

Hot Seats and Safety Nets

A mentorship program nurtures new theatre leaders

BY SUZANNE M. SATO

In the spring of 1999, TCG, with the support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, conducted a series of in-depth conversations among representative theatre leaders and managers to identify the major challenges and opportunities that the not-for-profit, professional theatre community was facing. This field scan represented the first such effort in 10 years.

As reported in a summary published in *American Theatre* the following January, many of the themes that emerged from the study turned out to be hardy perennials—and two seemed particularly timely and germane to the funding priorities of both the Duke foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation:

1) a crisis in leadership succession, due to the imminent retirement of many founding theatre leaders and the loss of both seasoned and younger artists to more lucrative commercial opportunities; and

2) the competition for new audiences, particularly young or culturally specific audiences, in the face of declining arts education budgets, severe economic constraints, and exploding competition for the eyes and ears of the public from an array of technology-based entertainment options.

In response, TCG rapidly developed and launched the New Generations Program in 2000 with two complementary objectives:

■ **Mentoring the Leaders of**

Tomorrow: the cultivation and strengthening of a new generation of theatre leadership through mentorships with accomplished theatre practitioners; and

■ **Cultivating the Audiences of Tomorrow:** the expansion and strengthening of existing theatre programs that have proven effective in reaching young and/or culturally specific audiences.

IN FOUR SHORT YEARS, THE NEW Generations Program, funded by the Duke and Mellon foundations has become a signature program of TCG. “We’re grappling with the notion of taking risks—with artists and with audiences,” says TCG’s executive director Ben Cameron. “And investing in people both on and off the stage.”

The Mentoring program pairs promising young leaders with seasoned mentors for a two-year period in an active theatre setting. To date, 35 grants of \$65,000 each, payable over two years, have been awarded. But perhaps the most unusual grant component, because it is so logical, has been the provision of up to \$15,000 in direct repayment of student loans to ease one onerous financial obstacle to the success of these future leaders. Finally, supplemental travel grants have made it possible for these mentees to explore the theatre world beyond the confines of local experience, ensuring that their aesthetic is informed by the broadest possible exposure. Since the inception of the New Generations mentorships, grants and supplemental support have totaled \$2,557,287.20.

Under the second objective,



Left, Adam Fristoe and Heather Starkel in *Iphigenia (a rave fable)*, directed by New Generations mentee Melissa Foulger at 7 Stages; right, Leslie Lyles and Peter Stadlen in *The Mystery Plays*, co-dramaturged by New Generations mentee Scott French in Second Stage Theatre’s New Plays Uptown Series.

63 Cultivating Audiences grants have totaled \$3,545,578, in four rounds, payable through 2005. Thanks to a renewed two-year commitment of support from both the Mellon and Duke foundations, the New Generations Program recently invited a fifth round of proposals, with revised category titles—**Future Leaders** and **Future Audiences**—and a new international component.

Participants in the New Generations Program have had profound—sometimes even life-changing—personal, professional and institutional experiences, many of which are worth sharing. This past spring, at the request of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, I interviewed a number of participating theatres and individuals across the first three years of the program in both the Mentoring and Audiences categories. In this two-part report, TCG has asked me to describe the general insights gleaned from these interviews. This article will highlight some

components of mutually satisfying mentor/mentee relationships, and the second article, two months from now, will take a stab at encapsulating the wide array of audience-development programs supported with New Generations grants.

MENTORING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

“The mentorship has surprised me in very interesting ways. It has given me an outlet for ideas that I barely knew I had—ideas on building the theatrical life you want, navigating artistic goals and financial survival.... I don’t want to feel that I’m the one holding all the information. I want to feel that we are partners, and that we are both discovering things together.”

—Sharon Fogarty, co-artistic director, Mabou Mines

“This was my first journey into the life of a company. I knew I wanted to be part of a theatre family; I knew I didn’t want a



EZ LAUREN

From left, Gary Houston, Anthony Fleming III and Shelley Delaney in *Free Man of Color*, directed by New Generations mentee Andrea Dymond at Victory Gardens Theater.

freelance career. It allowed me a freedom that I know I wouldn't have taken as an employee; I wouldn't have had the gall."

