrated theory and practice in exploring text-based scholarship, contextual and original source material, language, and performance in three Shakespearean plays— *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*. The Institute was led by prominent Shakespearean scholars Julie Crawford and Mario DiGangi, along with master Teaching Artists Krista Apple and Claudia Zelevansky. It was held at Polonsky Shakespeare Center, introducing participants to this state-of-the-art facility and the vibrancy of the surrounding Brooklyn Cultural District.

HUMANITIES PROGRAMMING

Theatre for a New Audience’s Humanities programs invite audiences of all backgrounds to deeply engage with the language of Shakespeare and classic theatre by attending a variety of free and low cost public events programmed around the Season’s themes and productions. These events feature notable perspectives from the worlds of film, food, music, journalism, art and design. In 2014-2015, Humanities events were attended by a total of 1,815 individuals, the largest annual attendance in the program’s history. Humanities events were promoted to subscribers, single ticket buyers, and previous attendees of Humanities programs through e-blasts and playbill inserts.

Between September 16, 2014 and May 17, 2015, the Theatre presented a variety of events, including eight “TFANA Talks” and two additional *Tamburlaine* post-show talk-backs. On September 22 and December 15, 2014 the Theatre presented two talks in the series “Creating a Theatre for a New Audience” that featured Richard Pilbrow (one of the world’s leading theater design consultants) and Milton Glaser (celebrated graphic designer). These events were the fourth and fifth installments of the program’s ongoing series featuring the creative artists behind the design of Polonsky Shakespeare Center.

On September 29 and 30, 2014, the Theatre presented screenings of *The Tighrope*, *Brook by Brook*, and *Tell Me Lies* (films directed by or featuring Peter Brook) in conjunction with the Theatre's production of *The Valley of Astonishment*. On December 8, 2014, the Theatre hosted a panel discussion entitled "Christopher Marlowe in the 21st Century". The panel was moderated by Council of Scholars member Ayanna Thompson and featured panelists Gail Kern Paster (retired Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library), Jonathan Burton (an award-winning illustrator), and Tamburlaine actors John Douglas Thompson and Patrice Johnson Chevannes. In the spring, the Theatre partnered with the Brooklyn Historical Society to present a two-part panel discussion entitled "Theatre's Changing Face of Race." The panel featured a discussion on the lives and portrayals of mixed-race individuals in 19th century America. Panelists included *An Octoroon* playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and director Sarah Benson; and scholars Nell Painter, Ann Morning, and moderator Ayanna Thompson.



In 2014-2015, the Theatre's "Open Books" program offered discussions with authors of recent theatre books curated by the Theatre's Resident Literary Advisor, Jonathan Kalb. Featured books were Ali-sa Solomon's *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of Fiddler on the Roof* (March 23), John Lahr's *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh* (April 6),

and Andrea Most's *Theatrical Liberalism: Jews and Popular Entertainment in America* (May 4). Finally, the Theatre hosted "Shakespeare Primavera" on May 17, 2015, following the matinee of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Food historian Francine Segan gave a presentation on the sweet and savory in Shakespeare's Italian plays, accompanied by a tasting menu of Renaissance delicacies catered by Union Square Events.

Each production of the season was accompanied by a 360° Viewfinder publication as part of the Theatre's Humanities Programs. The 360° Viewfinder features articles on the play's history, context, and themes, as well as interviews with the creative team. The guides are available for free download at <http://www.tfana.org/education/360-series/past-seasons>.

