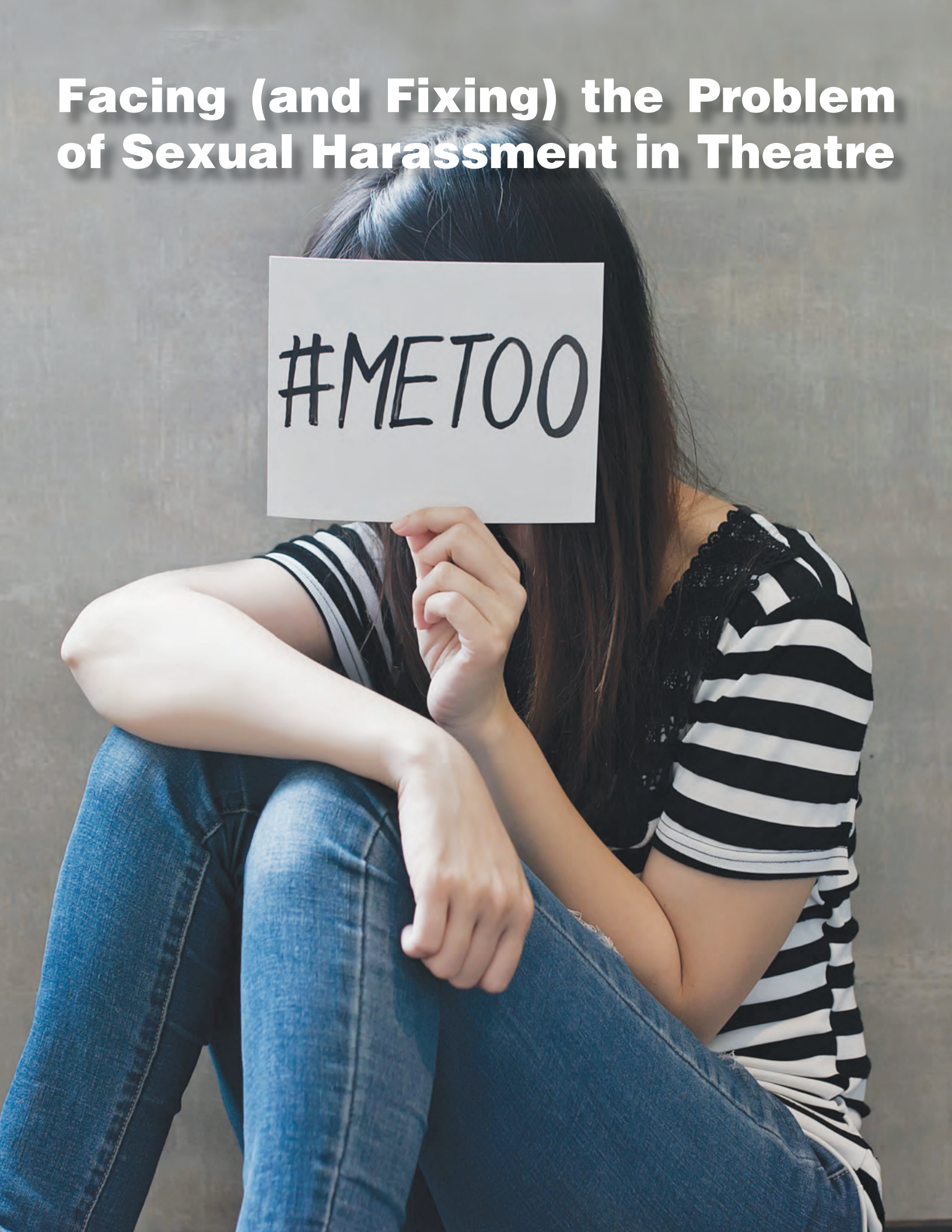


Facing (and Fixing) the Problem of Sexual Harassment in Theatre

A person with long dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on the floor. They are holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign has the text "#METOO" written on it in a black, hand-drawn font. The person's hands are clasped together, holding the sign. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

#METOO

by Stefanie Maiya Lehmann
with Celeste Morris

In the last year, stories of sexual harassment and abuse have taken center stage across the U.S., including allegations against major Hollywood stars, media personalities, industry moguls – and significant players in the theatre industry. These reports of sexual harassment in the theatre, coming from those who work onstage, backstage, in management and in creative areas, have caused shock waves across the industry, from university theatres to small professional theatres to community theatres to LORT theatres to Broadway. At theatres across the country, a wake-up call is being sounded and changes are being proposed as the reverberations from the #MeToo movement continue to be felt. In an online survey of SETC member professional theatres and university programs conducted in spring 2018, 36 percent said their organization had been impacted by a sexual harassment claim or claims. In a second online survey of SETC member professional artists, a third of those responding said they had been sexually harassed themselves, while 43 percent said they had witnessed it happening to someone else.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: AN ISSUE OF POWER IN THEATRE

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature ... when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.” Gender or sexuality does not matter: both victim and harasser can be a woman or a man. Sexual harassment can be verbal (making sexual comments, innuendos, jokes or advances), non-verbal (making gestures, facial expressions, blocking paths or following a person), or physical (touching, brushing or grabbing). In the theatre, it can occur onstage as well as offstage.