—Tyler Marchant,
Primary Stages

AT A TIME WHEN MANY OF ITS founding leaders, while still active, are considering retirement, the not-for-profit professional theatre has been concerned about leadership succession. Though graduate programs abound, the task of bridging the gap from training to professional life has been complicated by competition from commercial entertainment and by often crushing student loans, further exacerbated by long years of low-paying on-the-job experience. In response, the New Generations mentoring program is helping some potential leaders to jump-start their careers, and, as several participants pointed out, "to up the ante."

With opportunity comes responsibility, as mentors and mentees are well aware. "I see the mentoring relationship as a platonic ideal of the student/teacher, where there are no boundaries between what [the mentee] and I are doing," observed Christopher Burney, associate artistic director of Second Stage. "We are

mutually involved in all each other's decisions, and I believe in keeping an open door at all times." He added, "It does get exhausting." Indeed, mentoring is highly time-consuming for mentors and mentees alike, and the overwhelming quality both sets of people share is great generosity of spirit. Kevin Bitterman of Theatre de la Jeune Lune offered a typically enthusiastic response to the mentorship experience: "It's humbling to know that there are organizations willing to provide the money and take the time to invest in the development of a new generation of artists. I think that five years from now, when we have had a chance to do our own work, you'll see the results."

Initial mentoring results have been positive and immediate. Of eight Round 1 mentees who completed their mentorships in 2003, three are now artistic directors—Aaron Davidman at Traveling Jewish Theatre (San Francisco), Jason Loewith at Next Theatre (Chicago), and Michael Rohd at Sojourn Theatre (Portland, Ore.), which he also founded. Two are managing directors—Alisha Tonic at Sojourn and Sara Rutstein at the Curious Theatre Company (Denver)—while Tyler

Marchant is associate artistic director at Primary Stages (New York City), Steven Buescher is a core faculty member in the Trinity Rep/Brown University consortium (Providence, R.I.), and Michael John Garcés is slated to direct several productions across the country.

What's in a mentorship? In talking with New Generations mentorship participants, it is clear that successful mentorships are characterized by structured and meaningful partnerships, built on mutual trust and respect. The pivotal design characteristics of the mentorship program are:

- direct, personal and frequent interaction over time, by a single mentor, while working within the theatre;
- assumption of a two-year commitment, with the mentee resident at the theatre in a full-time capacity;
- mutual engagement between the mentor and mentee in structuring the mentorship;
- evidence of the mentor's and theatre's commitment to carrying out the program;
- that the mentorship is not a mechanism for providing the theatre with stopgap labor.

Beyond goodwill and hard work, rewarding mentoring experiences seemed to share several other crucial elements: a structured, mutually respectful relationship; a "macro" point of view, even when it comes to performing "micro" tasks; meaningful access to the decision-making process; the engagement of theatre staff beyond the mentor; possibilities for risk-taking; and open lines of communication.

THE STRUCTURE OF A MENTORSHIP is a fundamental component of its success. Though there are

many effective models, mentors and mentees unanimously agreed that a structured relationship, developed collaboratively between the mentor and mentee, is key. Regularly scheduled meetings are essential. Some mentors and mentees even share an office, making information-sharing a minute-to-minute experience, while others arrange what Peter Brosius, artistic director of Minneapolis's Children's Theatre Company, called, "regular, guaranteed, un-screw-up-able meetings," for touching base proactively and in order to be able "always to contextualize, to make it clear what the bigger goals are."

The challenge for mentors is to teach while conferring authority and accountability. One strategy was to set out learning goals in advance. Artistic director Casey Childs described Primary Stages' plan: "With each show, we changed [the mentee's] focus: managing director, casting, line producer, marketing director, directing a workshop." Another strategy was to "shadow" the theatre's leader from production through budgeting and season planning. Several mentorships focused on a specific substantive project—e.g., establishing a teen program, artistic coordination of a new second stage, line-producing several productions, planning and financing for a new facility—thereby enabling a mentee to interface with all departments around a cohesive project for which he or she was responsible.

Some mentorships combined several of these strategies: "The goals of the mentorship were threefold," said Spiro Veloudos, producing artistic director of the Lyric Stage Company of Boston. "First and foremost was our

mentee's growth toward becoming a producing artistic director. Second, I wanted her to work with me as an assistant director, so that she would have an artistic component to her leadership. Third, we wanted her to spearhead a new program to develop or produce a new play project. After the first year, we're pretty solidly on point for the first two goals, so in the second year, we're going to put more emphasis on the new play development."

