

Towne Street Theatre Presents

tst kids

TST Kids Musical Theatre Camp
● Summer Intensive
2011

The Perfect Place for Your Little Star



Mission

Founded in the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riots with the belief that we could affect social change through our art, the Towne Street Theatre's mission is creating, developing and producing original work that is reflective of the African-American experience and perspective for theater and film.

In order to further illuminate the role African-American artists have played in the history of the American theater, we also produce a series entitled "Black Classics," dedicated to the work of playwrights seldom produced, such as Loften Mitchell, Alice Childress and Steve Carter.

Our mission of affecting social change is extended with our commitment to developing the **next generation of theater artists** through our children's programming.

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TOWNE STREET THEATRE
LA's Premiere African-American Theatre Company™

TST Musical Theatre Camp Overview



Musical Theatre Camp

The students of Towne Street’s Musical Theatre Camp are an ensemble. From the beginning, the camp emphasizes teamwork. The children are taught how to work as a cohesive group and what it means to be a theatrical ensemble. They begin their musical theatre study by learning basic theatre vocabulary, generic to all productions. They learn theatrical stage directions, in addition to specific musical theatre terms. They receive instruction in all of the elements that are found in a musical theatre performance. (See box)

Throughout the rehearsal process, children are encouraged to use their imaginations. They create characters specific to their characters in the musical by exploring physical movement, as well as vocal experimentation. Acting Improvisational exercises and theatre games are employed to start the children on this exploration. In addition, the children are shown or are given homework to watch, which can include relevant movies or television shows. Research materials are also made available to them in the classroom and they also have homework assignments that they research on their computers at home.

Holistic Training

DANCE

emphasis on physiological and physical fitness, basic movement exercises, in addition to actual choreography.

VOICE

emphasis on proper technique for singing, vocal warm-up, ear training, projection, learning the various vocal parts to songs.

ACTING

emphasis in reading the script for understanding, researching the time period of the musical and learning about historical events, fashion, dialogue, and mores of the era.

Throughout the entire rehearsal process, the children continually strengthen their characters, as they breakdown the script to ascertain what is happening in each scene. Musicals are unique in that they must apply this process for each song also. They learn that in a musical, in addition to the dialogue, the songs and production numbers further the story and have to be broken down also, as if they are a monologue or dialogue. This same process, along with character work and acting techniques, are then applied to the dance numbers, in addition to the children learning the actual choreography.

(continued)

Each year a musical production is chosen with the intent of teaching the children, not only the history of the musical itself, but teaching them about the society and the time period that it comes from. For example, *The Wiz* was presented in the 2008 Camp, so the focus of the camp was not only on the 1970's, when the musical was written and first presented, but also on the history of African American productions.

Many of these musicals have been overlooked in theatre anthologies, so it's imperative that the children have a working knowledge of these shows and the performers, and the contributions they've made to the theatrical landscape.

Students gain knowledge of classic performers and productions by watching films like *Stormy Weather*, with performances by Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, The Nicholas Brothers and Lena Horne. They can see first-hand the discipline and the technique required to be "triple threat" performers, and to actually act, sing and dance at the same time. This teaching method was most helpful when we were studying and performing a musical that highlighted the great performers of the 1930's and 1940's.

When we were doing a specific musical (i.e. - *The Wiz*, *Beauty and the Beast*), it was helpful to use the films of those musicals for comparative purposes. The children were able to clearly see how the films were dramatically different than the musical productions, and how the musical's tools - dance and song, added to the clarity and the story structure of the production.

First, and foremost, our camp promotes good citizenship. Since the children are treated as an ensemble, they are extremely supportive of one another. They assist one another - if someone cannot do a dance step, or needs help with their lines, other students willingly step in to help them. They all feel successful together when they've performed in the final presentation.

There have been countless studies as to how the arts improve math scores and reading scores, but in addition to these scores, our camp gives the children a thirst for knowledge. Research is always necessary for the children to know whom and what they are portraying, and the children don't hesitate in doing the homework. Our program is a summer program, so many of the children continue the historical study, as well as, studying one or two of the art forms we've presented to them, during the regular school year.

