

"a lacerating critique of altruism" - SF Weekly

the **RULES** of **CHARITY**

By John Belluso

Directed by Leah Adcock-Starr

AUGUST 4-25
CENTER THEATRE
Previews Aug 2 & 3



artistic director notes

Thank you for coming to this Seattle premiere production of *The Rules of Charity* and the culmination of our 2018 season THE HUMAN FAMILY: TOWARD A RADICAL INCLUSION.

We hope that this production begins a conversation. It is an important conversation about representation, authenticity, entrenched ableism and difference in American society. We selected this play, not because it is the definitive “disability culture” play, but because it was a foundational play in 2005 for a conversation that has barely progressed since then.

John Belluso was a prolific playwright and disability activist who launched a form of contemporary theatre that was abruptly cut off with his sudden passing in 2006 at age 36. To appreciate this play, on any level, is to also consider the loss of what he might have written about our world since then. In 2005, we were in two wars, same-sex marriage was legal in only one state, George W. Bush had just been re-elected to the second term of an administration that argued in support of state sanctioned torture.

I have heard his hyper-realistic, violent, absurdist plays compared to the work of Sarah Kane, Sam Shepherd, Martin McDonough, Tony Kushner, Tracy Letts and even to the Theatre of Cruelty tradition. But none of these comparisons quite hold up for me. He was truly a unique voice creating scenes that crackle and with an aggressive moral code about how our ablest society twists and perverts our core human relationships.

As a Seattleite, I have come to recognize that our city has not taken to heart the realities of the disability community. Seattle is a city gaining comfort, albeit slowly, to engage in hard cultural discussions surrounding race and gender. But, unlike some other cultural centers in the United States, disability has been essentially ignored. Tobin Siebers writes in *Disability Aesthetics*:

“Disability is the master trope of human disqualification, not because disability theory is superior to race, class, or sex/gender theory, but because all oppressive systems function by reducing human variation to deviancy and inferiority defined on the mental and physical plane.”

I propose that the cultural wellspring of lived experience within our own community of artists with disabilities has barely been tapped. British playwright Kaitie O’Reilly writes “Disability culture is subversive and innovative. It embraces all the possibilities of human variety, rejecting the narrow neuro-typical and corporeal notions of ‘normalcy.’” It is with this spirit we launched the ILLUMINATE reading series earlier this summer. While I grieve the loss of Belluso’s voice in this conversation, I challenge my community of theatre artists to welcome the next chapter of this discussion and move Seattle towards a truly radical inclusion.

—Teresa Thuman

SPECIAL THANKS

Kieran Adcock-Starr • Julian Amrine • ArtsWest Theater • Corey Lynn Atencio • Libby Barnard
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the **RULES** of **CHARITY**

By John Belluso
Directed by Leah Adcock-Starr

production team

STAGE MANAGER LAURA OWENS
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERMALIE FUJII
COSTUME DESIGNERNATALIE SHIH
SCENIC DESIGNER PARMIDA ZIAEI
LIGHTING DESIGNER..... RICHARD SCHAEFER
SOUND DESIGNER..... ERIN BEDNARZ
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHERLEE ANN HITTENBERGER
DRAMATURG ANDREA KOVICH
PRODUCTION INTERNHALEY ARTHUR
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR JUSTINE HOPKINS
ELECTRICIAN ROBERT FALK
CARPENTERJOHN CLARK
ASSISTANT SCENIC ARTIST..... ELLEN SCHAEFER

cast

MONTY.....ANDREW LITZKY
LORETTA SHARON BARTO GOURAN
HORACE..... FUNE TAUTALA
LH/ MR. MILLICENT HISAM GOUELI
PAZ..... MAILE WONG

setting

The primary action takes place in the small one bedroom apartment of Monty and Loretta and environs.

Act One

2004

Act Two

One Year Later

There will be one 15 minute intermission

Please turn off your cell phones and refrain from photographing and video-recording the action.

The Rules of Charity is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

about the playwright



JOHN BELLUSO Playwright

Before his death in 2006, John Belluso's plays were being produced at The Actors Theatre of Louisville, Mark Taper Forum, Trinity Repertory Company, Victory Gardens Theatre, Magic Theatre, Public theatre Eugene O'Neill Center, among others. Awards and

Honors include an NEA/TCG Playwright-in-Residence Grant for a residency at the Atlantic Theatre, the AT&T On-Stage Award, the Mark Taper Forum's Sherwood Award, as well as grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Berrilla Kerr Foundation and honorable mention for the Kesselring Prize. From 1999 to 2005 he served as the Director of the Mark Taper Forum's Other Voices Project for Disabled Theatre Artists—one of the nation's only professional developmental labs for theatre artists with disabilities. Mr. Belluso received his Bachelors and Masters degrees from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Dramatic Writing Program.