As Rebecca Brown put it, "I've been able to walk in a lot of different shoes at the Children's Theatre Company, and have had a chance to learn what the work of producing is."

Mentors and mentees agree that a two-year mutual commitment is optimal. "Everything we do is in a cycle," observed Kevin Moore, managing director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre in Washington, D.C. "So the first time through is like a grad school intensive. The second time is when you get a sense of ownership." By contrast, a two-year limit can also place the mentee in a lame-duck position midway through the process. But in any case, the multi-year commitment is key.

As Jyana Gregory said of her experience at the Cleveland Public Theatre, "If you haven't been part of the organization, it takes a while to learn about where you are. It's easy to not invest when it's only a year. With two years, you don't have the option of just dismissing the things that don't work for you. Rather, you want to really think about what you can do to create an environment that works for you."

A BIG PICTURE VIEWPOINT DIFFERENTIATES leadership-mentoring from other kinds of theatre jobs

or internships. "What does mentoring mean?" posed Corey Fischer, former co-artistic director of Traveling Jewish Theatre. "It means sharing 25 years of experience doing this."

Most New Generations mentorships were structured to allow the mentee to interface with each of the key departments of a producing organization, as a route to understanding the institution as a whole. "When we planned this mentorship, it was designed to provide me a road map for how to run an ensemble-driven company by allowing me to work with all departments," observed Kevin Bitterman about Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Charles Newell, artistic director of Chicago's Court Theatre, confirmed, "The [mentorship] made us take time to talk about things that were not about the day-to-day operations of the organization. It forced us—in a very good way—to have the longer-term, bigger-picture conversation."

Sam Woodhouse, artistic director of San Diego Repertory Theatre, observed that mid-sized theatres can be well suited to productive mentorships: "Our mentee became a central member of our artistic team—at the heart of the artistic process—and I'm fighting to preserve the money in the budget to keep the position. We're a good size, so that someone can come in and make an impact and learn a great deal. The mentee is in the thick of the action."

The community perspective is another component of the big picture. When asked about the biggest "ah-ha!" of her mentorship in Cleveland, Gregory responded, "I've realized that having a strong relationship with community is vital. In New York, there is such a contin-



New Generations mentee Jacob Fisher, right, working with deaf and hearing actors in Seattle Children's Theatre's *Three Musketeers*.

uum of work; there's an audience for everything, and you tend not to worry about not filling a niche, because someone else is surely taking care of it. So you just do your own work. Here, I've learned about creating work that resonates with a community, about letting the community inform the work."

Beyond the institutional and community context lies the national and international theatre world, and many mentors instilled in their mentees a heightened awareness of the not-for-profit theatre world as a whole. "Part of the job was the opportunity to think about what I do," said Andrea Dymond about her experience at Victory Gardens Theatre in Chicago, "which seems much less parochial than it had in the past; that what I do is part of a larger conversation which could impact the future of the American theatre." She added, "It's intimidating, but exciting."

ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING is another crucial element of many successful mentorships. "What the mentoring program really did was put me around the table where all the decisions got made . . . where I had not been invited before," commented Stephen Buescher about his

experience at Dell'Arte Company in Blue Lake, Calif. Mentees felt empowered to ask questions, and to be open to opportunity. As Dymond put it: "What was great was having been able to spend two years just *being available* when opportunity arises." Inevitably, there were instances when a mentor was not prepared to be as accessible as the situation warranted, but subsequent discussion of such experiences constituted another kind of learning opportunity.

In many cases, mentoring was not limited to one-on-one engagement; multiple department heads became invested in the mentee's education and future. Delicia Turner Sonnenberg of San Diego Repertory Theatre, who is in the process of starting her own theatre, has enlisted her mentoring theatre colleagues as an advisory team. Woodhouse observed, "Practically my whole staff is engaged in an advisory capacity, serving as volunteer professional consultants."

At the same time, the mentorship experience can create complications with existing employees. At some theatres, senior staff members were unnerved by the advent of a young and sometimes inexpe-



New Generations mentee Nona Chiang performing in Great Leap's *To All Relations: Sacred Moon Songs*.

rienced person, with access to artistic and administrative decisions. Realizing the potential for friction can be the first step to finding a solution, many theatres worked to set an appropriate tone at the outset. "Once you have someone who is part of the organization, it's not just the mentor working with the mentee; it's also the rest of the staff," said Michael Maso, managing director of Boston's Huntington Theatre Company. "Given how hard everyone works in the theatre, it would be very difficult if the mentee weren't contributing to the whole. No one on the staff really resented the access because our mentee established his value so quickly."

