



TONY AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS TO BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT TN THEATRE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Adriane Lenox, winner of the 2005 Tony for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Doubt: A Parable*, by John Patrick Shanley, will be a highlight of the annual TTA conference. In addition to her many Broadway credits, Ms. Lenox recently played Denise Oher, the biological mother of Michael Oher, in the Oscar nominated best film, *The Blind Side*. Adriane's credits are below; also, see the article about Adriane written by Becky Fly, TTA Board member, for a more personal look at Adriane's Tennessee roots.

2011 TTA Conference in Dickson October 20-23

The Renaissance Center

855 Highway 46 South
Dickson, TN 37055

To accommodate our growth, TTA will be utilizing two hotels for the 2011 conference:

The conference hotel is Hampton Inn. A block of rooms will be held for a special TTA rate of \$79 per room until September 20th. To reserve, be sure to call (615) 446-1088 and ask for the TTA rate. Unfortunately, Hampton Inn is not able to offer the special conference rate through the 800 number or online.
www.dickson.tn.hamptoninn.com

ADRIANE LENOX (Adriane): Broadway credits: *Doubt, Chicago, Caroline or Change, Kiss Me Kate, Ain't Misbehavin', Dreamgirls, The Buddy Holly Story, Fascinatin' Rhythm, How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying.*

Off-Broadway: *Still Life, Cavedweller, Dinah Was...*

TV: *30 Rock; Damages; Detroit -187; Law and Order (Original, SVU); Shark; Royal Pains; Lipstick Jungle .*

Film: *The Blind Side, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Black Snake Moan, Alvin and the Chipmunks.*

From Melissa Shafer, President

I look forward to seeing you at the 44th annual Tennessee Theatre Association Conference. We are delighted to be back at the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee, where all of our events are scheduled under one roof. Please take advantage of it...feel free to mix it up a bit and add to the synergy! If you are coming for the Community Theatre Festival, consider taking in a few Secondary School Festival shows. If you are coming for the SETC screening auditions, catch the shows in the Community Theatre Festival. Be sure not to miss the lunch with Adriane Lenox. And everyone check out the workshops! Between events sip coffee in the rotunda and catch up with old friends or walk through one of the galleries and enjoy the art.

October will be here before we know it.

Bravo and Enjoy!

The overflow hotel is Comfort Inn.

Until Oct. 17th, a block of rooms will be held at \$62.99 for a standard room , \$72.99 for a regular king suite, and \$99.99 for a jacuzzi suite. To reserve, be sure to call (615) 740-1000 and ask for the TTA rate. Unfortunately, Comfort Inn is not able to offer the special conference rates through the 800 number or online.

www.comfortinndickson.com

Call for workshops

For the second year in a row, TTA will focus its workshops on two primary areas. Last year it was lighting design and marketing yourself as an actor, this year, it's **Scenic Art and The Arc of an Actor: Transitioning to the Next Step.** The arc of an actor workshops should focus on how an actor makes the transition to the next step in his or her career: for example, from high school to college, from college to professional. What resources does an actor need to be successful at the next level? What are the biggest differences in environment? personnel? expectations? knowledge base? experience? If you're interested in presenting a workshop on either Scenic Art or The Arc of an Actor: Transitioning to the Next Step, contact President Elect/Conference Coordinator Chris Luter at luter@k12tn.net.

From Chris Luter, President-Elect and Conference Planner:

We hope to see you all at the 2011 TTA Conference at the Renaissance Center in Dickson, TN. In addition to the traditional slate of workshops, festival performances, auditions, and networking opportunities, TTA is excited about three new additions to Conference 2011. Our keynote speaker and Distinguished Achievement Award recipient is Tony Award-winning actress Adriane Lenox. She will be speaking several times throughout the conference. Also, we have revived the Theatre for Youth Festival. Three companies from across the state will be performing for local students in the Dickson area Thursday morning of conference. Third, we introduce Mandy Norris Smith as TTA's new Dance Coach; Mandy will be conducting workshops to help actors with the dance component for SETC auditions. We hope these new activities add to your interest in the conference. Come join us and be a part of your Tennessee Theatre Association.

Reports from Division Chairs

TTA has the following divisions:

- Community Theatre
- College/University
- Secondary School
- Theatre for Youth
- and a Representative for Professional Theatre

From Barry Wallace, Community Theatre Division Chair:

2011 begins an exciting three-year stretch for TTA in the beautiful Renaissance Center in Dickson, TN and I am looking forward to some excellent Community Theatre Festivals there. This fall we are looking forward to a very full festival, possibly as many as five shows, and I hope all the participants will take advantage of the opportunity to visit our workshops, see the other shows, and take part in the 24-hour play festival which will run concurrently with the Community Theatre Festival. There is so much talent in our communities and we have a rare opportunity to view productions from across the state that I

10 Minute Play Festival

Want to create an entire 10 minute play in 24 hours? You can at the Tennessee Theatre Association conference this fall in Dickson! Open to playwrights, actors, and directors, participants will be divided into teams, work all night on the play, then have a public performance the following evening. Contact Professor Mark Creter at mcreter@tntech.edu or Professor Darren Michael at michaeld@apsu.edu for more information. All participants must be registered for the conference.

Design Competition

The TTA Design Competition is a chance for you to showcase your college's design program and for students to get feedback on their designs/portfolios from professional designers. Categories of competition are: scene, lighting and costume designs. The grand prize winner will have his/her 2012 SETC registration paid for by TTA! Contact Professor Karen Brewster at brewster@etsu.edu for details.



hope people will take this time to visit the TTA Fall Conference. If you've never come before, you're going to love it!

