

Quest: arts for everyone

The CallBoard

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September 5, 2005

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Summer hasn't officially ended, but we all know that Labor Day marks a change in our thinking and definitely a change in pace. Although in looking back, Quest did have a busy and productive summer. It began with the workshopping and showcasing of *Rivers* at the Clarice Smith Center. Rivers features Quest Affiliate Artist, Astad Deboo and will have its world premier this January at QuestFest – Baltimore. Quest's Wings Company enjoyed a one-week *Road Signs* run at the Smithsonian's Discovery Theatre. Their production of *Mosaic* appeared at Salisbury University as part of the school's summer institute in the arts for middle and high school students. The Wings Company concluded their summer with a performance of *Road Signs* at the Maryland Artist Teacher Institute (MATI). Quest's president, Tim McCarty served on the faculty of MATI, a one-week professional development experience for elementary and middle school educators, administrators, and parents. MATI provides participants with strategies for incorporating the arts into the curriculum. Quest provided funding support to Open Circle Theatre for their production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* which ran at Round House Theatre's Silver Spring Stage and was co-directed by ArtsBridge Coordinator, Monique Holt. The show's cast included Wings Company member, Luis Aguilar. Quest provided scholarship support to three artists with disabilities to attend an acting class at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre.

This summer's pace is no comparison to what Quest is taking on this fall. This issue of Callboard gives an overview of the work that lies ahead and also outlines ways that you can become involved.

The Wings Company will conduct auditions for new members on September 13 and 14 at 7:00 PM. Wings is Quest's touring company and members receive training in physical theatre and educational methodology. Auditions will take place at Gallaudet University's Elstad Auditorium. You can read the full audition announcement on the Quest website at <http://www.quest4arts.org/productions/auditions.htm>

Classes begin for Wings Company members September 19. Instructors Karin Abromaitis and Joel Ganz return this year and will be joined by Quest Affiliate Artist, Yola Rozynek. Company members will attend classes twice a week for six weeks.

A television crew from South Africa will be taping Wings Company classes and rehearsals this September. They will be focusing on company member Patti de Berg who is from South Africa. Almost from its beginning, the Wings Company has included deaf performers from other countries. Actors from Sweden, Canada, and Iceland have studied and performed with Wings. This will be the second time that a South African television show has highlighted Quest's work. Several years ago the same show featured the *Road Signs* residency at the Windybrow Theatre in Johannesburg. Quest Affiliate Artist, Walter Chakela, organized that residency.

This September, the Wings Company will showcase their work in Montgomery and Anne Arundel Counties. In November they will perform at the Riderwood Retirement Community. *Mosaic* will be performing at QuestFest. Tours of Austria, Czech Republic, Taiwan, Utah, Maine, and Iceland are in negotiations. The company will also appear at the first DC Fringe Festival next July.

Audition announcement

Quest will conduct an important community meeting on Saturday, September 17 at 10:00 AM at Gallaudet University's Elstad Auditorium Annex Classroom. The purpose of the meeting will be to outline ways that volunteers can become involved with Quest programs this year. We are particularly looking for volunteers to help support QuestFest. We will need help in planning and conducting hospitality, crew, usher, group sales, and educational outreach. For those of you who are students

hospitality, crew, ushers, group sales, and educational outreach. For those of you who are students, QuestFest offers an interesting internship or community service opportunity.

Plans are also underway for another Quest Community Event at St. Theodore's Greek Orthodox Church, the site of last year's highly entertaining Quest Olympics. The event is planned for the end of October and will have a fall theme while of course featuring the fun, frolic, frivolity that the Quest Family relishes. The fabulous folks who planned last year's Olympic party are back at it again for the October event and are looking for new volunteers to join them in creating the fall bash.

We'll be sending out reminders for the September 17 meeting and we look forward to seeing you then.

OK, so we don't have a title for it yet, but we're workshoping it any way. Actually, we have agreed on the subtitle – a Clown Drama. Quest Affiliate Artists Willy Conley and Mark Jaster joined by Eric Beatty, who served on the faculty for the Visual Playwrights Retreat, began work this month on a new piece that will premier at QuestFest. The three have talked about their desire to do something together for the past several years. Nick Olcott will join the trio later in the fall to direct the piece, which will showcase December 10. The show explores different aspect of loss, which certainly seems timely given the tragic aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

Both Willy and Eric are alumni of the Towson Theatre MFA program and one of the things that the planning committee for QuestFest-Baltimore has discussed is the possibility of featuring Towson alumni each year.

QuestFest – Baltimore

Speaking of QuestFest, the festival proper runs January 9 – 22 with approximately 45 performances at Towson University, Theatre Project, and Creative Alliance. In addition to performances, QuestFest artists will conduct three-day to six-day residencies in area schools. If you are affiliated with a school in the Baltimore/Washington area and would like to have one of these remarkable artists conduct a residency, please contact Quest ArtsBridge Coordinator, Monique Holt at monique@quest4arts.org. We will be posting descriptions of the classes and workshops available later next month.

Performers and companies featured at QuestFest will include: Pilobolus Too (Connecticut), Asphyxia (Australia), Ramesh Mayapan (Singapore/UK), and PUSH (New York). Quest will present the world premiers of two shows (Rivers and ...a Clown Drama) along with Mosaic.

Information about performances, residencies, workshops, panel discussions, and ticket reservations will appear on the QuestFest website some time next month.

Plans are underway for this year's Artist Retreat, a three-day professional development experience for artists with and without disabilities that Quest conducts in partnership with VSA arts Maryland. We are scheduled to return to the Pearlstone Retreat and Conference Center where artists will receive training in educational methodology and universal learning (accessible learning environments). If you are a practicing artist and would like to receive more information about the retreat, please contact Monique Holt at monique@quest4arts.org.

In the Community

Quest will be in residence this year at the Maya Angelou Public Charter School in Washington. Wings Company Assistant Director, Miriam Ganz and company member, Luis Aguilar will be teaching creative sign language to students in a series of six-week after school sessions.

ArtsBridge Coordinator, Monique Holt will serve as the sign master for Gallaudet University's production of Color Girls...

Quest President, Tim McCarty will serve as the sign language director for the VSA arts Playwright Discovery Program production of this year's winning play, 3/4 of a Mass for St. Vivian. Susan Karchmer, Miriam Ganz, and Paul Harrelson will interpret. The performance and award ceremony will take place September 26 at the Kennedy Center.

In cooperation with Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Quest is conducting focus group meetings to provide input for a proposed sign language interpreter and visual theatre-training program.

Tim McCarty travels to Salt Lake City every two months to continue planning the arts programming for the 2007 Deaflympic Winter Games.

In October, McCarty will be in Rochester, New York where he serves on the National Advisory Group for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

We are proud of the work that Quest is doing and the impact we are having. We are also deeply grateful for the continued support and involvement of the Quest Family. This issue of Callboard included ways that you can become involved. You can audition, volunteer, receive training, serve on a focus group, or book a show or residency.

We also welcome (really it's encourage) you to support this work financially. Quest is fortunate to have a three-year grant from the United States Department of Education. However, beginning in October, Quest must match 25% of the grant and next year, the company must match 50%. While funding for programming remains strong, contributions for the company's general operating costs is challenging. If Quest is to continue this important work, we need your help. You can make a contribution to Quest by going to our website at www.quest4arts.org or you can mail your tax deductible check to:

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We look forward to seeing you at the Community Meeting on Saturday, September 17.

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