MODELING LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR comes with tough choices as well as positive outcomes. Mentees have the opportunity to experience various models of behavior within a single institution and in different circumstances. While much behavior is proactive and positive, some lessons are harder to face. One mentee was given hiring authority for a certain project, and when a decision went awry, had to learn about how to make tough calls. Dell'Arte's managing artistic director Michael Fields

put it in theatrical terms: "There is a classic triumvirate of melodrama—hero, victim, villain. In an institution, it's easier to learn how to play the hero and victim well, but learning to say no is very difficult."

RISK-TAKING WITH A SAFETY NET—mentorships can provide an appropriate, even enviable, opportunity to risk failure. Several participants talked about the mentorship as a chance to take risks in a controlled setting—good preparation for leadership. Davidman, of Traveling Jewish Theatre, observed, "I just hope that other mentees are having opportunities to come into their own, not just to assist, but to realize their own vision. The best that can happen is that the mentee be allowed to risk and try some things." He added, "This field is so much about doing—not just sitting and watching. My hope is that [other mentees] get as much time on the hot seat as I did." Second Stage's Burney corroborated, "Of course, the relationship has not been without its bumpy moments, but if that didn't happen I'd be concerned that I'm not pushing enough. It's as if you're teaching someone to swing on a trapeze. You have to

give him enough slack to do it on his own, but you have to be there to catch him if he falls."

THE ARTISTIC/ADMINISTRATIVE balancing act becomes readily apparent to mentees as they encounter—and accept or reject—the choices their mentors have made. Some New Generations mentees, with a background as stage directors, wanted more exposure to the full spectrum of an artistic leader's duties. Others felt they needed to complement their management credentials with artistic ones. But even at this stage of their careers, many rising theatre professionals, like Melissa Foulger at 7 Stages, have confronted the challenge of "learning how to work as an artist and balance that with being an administrator."

Accordingly, several artistic directors insisted that their mentees keep an artistic component in their activities, even as they used the mentorship to hone their administrative capacities. And, conversely, other mentors emphasized that artistic leadership requires an appreciation of management skills, notably fundraising. Gregory summed up her priority: "I want to build a life that has creativity as a component of every day."

COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL trust are the bedrock of a successful mentoring experience. "The big piece we talk about all the time is the importance of constant communication, so that the people in the company know what to expect from you," said Steve Richardson, producing director of Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Yet, as important as it is to establish a structure for communication, honesty and mutual respect are also critical elements of a successful men-

torship. "I was never made to feel less," said Scott French of his experience at Second Stage. "I felt more like a co-worker. I was always made to feel valued, and there was a real give-and-take, even when I didn't understand just what was going on. My mentor was always serious about the experience and really invested in it, and he was not trying to create a mini-him."

Trust is not always instantaneous, and learning is gradual. As Traveling Jewish Theatre's Davidman described it, "At first, when we were starting our relationship, it was a dance; they were sniffing me out, and I was sniffing them out. It was a process." Ultimately, Huntington Theatre Company's Maso suggested, "It's about the relationship between two people, the level of the trust, the willingness to invest in someone."

A concomitant of trust is self-reflection. Corey Fischer observed, "If you're going to fulfill the terms [of the mentorship], you have to reflect deeply on what you're doing; you can't continue business as usual." Dymond expressed similar sentiments: "The mentorship helped me think about what I do, why I do it, and what I'm able to become."

A related qualitative factor for a successful mentorship was cited by Sam Sweet, managing director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, Va. "There is the chemistry. We think along the same lines, and the chemistry is compatible, but our goals are different enough that we can see things differently and not feel threatened."

In addition to chemistry, noted Charles Newell, artistic director of the Court Theatre, "is the right match of where the mentee is in his career."

THE IMPACT ON THE INSTITUTION

as a whole is inevitable. “A successful mentorship should not be only about the theatre and the mentor having an effect on the mentee,” suggested Burney, “but about the mentee having an impact on the theatre, and if the mentee has not had an impact on the theatre, then it’s not a successful experience.”