For the past twelve years, the children have written about their camp experiences at the end of the program. We have seen some of the children continue their studies in the arts throughout their high school years and onto the college level. Other students have decided to pursue related fields such as music or writing, and still others have decided to focus on sports or education. The common thread amongst all of these children are the thoughts they wrote about in their camp experience letter - they said they actually learned things that they previously had no knowledge of and they did things (sing, dance, etc.) that they didn't think they could do.

There is phenomenal growth in each child, from day one to the last day of the camp, but what is most obvious, is the huge improvement in self-confidence and pride that each child receives from just participating in the camp.



The children in our musical theatre program range from 10 – 17. They are divided into small, age appropriate classes. While students receive the bulk of their instruction inside their classes, ultimately we bring all of the students together to learn the opening number and the grand finale.

TST Musical Theatre Camp Productions

Bedtime Broadway Follies

The Best of TST Kids 2009

The Wiz

Disney's Beauty & the Beast

Bubbling Brown Sugar

New York Stories

Once on this Island

Our program also gives the children a chance to write. The dialogue that connects our musical theatre numbers is material scripted by the students themselves. They draw from show histories taught by their instructors, plus from insights they have gleaned about their characters, based on the information they've learned while participating in the workshop.

TST Glee! is our high energy "show choir" production for 2011, joining the camp's brilliant roster of kids performances.



TOWNE STREET THEATRE
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Arts Funding

The Realities of Funding



The Future of Theatre

Our children are the future of theatre and your support and donations help to ensure that there is a future for them to inherit. However, it takes a village to bring a production to fruition. Consider all the players in each production: actors, writers, producers, directors, set designers, costumers, stage managers, make-up artists, technicians- all contributing to tell a story that might not otherwise be heard. However, California funding for the arts has proven scant in recent years. Indeed, your support is more vital than ever. Consider the excerpts below.

The Hard-Hitting Realities of Funding

The article excerpts captured below paint a sobering picture of the veritable money drought as it relates to arts funding in California.

California is Last in Arts Funding — As Usual

Mike Boehm / February 12, 2009

“When it comes to funding for state arts agencies, California remains not-so-proudly ensconced in its customary slot — dead last — according to a report from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

The service and advocacy group calculates that the California Arts Council's \$5.6-million budget comes to 15 cents per capita — 11% of the national average of \$1.35. We've been in the cellar since 2003, when the budget crisis before the current budget crisis led to the agency's gutting. The arts council's starvation diet has been a bipartisan affair: Former Democrat Gov. Gray Davis, who had built the arts budget to more than \$30 million in 2001, slashed it to barely more than \$3 million two years later. Under Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the tax-generated share of arts funding has been about \$1 million.

Taken together, the 50 states' 2008-09 budgets include a pinch less for the arts than they did a year ago, down from \$414.3 million to \$412.5 million. But if you subtract federal largess distributed through the National Endowment for the Arts and count only funds that states ante up from their own revenue sources, arts funding slipped 3.3% — the first drop after four straight years of overall gains.”

“The California arts budget includes \$1.1 million from the state's general fund — the minimum needed to qualify for matching money from the NEA. The bulk of our state arts council's money — \$3.2 million — is, in essence, a form of charity: voluntary extra payments that arts-loving motorists make so their vehicles can sport special arts-themed vanity license plates.

At least the arts council's new chairwoman, Malissa Feruzzi Shriver, should have a decent chance of getting the governor's ear: A painter and art dealer, she's the wife of Santa Monica City Council member Bobby Shriver — and thus the sister-in-law of the governor and his wife, Maria Shriver. She became chair by a vote of the arts council members last month, succeeding Michael Alexander, the executive director of Grand Performances, the free performance series in downtown L.A. Another Angeleno, Eunice David, wife of lyricist Hal David, is the new vice chairwoman.”

Corporate, Private Giving to the Arts Expect to Decrease, Studies Say

Published: March 5, 2009

“With arts organizations already reeling from the global economic malaise, a new set of surveys provides more bad news. According to a report in Bloomberg, corporate and private funding of the arts are likely to be hard hit. A poll of 158 companies compiled by the research group the Conference Board last month revealed that 45 percent had already reduced their 2009 philanthropy budget and 16 percent more were considering it. According to the survey, giving to arts and culture will see the biggest drop, with 41 percent of organizations reporting a decrease. Environmental causes are second, at 28 percent.