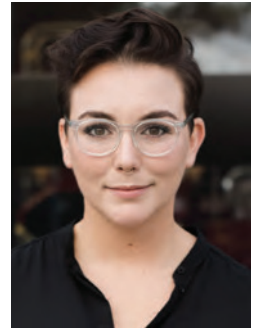
“The root of this harassment, unsurprisingly, is power,” says Chelsea Pace, one of the co-founders of Theatrical Intimacy Education, an organization whose mission is to empower artists “with the tools to ethically, efficiently and effectively stage intimacy and sexual violence in educational theatre.”

The hierarchical nature of the theatre industry – specifically, the disparity in power between well-seated producers, directors or designers and lower-ranking subordinates – provides an environ-

ment where that power dynamic can be abused. In a January industry panel, “Sexual Harassment in the Theatre,” hosted by New York City’s Artist Co-Op, Musical Theatre Factory Artistic Director Shakina Nayfack warned, “In the theatre, we have this deeply entrenched hierarchy of roles ... I’ve seen those power relationships become imbalanced, problematic and then abusive.”

Changing the hierarchal structure requires education – and a change in mindset, according to Pace: “Training, conversation and technique can work to address power imbalance, but hiring people with institutionally and historically less power – and letting them have the power – can change the industry.”

One of the organizations working to effect change in the theatre industry is Not in Our House, a non-profit organization founded by actors Lori Myers and Laura T. Fisher in 2015 in response to issues with sexual harassment in the Chicago theatre community, including alleged abuse at the now-closed Profiles Theatre that was detailed in a published report. Their nonprofit group, originally designed to provide a support net for survivors in the Chicago theatre community, has created a document called the Chicago Theatre Standards which includes a code of conduct, policies, processes and procedures, and various forms



'Training, conversation and technique can work to address power imbalance, but hiring people with institutionally and historically less power – and letting them have the power – can change the industry.'
- Chelsea Pace, *Theatrical Intimacy Education*

that can be used by theatres on a national level to create their own standards.

Another advocacy group working to combat sexual harassment in theatres is Let Us Work, which was founded by Rachel Dart, a New York-based director. She notes that personal and professional lines blur much more often in theatre than other career fields. Those working in other industries could not fathom a work environment where staged intimacy or physical violence might be required with a coworker eight times a week. Also, going out for post-show drinks and attending cast parties is often considered “part of the job” and the close friendships that develop through a production are often one of the reasons so many theatre artists love what they do for a living.

“Many of us work in theatre because it provides such a loving and supportive environment,” Dart says. “We work incredibly closely together, and the

rehearsal process can be intimate. Also, in many cases there’s not a defined workplace. You meet an agent or director or writer for coffee or a drink and they make you feel uncomfortable – are you ‘at work’? You’re rehearsing in somebody’s basement – to whom can you report?”

New York’s Public Theater chose to directly address these concerns in a recently re-developed Code of Conduct, stating, “Theatre is an art form. The work can and should be challenging, experimental, exploratory and bold. Artistic freedom of expression is essential. For these things to happen, though, the creative space must be a safe space. And because the spaces in which we work are broad, encompassing administration, auditions, rehearsals, technical work, late nights, parties, public-facing frontline work and more, we must acknowledge, and not exploit, the blurred boundaries between work and social spaces.”

ARTISTS: TIME TO MOVE BEYOND DEVELOPING ‘A THICK SKIN’

When dealing with harassment in the not so distant past, theatre professionals would often be told that “to be in this business, you have to have a thick skin,” hearing entreaties to “suck it up” and “nobody likes a whiner,” which wasn’t simply about dealing with artistic rejection, but also verbal abuse and sometimes physical abuse. Beliefs like this are a major contributing factor to the large number of unreported sexual harassment incidents.

In *Southern Theatre’s* survey of professional artists, theatre companies and college/university theatre departments regarding sexual harassment, more

than 4 in 10 artists had witnessed an incident and a full third of the artists said they had personally experienced sexual harassment – most commonly in the form of suggestive comments or jokes. The perpetrators were identified most often as a cast member, followed by the director, a crew member and the producer.

Just over 80 percent of those who experienced or saw harassment said they had not reported it. Top reasons for not doing so were that the artist “felt I might be over-reacting,” “didn’t want to negatively affect the production,” “didn’t think anything could be done,” or was “worried about professional repercussions.”

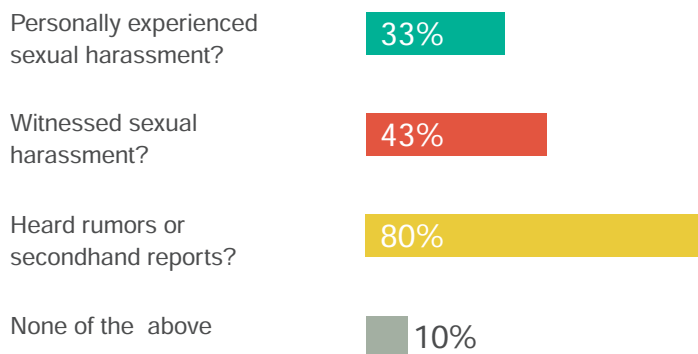
But other theatre artists who responded to the survey urged their fellow artists to get past their fears about reporting such incidents.

“Young professionals who may find themselves dealing with sexual harassment in the theatre environment have to realize that it is never their fault, and by them making it known to the proper colleagues, they are in no way ‘making a scene,’ or creating a problem,” one artist said. “By reporting sexual harassment, you are in fact solving the problem.”