In some theatres, the succession crisis that spawned the New Generations Program was immediate and the timing of the grant was direct. Davidman had had a prior relationship with Traveling Jewish Theatre, and was an obvious choice when TCG announced the New Generations program. “The company was in a really challenging moment when this grant came along, and it enabled me to get on a faster track to leadership. Yet, if it weren’t for the grant, I wouldn’t have been able to be around at the right time. The grant saved this theatre—no question.” Fischer corroborated, “Had we not been able to

start cultivating a next generation, I frankly don’t think the company would have survived.”

Several theatres noted the unforeseen benefit of adding a youthful perspective to the senior management process. Some capitalized on this opportunity, by focusing the mentee’s work on attracting younger artists and/or audiences to the theatre. Often, this fresh input began to permeate the organization’s decision-making process.

“In the end, it was beneficial to have a different generational, cultural and experiential voice at the table,” observed Fields. “On one hand, our mentee would raise ideas that we had already tried 15 years before, and then be frustrated by our response. But he also challenged the theatre’s leadership to have greater transparency in decision-making, which has led to major structural changes, which he probably precipitated.” In some cases, mentors, such as artistic director Randy Rolison at Cleveland Public The-

atre, even felt compelled to alter their own management style. “Our mentee was very savvy in getting right in; she made friends right away, and she made sure to reach out artistically. And she’s caused me to share more information and to open my door more.”

THE MENTOR AS MENTEE WAS A

recurring theme. Many mentors, such as Newell, reported that “mentoring is in [their] blood” because of their own experience of being mentored, and they saw the New Generations program as an opportunity to “return the favor.” Others viewed it as a way to address specific needs in the field, e.g., by actively seeking the opportunity to mentor a woman or a manager of color. Newell recalled his own mentors and a time when the resident theatres did not exist. “Younger artists have the perspective that the not-for-profit theatre is something that was always there, but knowing that the beginnings of this

movement are so recent gives me a sense of what a career path can look like,” and what impact a single artist can have.

Many mentors noted that the learning process can run both ways. Janine Nina Trevens, executive and artistic director of New York City’s TADA! Youth Theater, echoed the sentiments of several mentors: “What has been good for me is how much it makes me question everything I do. Whenever I’m tempted to say, ‘That’s not how we do it,’ I’m forced to stop and think about why that is the case.” In a few cases, confronting the issue of succession has freed artistic directors to more aggressively pursue creative passions that had been buried under administrative pressures.

THE NEW GENERATIONS MEN-

torships are an investment in leadership for the future, a formalized opportunity to pass on decades of accumulated learning. Third-party management, sufficient resources and the

NEW GENERATIONS PROGRAM SUMMARY: MENTORING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

ROUND 1:

Traveling Jewish Theatre (San Francisco):

Co-artistic director Corey Fischer mentored Aaron Davidman

Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Berkeley, Calif.):

Managing director Susan Medak mentored Alisha Tonsic

Court Theatre (Chicago): Artistic director

Charles Newell mentored Jason Loewith

The Dell’Arte Company (Blue Lake, Calif.):

Managing artistic director Michael Fields mentored Stephen Buescher*

INTAR (New York City): Producing artistic

director Max Ferrá* mentored Michael John Garcés

Ping Chong and Company (New York City):

Founder/artistic director Ping Chong mentored Michael Rohd

Primary Stages (New York City): Artistic director

Casey Childs mentored Tyler Marchant

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

(Washington, D.C.): Managing director Kevin Moore mentored Sara Rutstein

ROUND 2:

American Repertory Theatre (Cambridge, Mass):

Former artistic director Robert Brustein mentored Ryan McKittrick*

The Foundry Theatre (New York City):

Producing artistic director Melanie Joseph mentored Sarah Richardson

Great Leap (Los Angeles): Artistic director

Nobuko Miyamoto mentored Nona Chiang

Huntington Theatre Company (Boston):

Managing director Michael Maso mentored Joshua Borenstein (year 1) and Ann Hamada (years 2)

Intiman Theatre (Seattle): Artistic director

Bartlett Sher mentored Kate Whoriskey

Lyric Stage Company of Boston (Boston):

Producing artistic director Spiro Veloudos mentored Rebecca Low

San Diego Repertory Theatre

(San Diego, Calif.): Artistic director

Sam Woodhouse mentored Delicia Turner Sonnenberg

Seattle Children’s Theatre (Seattle):

Director of the Deaf Youth Drama Program Billy Seago mentored Jacob Fisher

Second Stage Theatre (New York City):