"John Belluso was a unique writer in many ways. I think it's fair to say that first, he was an activist, a guy with his eyes on the state of the world. He wrote from a political imperative, not only to wake people up to the full humanity – messy and all – of the disabled community, but to remind folks of the excitement of robust argument in the theater. But John was also funny and sexual and queer and outlandish and a lover of words in the extreme. For our birthdays he would read us poems.

— Lisa Peterson, Director, *The Poor Itch*

"Disability is an experience that shapes my life and view of the world, and a topic that I find endlessly fascinating because there is that universal element... It is the one minority class in which anyone can become a member of at any time."

—John Belluso

John Belluso's plays include:

The Poor Itch

Produced by The Public Theatre

A Nervous Smile

Produced by the Actors Theatre of Louisville's Humana Festival of New Plays

The Body of Bourne

Produced by the Mark Taper Forum

Henry Flamethrowa

Produced by Trinity Repertory Company, Victory Gardens Theatre and Studio Dante

The Rules of Charity

Produced by the Magic Theatre

Body Songs

Created with legendary theatre director Joseph Chaikin, Eugene O'Neill Center/NPC, workshopped at the NYSF/Public Theater

Pyretown

Commissioned and produced by Geva Theatre Center

Traveling Skin, and Gretty Good Time

Produced by the Ensemble Studio Theatre, Perishable Theatre, Falcon Theatre, and by VSA arts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

about the play

by Andrea Kovich

The Rules of Charity is one of John Belluso's greatest plays. In the short span of a promising career cut short by his untimely death in 2006, Belluso managed to gain national importance and become a pioneering figure in the movement to truthfully represent the experiences and stories of people with disabilities. Building off of concepts from disability studies, his work deftly combines his historical knowledge with his keen insight, as he grapples with pressing social and political issues.

As a wheelchair user, Belluso offered audiences a valuable perspective based in his lived experience. In an interview with *The San Francisco Observer* in 2005, Belluso eloquently explained why he chose to write about disability. "It is an experience that shapes my life and view of the world, and a topic that I find endlessly fascinating because there is that universal element... It is the one minority class in which anyone can become a member of at any time."

Belluso's complex and richly nuanced plays counter the dominant disability narrative of the extraordinary-individual-who-overcomes-personal-tragedy that is so pervasive in western drama. Instead, Belluso focused on disability to provide a critical examination of how American society treats individuals with disabilities. His work challenges an audience to view disability as an experience shaped by socially constructed notions, and not simply as a biological condition. Seen from this angle, there is a universal element to disability as it is part of the larger human experience.

As one of the most significant disabled playwrights in American theatre, John Belluso should be included on the syllabi of theatre history courses that seek to redefine the accepted canon. A prime example of his work, *The Rules of Charity* remains a testament to the beauty of Belluso's writing and the unwavering honesty of his voice.



Andrew Litzky - photo by Ken Holmes

The published Dramatist Play Services script of *The Rules of Charity* contains an excerpt from the following poem:

A Postcard from the Volcano

By Wallace Stevens

*Children picking up our bones
Will never know that these were once
As quick as foxes on the hill;*

*And that in autumn, when the grapes
Made sharp air sharper by their smell
These had a being, breathing frost;*

*And least will guess that with our bones
We left much more, left what still is
The look of things, left what we felt*

*At what we saw. The spring clouds blow
Above the shuttered mansion-house,
Beyond our gate and the windy sky*

*Cries out a literate despair.
We knew for long the mansion's look
And what we said of it became*

*A part of what it is ... Children,
Still weaving budded aureoles,
Will speak our speech and never know,*

*Will say of the mansion that it seems
As if he that lived there left behind
A spirit storming in blank walls,*

*A dirty house in a gutted world,
A tatter of shadows peaked to white,
Smear'd with the gold of the opulent sun.*

cast bios



ANDREW LITZKY
Monty

Andrew Litzky has been performing and producing in Seattle since 1990. He is a disabled person, living with the degenerative neurological syndrome Charcot-Marie-Tooth,