From Nelson Berry, Secondary School Division Chair:

This year we are looking at holding the One-Act Play Festival over two days of the conference. We will fill up the Friday slots first, and then fill up the Thursday slots, so it pays to turn in your applications as soon as possible. We will also be holding our combined TTA/college/university/individual scholarship auditions in the same building as the festival, making it easier and more convenient for everyone to participate.

Please be sure to visit the TTA website for more information and to download the application forms. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Nelson Berry, Secondary School Division Chair, at nelson.berry@montgomerybell.edu.

From Tracy Nichols, Theatre for Youth Chair:

The Theatre for Youth division is busy preparing for our conference festival on Thursday, October 20th. Approximately 600 students and teachers will participate in the Theatre for Youth Festival. TTA is extremely fortunate to have performances of *A Year With Frog and Toad*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *How I Became a Pirate* lined up for students from a Title 1 school.

In addition, all areas of the state are represented with this year's Theatre for Youth Festival. The M.E.T. Series at The Renaissance Center will present *A Year with Frog and Toad* and represents middle Tennessee. The Chattanooga Theatre Centre from east Tennessee will present *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Our Theatre for Youth Festival also represents west Tennessee with a performance of *How I Became a Pirate* from Cordova High School.

The 2011 Theatre for Youth Festival will be sponsored in part through a generous grant from the Target Foundation.

If you have any questions about the Theatre for Youth division or the TFY Festival, please contact Tracy Nichols at nicholst@apsu.edu.

From Meleia Lewis, Auditions Coordinator:

SETC screening auditions, held during the TTA conference, are open to both in-state and out of region auditionees on both days, so it will be necessary for auditionees to specify which day they need to have their audition scheduled.

Registration begins September 15th online at www.setc.org.

From Becky Fly, West TN Area Rep:

Tony Award-winner Adriane Lenox will be the key-note speaker at this year's luncheon on Friday and will also hold workshops throughout the weekend for both secondary and college-age groups.

Ms. Lenox grew up in Memphis and attended Lambuth College. She performed at Opryland and then became a back-up singer with Perry Como. She went on to be a replacement in *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Dream Girls* on Broadway. She originated roles in the hit musicals *Caroline or Change* and in the revival of *Kiss Me, Kate*. She also created the role of Shug for the Atlanta workshop production of *The Color Purple*. She won a Tony for Best Supporting Actress in her role as Mrs. Muller in *Doubt*. Cherry Jones from Paris, TN won the Tony for Best Actress in the same play. A great year for actors from West Tennessee! Perhaps she is best known nationally for her recent role in the hit movie *The Blind Side* with Sandra Bullock. ("Adriane Lenox makes every moment count in her brief but layered cameo as Michael's crack-addicted mom..." *The Hollywood Reporter*.) She was also featured in the Craig Brewer film *Black Snake Moan*, starring Samuel L. Jackson and Christina Ricci.

I remember Adriane fondly. I was a rising senior at Lambuth and was answering our theatre professor's phone (Mr. Jesse Byrum) when Adriane called to schedule an appointment to audition for a drama scholarship. Of course she was amazing. Later we were both involved in a Jackson Theatre Guild production of *Godspell*. I had always heard the expression that someone had "stopped the show," but after Adriane sang "Oh Bless the Lord My Soul" the show just stopped--totally. We were frozen in our places for what seemed like 10 minutes. They just would not stop applauding. It was the first and only show-stopping experience I've ever had.

Ms. Lenox is married to composer/conductor Zane Mark and their daughter, Crystal, has toured with

the national company of *Legally Blond*.

What a treat for TTA to bring such first rate talent to our state conference: I hope to see everyone in Dickson!

Amanda (Mandy) Norris Smith: TTA Dance Coach



Mandy is conducting workshops to help actors become more familiar with the dance combinations being taught at SETC auditions. Mandy will offer workshops at the 2011 conference for beginners and more advanced dancers. Actors: plan to take a class to feel more confident and prepared for your dance audition at SETC, or for any dance audition.

Mandy is from Clarksville, TN, where she began her training with her mother, Rosemary Norris, whose students received dancing roles on Broadway. Mandy then continued to study classical ballet with Nashville's symbol of dance, Albertine Maxwell. Mandy has Pedagogy Studies (years 1-5) of the Vaganova method of teaching ballet from John White, Director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet Society. She was the director of her own school for 18 years in Clarksville. Each spring her school presented a spring production, which built and sustained a continuing education scholarship through the Speech, Communication and Theatre Department at Austin Peay State University. She has intensive

teaching experience working with children of all ages. She has taught at Davidson Academy since 1997.

In 1989, she won the National Tap Dance Challenge Award associated with the movie *Tap*, starring Gregory Hines. She has created multiple nationally acclaimed tap routines for Artistry In Motion's performance team and has served for 4 years as a judge with International Dance Challenge, a national competition organization.

Mandy has two daughters, Alexandra and Morgan.

Good news...

In early August, TTA received grant monies from Target to fund the revived Theatre for Youth Festival. With this generous funding, TTA will be able to produce a festival that will encourage professional companies to participate, provide transportation to children from Title 1 schools who would otherwise be unable to attend, and offer quality study materials to teachers and students to enhance the learning process via a live theatrical performance. Thanks, Target, for your support of the arts in the state of Tennessee!

Changes in FOCUS, the official TTA newsletter....

In 2012, FOCUS will be going solely electronic--no more paper newsletters will be mailed. If you're receiving this newsletter by email, then you're in the email system, but for those who are not, in order to continue receiving FOCUS, please go to the TTA website and enter your name and email address for the newsletter sign up. We'll add you to the email list, and you'll continue to receive

information about TTA, the annual conference, and theatre across the state.

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