Another artist noted, “No job is worth a lifetime of therapy (or worse). If speaking up might cause you to lose the job, you don’t want to work there anyway.”

Another survey respondent stated simply, “Report, report, report. Never be ashamed or think reporting

In a theatre workplace, have you (select all that apply):



Spring 2018 *Southern Theatre* Survey of SETC Member Professional Artists

an event will damage your career.”

Individual artists may sometimes feel as if they are on their own, at the “bottom of the food chain,” or that there is no way to have their voices heard. However, everyone has the right to a workplace free of harassment regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, identity, experience, union status or contract type. All artists have a right to a safe place to work and collaborate.

Artists should not have to deal with such issues to have a job, notes Not in Our House’s Lori Myers: “Know that there are mechanisms in motion that are there to protect you so that you can confidently enter a theatre building knowing that it is a workplace, not a dating service of convenience.”

Many working theatre professionals do not feel they have been properly prepared to navigate issues of sexual harassment in their workplace. Of the 235 theatre artists who responded to the *Southern Theatre* survey, 48 percent said they did not believe they had received adequate training to recognize and respond to sexual harassment in a theatre workplace.

Take Action, Document Harassment

Dart, who was sexually harassed herself while working at a theatre and subsequently was asked to work again with the same man at the same theatre, says she felt “very angry and very alone and spent a lot of time wondering what action I could take to try to effect some change in policy and culture for other theatre artists, especially those who are non-union.”

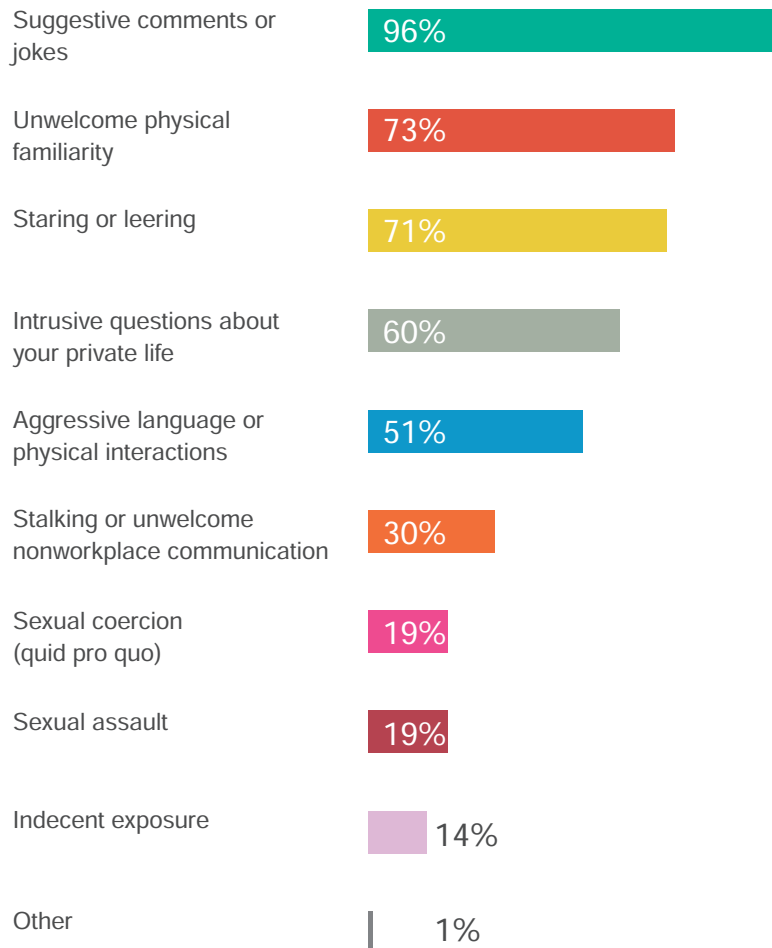
She wants those who work in theatre to know that inappropriate behavior does not have to be tolerated. “If someone is speaking to you in a way that you don’t want to be spoken to, if you feel empowered to do so, address it with them directly,” she recommends. She suggests saying, for example, “Please don’t touch me or talk to me like that” or “If you want to hug me/ touch me/etc., please ask my permission first.” When inappropriate behavior occurs, Dart says, “If you feel comfortable reporting it, report it. If you don’t, document it in great detail and tell other people about it.”

As one respondent from a professional theatre company commented in the *Southern Theatre* survey on sexual harassment, “Shouting into the void of Facebook might be cathartic and a good way to garner support and outrage but won’t often allow actual progress to be made. Make sure you have evidence, proof of action/inaction, time lines and dates. This is a tricky, sticky issue and if you don’t have more than

he said/she said, you will ultimately undermine your goal and any progress toward fixing the issue.”

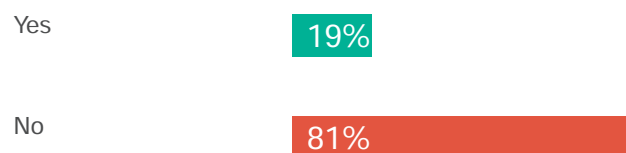
Human Resources for the Arts (HR4A) recommends that individuals who experience harassment document everything that occurred, stating, “This is

How would you describe the form(s) of harassment you have experienced personally (select all that apply)?:



Spring 2018 *Southern Theatre* Survey of SETC Member Professional Artists

Did you report the incident?