Associate artistic director Christopher Burney mentored Scott French

7 Stages (Atlanta): Artistic director

Del Hamilton mentored Melissa Foulger

Victory Gardens Theater (Chicago):

Artistic director Dennis Zacek mentored Andrea Dymond



BOB CHESTNY

New Generations mentee Michael Rohd (seated, center) with, from left, M. Burke Walker, David Jenkins and Jeff Randall in Ping Chong and Company's *Blind Ness*.

opportunities presented by a forum for sharing experiences—all these factors have contributed to the success of the individual mentorships. Participants agreed that the management and counsel of TCG were helpful, both in the careful administration of the panel selection process and in the extensive follow-up during the two years of the program. A critical fundamental has been the willingness of the Duke and Mellon foundations to invest in resources—grants, student loan reimbursement and travel

funds—which allowed mentors and mentees to focus on the work and learning, rather than financial constraints.

Beyond the training, the New Generations mentorships put career development on a fast—and sometimes redirected—track. Scott French attributed his professional credibility and his new job to his Second Stage mentorship. “I wouldn’t have been considered—and wouldn’t have been appropriate for—the job without these past two years, giving me more faith in my abil-

ities to take care of things,” he says. Similarly, Ryan McKittrick, a mentee at American Repertory Theatre, reported, “This mentorship has changed everything. I had the opportunity to work with major directors, and it made me realize that I need to be in a rehearsal hall, collaborating with other artists. I don’t think I had realized that during my schooling.”

Also invaluable were the opportunities for each class of mentors and mentees to meet, to share problems and ideas, not

only for information exchange, but also for a glimpse at the future of the art form. A mentee commented, “It’s clear that there are real leaders in the field that are going to come through this program. Would they have become leaders anyway? Probably yes. But to be able to sit down and commit for two years, it seems as though the opportunity is a different one, that the risks that they’ll be able to take will be part of making them the leaders they will become.” TADA! Youth Theater’s Emmanuel Wilson summed it up with genuine emotion: “I know I didn’t do this on my own. Someone said yes.”

Finally, a mentorship is an investment in people. Davidman of Traveling Jewish Theatre concluded, “I guess what I’m getting at is that these are life relationships. There will not be a moment when I’m no longer a mentee. There’s a fabric that is more complex and nuanced and multi-faceted, like any great art should be.” **AT**

ROUND 3:

Center Theatre Group (Los Angeles):

Director of New Play Development Luis Alfaro and co-director of the Latino Theatre Initiative Diane Rodriguez are mentoring Robert Castro in artistic and administrative leadership

The Children's Theatre Company (Minneapolis):

Artistic director Peter Brosius is mentoring Rebecca Brown

Cleveland Public Theatre (Cleveland, Ohio):

Artistic director Randy Rollison is mentoring Jyana Gregory

Mabou Mines (New York City): Co-artistic director Sharon Fogarty is mentoring Clove Galilee

Piven Theatre Workshop (Evanston, Ill.):

Artistic director and co-founder Joyce Piven is mentoring Jennifer Green

Signature Theatre (Arlington, Va.):

Managing director Sam Sweet is mentoring Melvin D. Gerald Jr.

TADA! Youth Theater (New York City):

Executive and artistic director Janine Nina Trevens is mentoring Emmanuel Wilson

Theatre de la Jeune Lune (Minneapolis):

Artistic director Vincent Gracieux and producing director Steve Richardson are mentoring Kevin Bitterman

ROUND 4:

Alliance Theatre Company (Atlanta, Ga.):

Managing director Thomas Pechar will mentor Lena Carstens

Arizona Theatre Company (Tucson and Phoenix, Ariz.): Managing director Jessica L. Andrews will mentor Lori Monnier

Traveling Jewish Theatre (San Francisco, Calif.):

Founding member and artistic associate Naomi Newman will mentor Eric Rhys Miller

Childsplay, Inc. (Tempe, Ariz.):

Artistic director David Saar will mentor Adam Burke

Double Edge Theatre (Ashfield, Mass.):

Founder and artistic director Stacy Klein will mentor Justin Handley

Long Wharf Theatre (New Haven, Conn.):

Artistic director Gordon Edelstein will mentor Eric Jiung Ting

Teatro Visión de San José (San Jose, Calif.):

Executive director Raul Lozano will mentor Jess Moreles

Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

(Washington, D.C.): Artistic director Howard Shalwitz will mentor Rebecca Taichman