CMT (similar to Muscular Dystrophy). As Co-Founder of theater simple, Andrew has performed in over 35 productions, toured internationally, directed all technical matters, and created both indoor and outdoor "shoestring epics". He has Road Managed most of the company's tours, all the while performing at over 50 national and international festivals on three continents and logging well over 250,000 miles. Andrew has acted regionally with the Berkeley Repertory and at the Spoleto Festival (Charleston, SC), internationally throughout Canada, at the Adelaide Fringe Festival (AU) and Singapore Arts Festival, and locally with the Seattle U, Seattle Shakes, Strawberry Theatre, Book-It, Seattle Public Theater and Taproot. He is grateful to and ever-so in awe of his co-conspirator in life and art, Llysa.



SHARON BARTO GOURAN
Loretta

Sharon is honored to be making her Sound Theatre Company debut. She was most recently seen in Seattle Shakespeare Company's

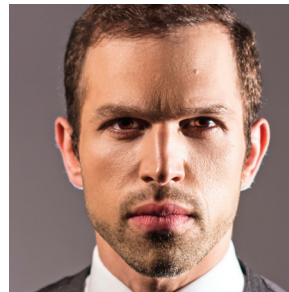
Merchant of Venice, and Café Nordo's *Onērus*. Favorite credits include: *Twilight Zones Live!* (Theatre Schmeater), *Almost Maine* (Company of Fools in Hailey, ID), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Sun Valley Shakespeare Festival), *And, And, And Isabella Bootlegs* (Macha Theatre Works), *The Lower Depths* (Theatre Machine), *Oedipus* and *Elephant's Graveyard* (Balagan Theatre), and *Maldoror* (UMO Ensemble). She also appears in the award-winning web series *Manic Pixie Dream Wife* and is a longtime company artist with Company of Fools in Hailey, ID. Sharon holds a BA in Theatre from Willamette University in Salem, OR.



FUNE TAUTALA
Horace

Fune is from Tacoma, WA. After completing the theatre program at Eastern Oregon University he spent two seasons at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Upon

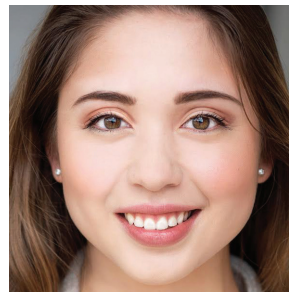
moving back to Washington he spent time performing in the Seattle area appearing in *Kiss me Kate* at Seattle Musical Theatre, *Shrek* at Twelfth Night productions, and *Cinderella* at the 5th Avenue Theatre. He is happy to be in *Rules of Charity*. This is a challenging play and he is beyond excited to be a part of something so new and different. He dedicates this show to his mother, Faafouina Tautala.



HISAM GOUELI
LH / Mr. Millicent

Hisam Goueli is thrilled to be performing in his first Sound Theater Company show. He has performed scripted and musical theater, improvisational theater and

burlesque throughout Seattle. He cannot thank Leah and Teresa enough for the opportunity to join an amazing cast and crew to tell this story. He wishes to thank you for coming to support the arts and hopes that we continue the conversation toward radical inclusion.



MAILE WONG
Paz/Joyce

Maile Wong is a Seattle native, actress, and teaching artist who is so honored to be returning to Sound Theatre Company (last seen in *Nadeshiko* in 2017)! She

has recently appeared with ArtsWest (*PEERLESS*), and Seattle Public Theatre/SIS Productions (*The World of Extreme Happiness*), among others. She completed Intiman Theatre's Emerging Artist Program in 2016, and is a graduate of Lakeside School and Wellesley College, where she studied theatre and developmental psychology.

production team bios



LEAH ADCOCK-STARR Director

Leah Adcock-Starr is a theatre director, educator, scholar and a Midwest transplant to the Pacific Northwest. Recent directoral adventures include Caroline Bird's TROJAN WOMEN

(Civic Rep - WA), an all female HAMLET (Theatre Unbound - MN), TWELFTH NIGHT (UW - WA) and an original play with shadow puppets and dance inspired by the life and work of JM Barrie for the 2016 Seattle Fringe Festival, co created with her husband and favorite collaborator, Kieran. As a teaching artists for Foundry10 and Bellevue College, Leah's work focuses on interrogating the 'classical' canon, arts equity, identity exploration, and story as a catalyst for social change. Leah is the founding Artistic Director of Off Road Shakespeare, a traveling ensemble of artists, activists, and clowns that tour brave and beautiful productions of Shakespeare's plays to public spaces, housing shelters, community centers, and libraries throughout the Seattle Metro Area. Off Road plays for free, for all. Leah holds BA's in Theatre Arts and Theology from Hamline University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Washington School of Drama.