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the best thing you can do, period.” This can be accomplished simply by keeping a detailed diary entry or through more systematic tracking worksheets, such as the downloadable templates provided in the League of Independent Theater’s “Anti-Sexual Harassment Toolkit.” When considering how to speak up when faced with a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, HR4A advises the format, “Say what you see, say how you feel, say what you want, and walk away.” An example would be: “You just made a comment about my body. I didn’t like that. Don’t do that again.” Then, directly leave, exiting safely, not continuing the conversation.

Southern Theatre’s survey found that 81 percent of those who were witness to or a victim of sexual harassment did not feel the perpetrators of the sexual harassment faced appropriate consequences. Know that if you feel like a theatre company is not taking a report of harassment seriously or you feel uncomfortable reporting an incident of harassment to the company, outside help can be found. Advocacy organizations, third-party mediators, union representatives, a lawyer or, when dealing with criminal assault, the police, are all outside sources of help.

When *Southern Theatre* asked theatre professionals how often they were made aware of sexual harassment policies and/or reporting processes when beginning work with a theatre, only 17 percent said they always were. Another 39 percent said sometimes, 27 percent said rarely, and 17 percent said they had never been made aware of policies or processes. HR4A reminds individual artists, “If your employer has not posted their policy or guidelines and has not made a first rehearsal speech or something similar, ask why not. Ask to see the employer’s sexual harassment policy. You are within your rights.”

Speak Out About Harassment

Theatre artists must watch out for each other and encourage others to speak out. Even if you have only witnessed sexual harassment, you have still experienced a hostile workplace and are indirectly being victimized by the behavior. This means you have the right to report on your own behalf.

In addition, many abusers are repeat offenders, so when you report an incident, you are not just doing it for yourself, but also for the countless others following you, noted one professional theatre representative who responded to the *Southern Theatre* survey.

“Living with the guilt of silence when you find out that other[s] suffered because of your silence is a deafening and humbling experience,” the theatre representative wrote. “Even if you don’t feel comfortable saying something for yourself – say something for the next guy or gal that will endure the same treatment.”

Although recent cases of sexual harassment can sound scary, Myers reminds individuals that they are not the norm in the theatre world.

“There are so many incredible folks out there that are not ‘out to get you,’” she says. “Rather, they want desperately for you to succeed. Truly.”

In your experience, do you feel the perpetrators of sexual harassment have faced appropriate consequences?

Yes **19%**

No **81%**

Spring 2018 *Southern Theatre* Survey of SETC Member Professional Artists

THE COMPANY PERSPECTIVE: WHAT CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE

With the increased public awareness and discourse on sexual harassment, many major players in the theatre industry have felt compelled not only to respond but also to focus on improving the state of the industry – and not only because many of them view it as the right thing to do. From a legal standpoint, it also is critical.

The EEOC states that “an employer is always responsible for harassment by a supervisor that culminated in a tangible employment action. If the harassment did not lead to a tangible employment

action, the employer is liable unless it proves that: 1) it exercised reasonable care to prevent and promptly correct any harassment; and 2) the employee unreasonably failed to complain to management or to avoid harm otherwise.” The EEOC also advises that prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace, encouraging employers to take the initiative to prevent sexual harassment.

Dart from Let Us Work points to three common points of failure at the theatre company level: “First of all, many theatre companies begin by failing to create

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'Although we had a harassment policy in place prior to the revision, it became evident that we needed to create a more clearly defined reporting path.'
- Kelly Duyn,
Venice Theatre

an environment that makes it clear that sexual harassment is not tolerated. Secondly, many companies, especially small ones, are already stretched very thin in terms of resources and haven't devoted the time and energy it takes to develop a sexual harassment policy and a complaint path. Third, when incidents do happen, it can be painful for people to have to acknowledge that their collaborators – who are often also their very close friends – are perpetrating harassment or assault. So, rather than trying to grapple with that idea, they dismiss the incidents as fabricated, or sweep them under the rug."

In many of the recent cases of sexual harassment, the theatres involved created new policies and procedures only after sexual harassment had occurred. Instead theatre companies should "front-load the work," Not in Our House's Myers says.

"Define your policy, let folks know prior to hiring them exactly what you expect of everyone, and follow through with what happens when the policy is broken," she says. "By not outlining a clear conflict resolution path that consists of routing complaints of sexual harassment to objective third parties (that are not just the artistic director and the director), companies set themselves up as an insulated unit that is impervious to serious wrongdoing."

Resources for Developing Policies

There are several sources of guidance available for theatre leaders. One of the best resources is the Chicago Theatre Standards, available for free download from the Not in Our House website (www.notinourhouse.org). The document was the result of a year of roundtable discussions and pilot testing across 20 participating theatre companies. The document shares specific goals and standards for numerous activities, such as auditions, dressing rooms and the choreography of nudity and violence. It also offers several sample templates for agreements, company forms and language.

Florida's Venice Theatre, one of the largest community theatres in the U.S., used the Chicago Theatre Standards as the jumping off point for the new organizational policies and standards related to harassment that it developed this year. The move to revise its policies followed accusations of sexual harassment against a guest director during a 2015 production of the musical *Hair*.

"Although we had a harassment policy in place prior to the revision, it became evident that we needed to create a more clearly defined reporting path," says

Kelly Duyn, Venice Theatre's assistant director of education and outreach. "This would make it so that, for anyone who felt they were experiencing harassment of any kind, the process for reporting it would be as easy and clearly defined for them as possible."