National Endowment for the Arts

For Fiscal Year 2009, the budget was \$155 million or 0.005201342281879195% of the total budget. If that were distributed evenly across the country it amounts to roughly 39 cents per child for each under 15 years of age (based on US Census estimates of children up to 14 years of age. Source CIA.)

California Art Council

California Budget is \$5,610,00 or \$2.56 per child under 18.

May 18, 2009

Baltimore Sun News:

Arts appear to play role in brain development. Classes can change brains and the way people think. For years, school systems across the nation dropped the arts to concentrate on getting struggling students to pass tests in reading and math. Yet now, a growing body of brain research suggests that teaching the arts may be good for students across all disciplines.

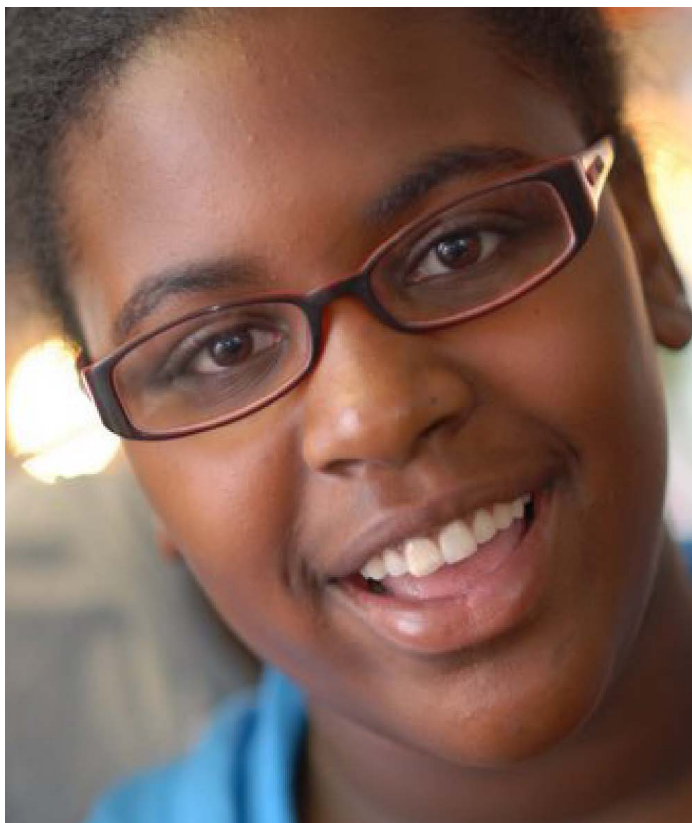
students across all disciplines. teaching the arts may be good for brain research suggests that may. Yet now, a growing body of students to pass tests in reading and concentrate on getting struggling

Donations from rich individuals — defined as having household incomes of more than \$200,000 or a net worth of at least \$1 million — will also drop, to an average of \$4,792, down 71 percent from the period between 2005 to 2007, according to a separate poll of 700 individuals compiled by the Center on Philanthropy. “

“This is a tougher time for arts organizations,” said Patrick Rooney, interim director of the center. “When you’re providing human services or feeding the hungry, people understand that maybe this is a time to dig a little deeper. Helping an arts organization? That’s a tougher sell.”

According to another COP study, during the past four decades charitable giving decreased by an average of 1 percent in recessionary years and increased an average of 4.3 percent in non-recessionary years. “There’s a chance that 2008 or 2009 will be worse than that,” Rooney said. “We don’t want to say the sky is falling, but we think there will be some pain and suffering.”

So where does that leave us?



Our Children: The Future of Theatre

Summer Schools closed. Arts programming cut from schools. Budgets slashed from cities and towns. The facts are dismal, but at TST, we refuse to give up and give in. Our programming is needed now, more than ever. Please give another child a chance to experience the magic of theater and the joy and learning skills it brings.

Your help is needed.



All children photos by: David Holtz

The Towne Street Theatre is a 501 c 3 non-profit corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the extent the law allows. To request a project budget please call (213) 712-6944 or email us at info@townestreet.org

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