THE STUDIO

In spring 2014, the Theatre launched a new initiative, The Studio, to bring all of the Theatre's artist training and development programs under one coordinated umbrella. The Theatre's Associate Artistic Director, Arin Arbus, serves as Director of the program. This Studio is supported by a \$500,000 Challenge grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and has received major matching support from the Booth Ferris Foundation. In the 2014-2015 Season, The Studio provided artists with the resources to develop new projects and explore artistic approaches outside the pressures of a scheduled production. Examples of Studio projects include a workshop of Adrienne Kennedy's new play *He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box*, a new work inspired by Kennedy's own experiences of growing up in the segregated South, infused with allusions to Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*; actor Christopher Bayes' residency where he developed *Ruzante*, a new commedia dell'arte piece based on 16th century playwright Angelo Beolco's work; and a workshop of *Romeo and Juliet* in which director Danya Taymor explored her unique vision of the play through experimentation with setting and time period.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Theatre has formalized its commitment to making its world-class productions accessible to people of all income levels through a variety of discounts and low-cost ticketing initiatives. In 2014-2015, the Theatre continued to engage its Brooklyn neighbors through the second year of the Brooklyn Pass initiative, offering \$20 tickets to clients and staff of borough-based arts and social service non-profits. The Theatre sold 102 Brooklyn Pass tickets, providing nearly \$6,500 in subsidies to Brooklyn residents throughout the course of season. The Theatre's New Deal Ticket Initiative continued to offer \$20 advance-sale tickets to people aged 30 or younger and full-time students of any age. The growth of this initiative since the Theatre moved to Brooklyn in 2013 has been remarkable: the Theatre sold 5,537 New Deal tickets in the 2013-2014 Season, more than three times the total amount sold in any previous season. In the 2014-2015 Season, the Theatre was able to grow the program by an additional 28%, selling a total of 7,074 New Deal Tickets, representing nearly one out of every five tickets sold during the season.

ANNUAL SPRING GALA CELEBRATING SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY:

Theatre for a New Audience's 2015 Spring Gala Celebrating Shakespeare's Birthday took place on Monday, May 11, 2015 at Capitale on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Renowned classical actor John Douglas Thompson received the eleventh annual Scripps award for Extraordinary Commitment to Promoting the Power of Language in Classical and Contemporary Theatre. The Theatre also honored Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton with The Life in Art Award. Cleary Gottlieb's *pro bono* services were instrumental in the completion of the Theatre's new home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center. The evening was emceed by Kristine Nielsen, a Tony-nominated actress that entertained the Gala's 396 guests—the largest Gala attendance in the Theatre's history. Combining funds raised through table purchases, the auctions, and the paddle raise in support of the Theatre's FY16 education residences, this year's Gala raised more than \$600,000. These funds support Theatre for a New Audience's productions and educational programs, and made a significant impact on the audiences, artists and students the Theatre serves.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE:

Thanks to generous support from The City of New York and many private donors, TFANA has raised more than \$68.2 million of the Capital Campaign goal of \$69.1 million, which includes a \$10 million program and operating endowment.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

The following is an overview of Theatre for a New Audience's income and expenses for the fiscal year, which ended August 31, 2015 (audited).

INCOME

Earned Revenue	
Box Office	\$1,780,859
Department of Education Contracts	\$119,496
Facility Rentals	\$18,012
Endowment and Interest Income	\$269,892
Concessions	\$175,598
Miscellaneous	\$222,941
Total Earned Revenue	\$2,586,798
Contributed Revenue	
Individuals	\$480,498
Board	\$435,844
Foundations	\$1,453,574
Corporations	\$124,500
Government	\$289,231
Special Events	\$752,695
In-kind	\$21,933
Total Contributed Revenue	\$3,558,275
Transfers from Restricted Funds	\$393,851
TOTAL INCOME	\$6,538,924

EXPENSES

Administrative Salaries & Benefits	\$845,491
Professional Fees	\$54,548
Administrative Expenses	\$214,316
Building Operations	\$885,664
Concessions	\$256,361
Ticket Handling Fees	\$127,298
Marketing and Press	\$656,105
Fundraising (includes Gala expenses)	\$475,583
Education and Humanities Programs	\$423,485
Workshops/Special Projects	\$142,377
Production	\$2,553,153
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,634,381
SURPLUS/DEFICIT*	(\$95,457)

*The FY15 deficit represents less than 2% of the overall budget, and is the first operating deficit the Theatre has experienced in twenty years. While expenses have increased since opening Polonsky Shakespeare Center, audiences have grown significantly and the Theatre is raising nearly \$1,500,000 more annually in contributions than it had prior to moving to Brooklyn. The Board and staff are working diligently to return to a balanced budget, and are confident in the Theatre's capacity to maintain its new level of operations.

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