Not all of the tenets of the Chicago Theatre Standards applied to Venice's operations, so the theatre selected appropriate parts and built on them to create its own policies.

"The [Chicago Theatre Standards] document is meant to cover all aspects of production from start to finish and was initially created by professional theatres, so, as a community theatre, not all standards were going to be applicable," Duyn said. "We wanted [our final version] to be one that was not just revised from a larger prominent document, but one we could stand behind as an organization to make sure everyone working with us felt supported."

Another valuable resource for any practitioner aiming to create a healthier workplace environment and practices is the "Anti-Sexual Harassment Toolkit," developed by the League of Independent Theater in partnership with Let Us Work. It is a 15-page document available for free download on the League's website at www.litny.org/antisexual-harassment-toolkit. As the toolkit's overview states, "Absolutely anyone can use this document. The concepts of communication and consent, along with the guidelines, tools and templates provided, can be applied to any practitioner of any discipline related to the performing arts."

A third resource is the website Human Resources for the Arts (HR4A) at <http://hrforthearts.org>. It was created after a series of meetings about inadequate access and implementation of human resources procedures in the New York theatre community. HR4A outlines four starting places for theatre managers:

- create an accountable and transparent sexual harassment policy,
- develop a grievance procedure process,
- clearly identify to whom and how to report any complaint,
- and have the highest-ranking figurehead make a speech to the entire company on day one of rehearsals that makes it clear that there is zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

Help from the Unions

Some of the major theatrical unions also have programs to help theatres deal with this issue. In 2016, Actors' Equity Association (AEA) partnered with the

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When inappropriate behavior occurs, 'if you feel comfortable reporting it, report it. If you don't, document it in great detail and tell other people about it.'

- Rachel Dart, Let Us Work

Actors Fund to create a training program to assist Equity staff in responding to questions, complaints or reports of harassment. In November 2017, AEA reached out to 1,500 producers and theatre companies, urging them to develop clear policies against harassment and announce them on every first day of a production. In March 2018, AEA announced the formation of the “President’s Committee to Prevent Harassment” in theatre to “help the organization develop additional forward-looking strategies to eradicate harassment and bullying in the theatre.”

The Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) has also made efforts to address sexual harassment in the theatre industry. In 2017, SDC revised and updated its “Rights and Responsibilities for Members.” The union has developed new resources for members, explored ways to collaborate with other unions and guilds, provided guides to discrimination statutes, developed systems of reporting and record-keeping, and is developing a training program for SDC members, its Executive Board and the staff. In a 2018 letter to its membership, SDC outlined three goals: to unite, empower and protect its membership, noting the following: “SDC believes the American theatre must unite to create a safe and healthy workplace, one that reflects the great diversity of the theatre community and fully embraces shared values, which at their core, are intolerant of discrimination and harassment in any form. SDC empowers our members to promote a safe and healthy workplace through rigorous, ongoing education and training, which enables them to stand up to inappropriate workplace conduct while cultivating a supportive, upstanding network of SDC members and staff. SDC protects its members who are involved in wrongful workplace conduct situations through the establishment of clear protocols

for reporting, effective inquiries and utilization of dispute mechanisms for addressing complaints.”

Workshops and Panels Promote Discussion

Industry panels are also becoming common, both domestically and internationally, to address this issue. In November 2017, The Public Theater held a “(Mis) Conduct” town hall meeting to discuss sexual harassment and abuse in New York’s theatre community. The following month, and over 1,500 miles away, a similar town hall was hosted to address the same concerns, but for the theatre community in North Texas. In February of this year, the same type of event was held for the San Francisco Bay Area theatre community and, in March, Orlando Shakespeare Theater, the University of Central Florida (UCF), Theatre UCF, Mad Cow Theatre and Orlando Repertory Theatre hosted two workshops on sexual harassment issues and prevention, led by Fisher of Not in Our House, developer of the Chicago Theatre Standards. One of the largest town hall events was hosted by the Royal Court Theatre in London in October 2017 and concluded with a curated event where, over a period of five hours, 150 testimonies of sexual abuse were read, 126 of which were directly related to the theatre industry.

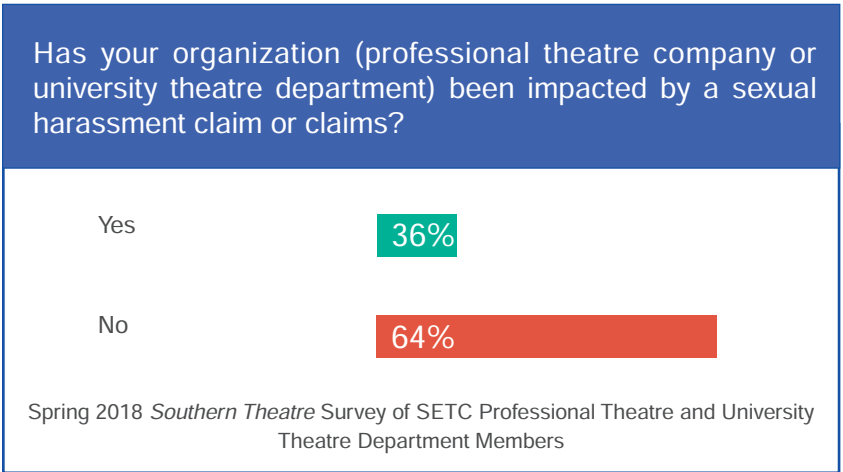
These panels have not only encouraged important conversations on sexual harassment, but also have provided tangible results such as new action plans, the development and publication of new codes of behavior, and even new tools like help lines and reporting systems to support theatre professionals and combat toxic work environments.