LAURA OWENS Stage Manager

Laura Owens is thrilled to be working on her second Sound Theatre Company production! Previous stage management credits include *Welcome to Arroyo's* with

Theater Schmeater, *The Merchant of Venice* with Seattle Shakespeare Company, *Nadeshiko* with Sound Theatre Company, *The Lost Girls* and *Girl* with Annex, *Pterodactyls* with Promethean Theatre Company, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *The Shape of the Table*, *Pentecost*, *The Prisoner's Dilemma*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *KidsWrite! A New Play Festival*, and *On Her Chemise* with Burning Coal Theatre.



ANDREA KOVICH Dramaturg

Andrea is a Seattle-based freelance dramaturg, writer, and member of LMDA (Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas). Particularly passionate about

social justice issues—including equity, diversity, and inclusion—she is especially interested in the representation of the disability community in theatre. Past internships include working with San Diego Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Taproot Theatre Company. She's currently a dramaturg in Umbrella Project's 2018 Writers Group. In addition to curating the reading series, she will be Dramaturg for *The Rules of Charity*. Andrea earned a Masters of Arts in Theatre Arts (with an emphasis in Dramaturgy) from San Diego State University.



NATALIE SHIH Costume designer

Natalie Shih is excited to be working with Sound Theatre Company for the first time! Originally from California, she is now a Seattle-based costume designer. Since

graduating from Cornish College of the Arts in 2017, she has designed *Persimmon Nights* and the *Kimchi Kittens* for Café Nordo, *Ironbound* for Seattle Public Theatre, and *Straight White Men* for Washington Ensemble Theatre. On weekends, she enjoys cooking with her husband and spending time with her fur-babies.



PARMIDA ZIAEI Scenic Designer

Parmida is an architectural, interiors and scenic designer and performer, born and raised in Iran. Her theater career in the area started by assisting on *Sound*

Theater's production of *You Can't Take It With You*. Her recent work include props design for Annex Theater's production of *Crewmates and Copious*

production team bios continued

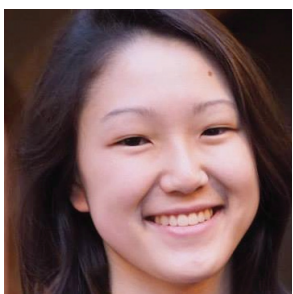
Love production of *Journey West* and assisting on Pratihwani's production of *Queen*. She is grateful for the amazing theater community in Seattle and the opportunity to work with Sound Theater again.



ERIN BEDNARZ **Sound Designer**

Erin Bednarz is an interdisciplinary artist having worked with 40+ arts organizations over the last nine years. She serves as company member with

LiveGirls! and Annex Theaters, and is co-founder of new play accelerator Umbrella Project. Her produced work has gained literary nods from HowlRound, CityArts and Encore. Erin's late band Hearts Are Thugs was featured on television network The CW and earned her a 2015 RAW Artist Award. She completed the Intiman Theater Sound Design Apprenticeship in 2016 and has since expanded her designs to national and institutional levels. As a teaching artist, Erin's knowledge of design and performance has been shared at universities and in communities across Washington state. She is also the dramaturgical component to 4Culture grant recipient ensemble Cheat Day.



MALIE FUJII **Assistant Stage Manager**

Malie Fujii is an arts marketer, stage manager, and occasional creative type. Recent stage management credits include *An Octoroon* and *The Who & The What* (ArtsWest); *The*

World of Extreme Happiness (Seattle Public Theater); *Nadeshiko* (Sound Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Off Road Shakespeare Company); *NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals* (5th Avenue Theatre); *Force Continuum* (UW School of Drama); and *BrechtFest* (The Horse in Motion). Malie is a graduate of the University of Washington with degrees in Business Administration and Drama.



JUSTINE HOPKINS **Wardrobe Supervisor**

Justine is excited to be working on her first production with Sound Theatre Company. Her previous credits include scenic art for *Up Here* (La

Jolla Playhouse), costume design for *War of the Worlds* (University of California, San Diego), and assistant costume design for *Widower* (University of California, San Diego).