Input from Companies on What Works

Several companies that responded to *Southern Theatre’s* online survey pegged success in dealing with this issue to having clear policies and procedures in place that assure employees they can report incidents – and providing those employees with detailed information on the chain of communication, repercussions and resources that are available.

“[Our] open door policy and whistle-blower policy allow our employees to feel safe about reporting any issues,” said one company representative, adding that it is key to have a commitment from senior management and a comprehensive policy in place, as well as to offer annual and ongoing training.

One company representative noted that his theatre spells out exactly what constitutes harassment in the employee handbook, which also includes “an explicitly outlined complaint procedure which



includes a protection from retaliation clause." The handbook also details how to create an appropriate and safe work environment for minors. In addition, the theatre representative said, "all department heads and employees are expected to attend a mandated seminar conducted by an attorney associated with sexual harassment cases."

Two company representatives mentioned having "No Tolerance" policies at their theatres. One said: "Once a report is made, it is researched and if [the allegations are found] to be true and intentional, the guilty party is fired and a mark is on their record."

Another company representative said their

theatre has "a written sexual harassment policy that must be read and signed by each employee upon commencement of employment."

In crafting a sexual harassment policy, Dart says company leaders need to make sure they understand the issue from all sides: "Develop your policy with compassion, not just with the desire to cover yourself if you get sued," she says. "Seek to understand why people report sexual harassment and understand how difficult it is to do so. Talk to people who have experienced it. Ask them how they would have liked the situation to have been handled. And reach out if you need help."

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: BUILDING A FOUNDATION

College is often where artists begin their theatre journey – and where they learn lessons about sexual harassment that they carry forward into their careers. When Dart surveyed artists about their encounters with sexual harassment before launching the Let Us Work project, she discovered that many had their first sexual harassment experience while in school.

"So, so many of the respondents to my survey

described being sexually harassed, assaulted or exploited by their teachers or professors," Dart says. "If they're taught that that behavior is normal and to be expected while they're students, how will they know not to tolerate it when they're in the professional world?"

She urges undergraduate and graduate training programs to create environments where young

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Do you have policies pertaining to intimacy onstage?

Yes **26%**

No **74%**

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people are treated with respect, to model appropriate employer/employee behavior, and to teach students specifically what to look out for once they go out into the professional world. As they help students build a foundation for their careers, academic institutions have the ability to establish clear expectations of behavior that can eventually change the culture of the industry at large.

One of the areas where university faculty and staff can have an impact is in helping students define sexual harassment. Students are often confused about

what they should report. Does unwanted flirting and attention from a fellow cast member or a faculty member constitute harassment? Does the costume designer's remark about letting out a waistband of a costume become body shaming? Does the choreographer demonstrating a lift become unnecessary touching? Sometimes misconduct is blatant, ugly and obvious, but many times it can be more of a gray area.

Students also need to understand the system for reporting harassment and misconduct, as well as the course of action that must be followed if they make a formal complaint. They need to know that if they bring an accusation of misconduct to the faculty or staff, that faculty or staff member is required by university policy to report it.

It Starts with Title IX

Sexual harassment at most universities falls under Title IX, the federal civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex at institutions receiving federal financial assistance, which was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Each educational institution typically has a Title IX coordinator whose sole responsibility is managing policies

(Continued on Page 20)

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Theatrical Intimacy: Creating a Safe Process and a Common Vocabulary in the #MeToo Era

Intimacy direction or choreography is an emerging field that is becoming more prominent in the wake of recent sexual harassment allegations in theatre.

"This movement toward creating safe spaces for performers to do their work is growing exponentially because of the #MeToo movement and, more specifically, *Not in Our House in Chicago*," says Jenny McKnight, a theatre professor at Indiana University who was appointed recently to serve as the intimacy choreographer for any IU production that contains moments of noncombat physical contact.

Like fight choreographers, intimacy choreographers or directors look to determine not only the best way to interpret and stage a scene but also how to do so in a respectful professional manner adhering to the highest standards of artistry and safety. Put simply by the motto of Intimacy Directors International, the work of intimacy directors aims to "create safe places for dangerous work."

While 74 percent of the colleges, universities and theatres that responded to the *Southern Theatre* survey said they do not have intimacy policies, several indicated they now offer or plan to offer intimacy training. Some also plan to develop intimacy policies in the near future.

"We are looking to adopt intimacy-specific policies – all have been handled on a case-by-case situation," said one respondent.

Another noted that "as a faith-based institution, we typically don't do intimate scenes on stage. However, the program director is currently pursuing further training in intimacy education to stay ahead of the curve."

Intimacy Directors International, one of the organizations that offers training in this area as well as providing certified intimacy directors for productions, recently presented a workshop, led by its founder Tonia Sina, for faculty and students at IU.

"The perspective that Tonia brought was eye-opening, and the students were eager to learn all she could teach in the short time she spent on our campus," McKnight said. "We learned that just as a production has a fight choreographer to design and safely teach simulated violence (which keeps everyone safe) there is also a need for an intimacy choreographer to design and safely teach simulated

intimacy (which also keeps everyone safe). Especially for students, it is very important to establish clear boundaries and an expectation of consistency by having an outside eye (the intimacy choreographer) to help shape the moments of intimacy and create a choreography that remains consistent through every performance."