HALEY ARTHUR **Production Intern**

Haley is working on her BA in Theatre with a Minor in Film at Berea College. She is joining us for the summer as a production management intern and has previous

experience with lighting/sound board operation, directing, cinematography, and pre/post production filming equipment, processes, and editing programs. Haley has also led, co-led, and/or participated in several social action groups of varying focuses, and is dedicated to changing the world through facilitating and creating art with a message.

"John's mission was a big one. Too big, perhaps, for someone who's health was probably always on the verge of collapse. John was powerful, though. For all the talk about how diplomatic and charming he was, (and he truly was,) John was also never afraid to make a demand. He demanded more of the world and he made the world demand more of itself. He was the embodiment of the iron fist in the velvet glove. I hope in his memory and in his spirit, we will all keep on swinging."

— Ann Stocking appeared in John Belluso's *The Body of Bourne* at the Mark Taper Forum

TERESA THUMAN

STC Founder/Producing Artistic Director

Teresa founded Sound Theatre Company in 2006, for which she has directed productions of *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Holiday of Errors*, *School for Lies*, *Dogg's Hamlet*, *Cahoot's Macbeth*, *The Illusion*, *The Foreigner*, *Pygmalion*, *Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)*, *The Tempest*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Top Girls*, *The Last Five Years*, *The Further Adventures of Anse and Bhule in No-Mans Land* and *The Belle of Amherst*. Other local directing credits include *Othello*, *Henry VIII*, *The Bacchae*, *As You Like It*, *King John (GreenStage)*; *Opera Workshop*, *A Little Night Music*, *Big Fish*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Down In The Valley*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Dido And Aeneas*, *Working*, *She Loves Me*, *Into the Woods*, *The Impresario (Shoreline CC)*; *The Underpants*, *The 39 Steps (Mount Baker Theatre)*, *Pericles (Cornish College of the Arts)*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Anything Goes*, *High Society*, *My Way (Seattle Civic Light Opera)*; *HAIR*, *Picasso at the Lapine Agile*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Noises Off*, *Urinetown*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *The Producers*, *Secret Garden (Bainbridge Performing Arts)*; *Miracle Worker*, *Tartuffe*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Oliver! (Driftwood Players)*; *The Book of Nathan (Theater Schmeater)* and numerous new-work projects and festivals. Teresa has taught at UW School of Drama PATP, UNC Chapel Hill, Shoreline Community College, Cornish College, George Fox University, Allan Hancock College, Freehold ETI and served eight years as an Artist-in-Residence at PCPA Theatrefest. She holds an MFA in Directing from University of Portland and a BFA in Acting from Webster University Conservatory of Theatre Arts.



Fune Tautala and Sharon Barto Gouran - photo by Ken Holmes

LEE ANN HITTENBERGER

Fight Choreographer

Lee Ann is honored to assist this courageous and patient team of actors, interpreters, and artistic leaders. Lee Ann was trained at Dell Arte International School of Physical Theater, and has directed, choreographed dance, and stage fighting throughout the Northwest.

RICHARD SCHAEFER

Lighting Designer

Richard has designed lights and/or sets for many of STC productions. As a member of the board, he is a true believer in the company's mission, vision, and values. In addition to his work with STC, he works in and around Seattle as a freelance designer and has taught lighting at Cornish College of the Arts. He has designed lights and/or sets for many shows at Seattle Public Theatre, Taproot Theatre, Shoreline Community College, Broadway Bound Children's Theatre, and Village Theatre (Originals and Kidstage), as well as lights for more than 40 productions for Seattle Musical Theatre (aka CLO).



Hisam Goueli, Andrew Litzky, and Maile Wong - photo by Ken Holmes

"Two centuries of myth making about rugged individualism will not yield easily to the painful fact that dependence is the human condition."

— Scholar and Activist Deborah Stone

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Sound Theatre Company strives to acknowledge all donations received, and this list reflects those received between January 2017 and June 2018. If you have donated and do not see yourself acknowledged, or if you would like to be listed differently, please notify us at development@soundtheatrecompany.org.



OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE

MEDIA SPONSOR



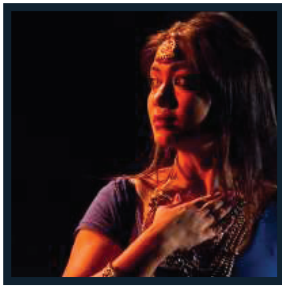
Sound Theatre Company Staff

Producing Artistic Director Teresa Thuman
 Artistic Producer Margaret Toomey
 Production Manager Madison Silva
 Technical Director Richard Schaefer
 House Manager Tom Miller
 Accessibility Coordinator Charlotte A. Morrill

Board of Directors

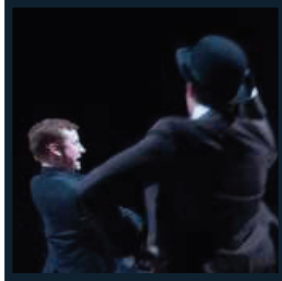
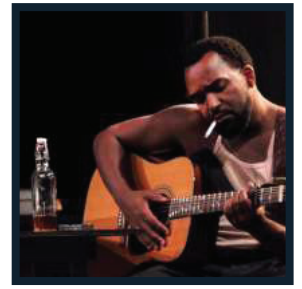
Patrick Lennon, President
 Anne Mccurdy, Secretary
 Richard Schaefer, Treasurer
 Ray Bunnage, Katherine Cleland, Ken Michels,
 Nathan Reeves, Gurvinder Pal Singh, Teresa Thuman

SOUND THEATRE COMPANY ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENTS 2018



MISSION STATEMENT

Sound Theatre Company empowers artists to give voice to the dignity and diversity of the human experience--moving audiences toward a more just and compassionate world.



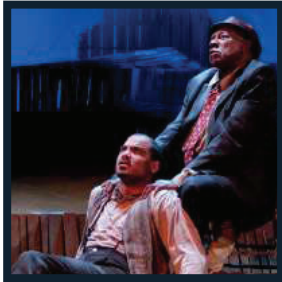
VISION STATEMENT

Sound Theatre Company envisions a world that joyfully nurtures the creation of transformative theatre experiences and celebrates the open, honest and truthful exchange of diverse and inclusive voices.



EQUITY STATEMENT

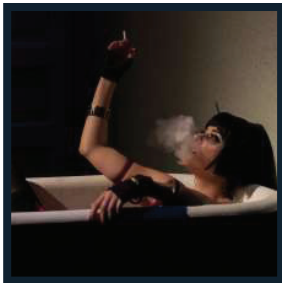
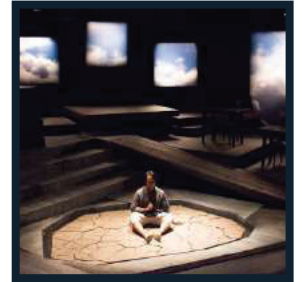
Sound Theatre Company commits to the work of embracing inclusivity and diversity. Through our programming, casting, hiring, audience building and volunteer recruitment practices, we create an organization that models and builds the inclusive society we envision by treating everyone with respect, without judgment or bias.



VALUES

COMMUNITY

We recognize the unique communal bond that is created when artists and audiences convene for stories presented in live performance. We value the contributions of all members of this community and the healthy, evolving relationships that are strengthened by theatre: artists, audience, staff, volunteers, donors and community partners.



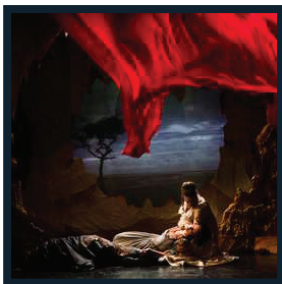
COLLABORATION

We embrace the possibilities that are imagined and forged during the creation of theatrical work. We seek out collaborations with other arts, education and social service organizations in our effort to create a more robust and reflective civil society.



INTEGRITY

We are dedicated to truth, transparency, accountability, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our organization. We believe in creating innovative works within the artist-centered and fiscally-responsible limits we have established since our founding.



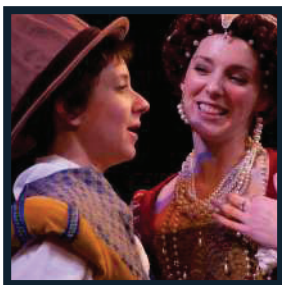
EXCELLENCE

We relentlessly pursue artistic excellence across a broad range of theatrical genres drawing from and enhancing the talents of our artistic community to consistently deliver moving, acclaimed and award-worthy productions.



INNOVATION

We bring innovative and expressive works to life by challenging our artists to take thoughtful, creative risks and by providing a safe, supportive and inclusive working environment.



MENTORSHIP

We bring established and emerging artists together to enhance their mutual artistic and professional journeys. As needed, we provide mentorship, coaching, professional development, showcase performances, and other enrichment opportunities.