McKnight notes that intimacy training gives performers a common vocabulary that allows them to communicate with each other about the work they are doing and to define boundaries. "There's a process, a codified set of guidelines that makes the whole process less intimidating, less potentially harmful, and gives artists more agency in their own work. We have to be better at those things for our industry to thrive, and I believe that giving students this information is vital to a healthy future for performers."

Another organization offering training in this area, as well as intimacy choreographers for productions, is Theatrical Intimacy Education, co-founded by Chelsea Pace, Laura Rikard and Kate Busselle.

"Organizations like Theatrical Intimacy Education can train the people in charge in the room (e.g., the director) how to have a process that takes care of the actor without sacrificing a creative process," says Rikard.

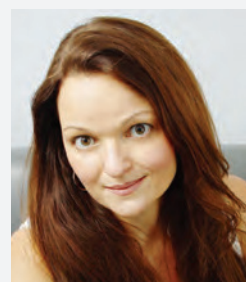
Busselle notes that such training not only benefits the artists, but also the work that they are producing. "Intimacy training is fundamental in today's theatre industry because we need to restructure the way that we create theatre," says Busselle. "Working from a place of seeking mutual consent, establishing boundaries, and allowing an avenue for dialogue about the work can only improve the work."

In addition to having policies and procedures related to intimacy, Pace notes that schools and theatres need to "work towards a culture of affirmative consent in classrooms and productions. And it's work. It takes a lot of effort and time to change deeply ingrained attitudes and practices around physical contact." She suggests teaching students to ask, "May I touch you?" when they are working together in class. And, she adds, "If you are the person in power in the room, you need to ask, too. And remind them, often, that they are always allowed to say no." ■

- Stefanie Maiya Lehmann



Jenny McKnight,
Indiana University



Laura Rikard,
Theatrical Intimacy
Education



Kate Busselle,
Theatrical Intimacy
Education



'This is a powerful moment for training programs to ... affect ... the process and culture in which we produce work.'

- Linda Pisano, Indiana University

(Continued from Page 18)

and investigating Title IX complaints. The federal guidelines are relatively vague, so institutions are responsible for defining their individual policies and processes regarding investigations and disciplinary measures. University faculty and staff have a responsibility to educate themselves on institutional policies and to openly share that information with students.

Most of the college and university respondents to the *Southern Theatre* survey on sexual harassment specified Title IX and university-wide programs related to this topic as the policies they use to protect against sexual harassment. However, the complex world of the theatre department often presents special challenges for those seeking to prevent or deal with sexual harassment. Unlike students in science or English departments, theatre students and faculty spend long hours working together in very personal, intimate environments. Many theatre artists and students say they have experienced or even engaged in the EEOC's examples of behavior that contribute to an unlawful hostile environment (such as off-color jokes, crude language, comments on physical attributes and unnecessary touching) within a prior theatre environ-

ment. For some, these behaviors may have once been considered "normal" in the workplace, but are no longer acceptable. So, in educating students, educators must first evaluate and, if necessary, change their own behavior. Knowing that any of these offenses can lead to disciplinary action should keep faculty and staff members ever-mindful of the way they interact with students and colleagues.

Guidelines Specific to Theatre Departments

Some theatre programs have taken the time to, outside of existing university policy, develop handbooks or guidelines covering topics such as roles in the theatre, curriculum expectations, shared goal and belief statements, and ethics/codes of conduct. The idea of the documents is to protect student-to-student relationships as well as student-to-educator relationships and to outline the expectations for a respectful, safe work environment. Indiana University (IU) is one such university program. The Department of Theatre, Drama and Contemporary Dance goes so far as to post its policies on sexual harassment and open and safe auditions on the department's website.

"We have regularly had our campus' Title IX office come and talk to us at faculty meetings about situ-

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Peter and the Starcatcher - Directed by Murray McGibbon. Photo by Jeremy Hogan.

ations and procedures,” says Jonathan Michaelsen, professor, director of graduate studies and former department chair. “We have also had discussions about instructors in voice, movement, dance and acting courses and what is appropriate contact with students.”

In addition, the IU theatre department has developed policies regarding costume fittings, such as specifying that faculty should never be alone with a student in a fitting and establishing strict protocol regarding fitting photos, requiring every student to fill out a photo policy form for every show, according to Linda Pisano, a professor of costume design and the current department chair.

She says the focused efforts of the department have “provided us with the knowledge of not only what to do in a situation but how to be confident in our preparation to handle crisis. Our students know this, and they know we won’t stand by and allow a toxic culture to permeate.”

As a result, she said, “more students are not afraid to speak up when issues first occur or where changes still need to occur... [They] are willing to come forward to faculty knowing they have access to confiden-

tiality, and overall there seems to be more awareness of how people need to respect one another.”

Pisano notes that initiatives to combat sexual harassment present universities with an opportunity to make a difference in the future of theatre.

“Universities train the emerging generation of artists, scholars and makers,” Pisano said. “What better way to change the industry and the systemic problems than by addressing them at this level? This is a powerful moment for training programs to not only affect what we produce but the process and culture in which we produce work.”

The University of Central Florida (UCF) School of Performing Arts also has taken extra steps to address sexual harassment, after a theatre technical director there was the subject of a Title IX investigation following an accusation of sexual harassment by a student. Orlando TV station WFTV-TV reported that the faculty member was reprimanded and given sexual harassment training but kept his job.

Efforts at UCF include a university-wide campaign called “Let’s Be Clear,” which provides options and information for students on reporting sexual misconduct and getting help (including a 24/7 text help line),



UCF’s School of Performing Arts has taken steps to ensure ‘no confusion about what is and what is not acceptable behavior.’

- Michael Wainstein, school director



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with details posted throughout campus, including in every bathroom. This allows “students to come forward more easily and sends a strong message that the university has the well-being of its students and faculty foremost in mind,” says Michael Wainstein, director of UCF’s School of Performing Arts.

The UCF School of Performing Arts also has taken steps on its own, recently bringing in Not in Our House to provide workshops on how the Chicago Theatre Standards could be applied to the needs of the theatre department.

“We thought that this set of standards

SETC’s Sexual Harassment Policy

SETC is an equal opportunity organization. The right to employment, membership, to hold office, and to participate in SETC activities, including (but not limited to) conventions, meetings, auditions and performances shall not be abridged because of age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, military veteran’s status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

The prohibition against harassment not only applies to SETC employees, but also to vendors, service representatives and all other persons doing business with SETC. Persons reporting such activity will not be retaliated against for doing so. The hiring organizations of SETC sign registration documents agreeing to these terms.

What to Do If You Are Harassed at SETC’s Auditions or Job Fair

Any SETC participant who believes that he or she is being harassed or discriminated against for any reason has the responsibility to bring the matter to the attention of the SETC Auditions Chair, the Professional Theatre Services Director, the serving Auditions Team or Job Squad, or any board or staff member of SETC.

All such matters will be then directed to the Auditions Committee for research and action. The Auditions Committee shall take appropriate action with regard to offending party(ies) and shall report to the victim the action taken. Should action of any legal nature be required, matters will then be referred to the Executive Committee for additional treatment.

Callback and Interview Recommendations

For the purposes of callbacks or follow-up interviews, the following recommendations are for the safety and protection of both the auditionee/job candidate and the hiring representatives:

1. Hiring companies may hold callbacks/interviews in only those spaces approved by SETC. This includes hotel rooms in specified hotels.
2. When hosting callbacks, try to avoid having a single representative and a single actor/candidate in the space. If the hiring company has only one rep, ask another actor/candidate to come in as a third party.
3. Do not shut doors on hotel rooms. Either prop them standing open, or at minimum, place the security bar between the door and the door jamb to prevent it from closing.
4. In any space rented for the purpose of callbacks or interviews, doors may not be locked when occupied.
5. Hiring theatres may not ask auditionees to dance. (All dancing is done during the SETC Dance Call.)
6. Auditionees/candidates should not go to any “callback” or “interview” location which does not have materials bearing the SETC logo on the door or beside the door.

would translate well into our educational theatre community here at UCF and have decided to adopt them," Wainstein says. "A committee of students and professors has adapted the standards to our environment."

He says the School of Performing Arts specifically addresses harassment from the first day of classes and with each production, with students reading the developed standards and the school providing a university specialist to speak with students, "so there is no confusion about what is and what is not acceptable behavior." The school also is providing special training for stage managers, recognizing that they are often the first to hear from a student who is being harassed.

"As educators, we are bound to prepare our students for all facets of the world and business they have chosen and unfortunately, like any business, there are some dark sides," Wainstein said. "But, if they are prepared as students to understand how to handle situations like this, they will be more likely to avoid them entirely. And when they can't avoid them, they will have a toolkit that they draw upon to deal with the situations that might arise."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: A SAFER THEATRE

As schools, theatres and artists seek ways to deal with the current environment, initiatives that not only create more awareness of the problem but also help shift the culture are important steps on the road to creating theatre that is safe for artists as they continue to explore new territory in art.

"For the sexual harassment in the industry to change, we have to go beyond reporting the problems," says Theatrical Intimacy Education's Rikard. "There has to be an effort to educate everyone in the work environment on the value of boundaries and respect for each other's bodies and minds in order to have boundless creativity. The industry is gathering the courage to finally call out inappropriate behavior but they have to go beyond this. It is time for educa-

Educating Guest Artists

One area where some theatre programs see a need to take extra action is in guest artist arrangements. Guest artists can be valuable sources of mentorship, but as outsiders to the university system, they sometimes look on the students as peers. However, what might be thought of as appropriate in a professional theatre (asking a co-worker out for drinks, innocent flirting), is a different scenario in a college setting. Students are also more likely to feel star-struck by guest artists and resistant to reporting incidences of misconduct.

One university that has recognized this issue is the University of North Georgia/Gainesville Theatre Alliance. With the help of the university Title IX office, the theatre program is in the process of developing a Guest Artist Handbook that will clearly define expectations of interactions between guest professionals and students, describe the reporting process, and outline possible consequences. One of the respondents to the *Southern Theatre* survey also noted plans at his institution to provide "a guest artist workshop in intimacy training for [the 2018-19 academic year]."

tion and cultural change and removing any stigmas that keep people from standing up for the safety of their instruments (i.e., the body and mind) and also creating a place where someone can say, 'Hey, I may have some old school ideas around this – I need to learn and change.'" ■



Stefanie Maiya Lehmann is business manager of Lincoln Center Concert Halls and Production in New York City and a member of the *Southern Theatre* Editorial Board.



Celeste Morris contributed content for the university section of the article. She is resident designer and an associate professor at the University of North Georgia / Gainesville Theatre Alliance.

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