

Essential Learning... *In the Arts*

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ARTS EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

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Workshop

Music Aesthetics Workshop: Round Two

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Arts & Humanities 9.4 (Aesthetics) is the standard that a significant portion of teachers and administrators alike struggle with how to teach and assess in the classroom. In fact, educators in the region listed aesthetics as the second most requested topic for professional development (based on the AEC's most recent Professional Development Report - <http://www.artsedcollaborative.org/documents/ProDevReport2008.pdf>).

Arts organizations like the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO) have expressed a direct interest in collaboratively developing workshops with the AEC on how to tackle the issue of aesthetics in the classroom. Last February and April, the AEC & PSO offered the first iteration of a two-day music aesthetics workshop that 27 regional educators attended.

On **January 14 & March 11, 2009**, the latest two-day workshop on aesthetics will be presented. This workshop series is designed to explore a broader understanding of music aesthetics and tie in the historical and cultural context of music. Day one will focus on a personal aesthetic response as well as discussions around the interaction of the composer and performer. Day two will focus on providing participants with practical information as it relates to leading discussions in the classroom.

A highlight of the first day of this workshop series will be Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year, John Adams, leading a discussion regarding the interaction of the composer and performer. Having one of America's most respected composers available for a discussion on aesthetics and the historical and cultural context of his music will prove to be an invaluable experience for participants. Adams has produced works, both operatic and symphonic, that stand out among all contemporary classical music for their musical depth. In 2002 Adams composed "On the Transmigration of Souls" for the New York Philharmonic, a work written in commemoration of the first anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks and a composition that won him a 2003 Pulitzer Prize for music. "Transmigration" will be performed by PSO, under the direction of Adams himself, on January 17th, 2009.

Participants are eligible to receive 12 hours of ACT 48 credit and registration forms must be received by January 7, 2009. For more information and to download the registration form, visit: http://www.artsedcollaborative.org/documents/Opportunity_Alert-MusicAesthetics.pdf.

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Integrating Dance & Movement into the Curriculum

The Arts Education Collaborative and Attack Theatre, in partnership with Intermediate Unit 1, are offering professional development, residency, and performance opportunities. This residency program includes:

- a one-day professional development workshop for teachers
- a two-day individualized workshop for students, and
- a performance for the entire school body

During the residency, professional teaching artists will work with you to co-plan a personalized residency for your students, and internationally known Attack Theatre will present the in-school performance. The program will be implemented between March and June 2009.

Applications must be submitted by **Monday, January 12, 2009** and can be found at <http://www.artsedcollaborative.org/documents/IU1DanceResidencyAlertandApplication.pdf>. For more information, please email boersmad@artsedcollaborative.org.

Composer & Performer: The Intersection of Music Performance by Michael Cerveris, Program Associate, AEC

An important dimension of an authentic aesthetic response to experiencing a work of music is an awareness and appreciation of the total context that brings that experience into being. That context includes not only the time, place, and circumstances of the performance of the work but also of the initial creation of it. Thus the composer's perspective, the performer's perspective, and the audience perspective all combine to create the whole scope and sequence of the experience. The focus for our previous AEC workshops on the aesthetics of music centered on the goals and statements of 9.4 of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities, Aesthetic Response. In our next rendition, we again look at 9.4 and add the perspective of 9.2 Historical and Cultural Context.

Very often, the standpoint of two of these aspects, the composer and the performer, are separated by a wide gulf of time and circumstances. Particularly in the classical music tradition, we are often engaged with music by composers of past eras and geographical regions other than our own. Some hold this accountable for one of the reasons many of our students lack responsiveness to classical music. However, through the collaboration and generosity of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, we will be able to bridge that separation and take advantage of the unique perspective that this year's PSO Composer of the Year, John Adams, can provide. This unique perspective will be demonstrated when Adams conducts a number of his own selections as part of the PSO concert series on January 16th and 17th.

Part of the morning of day one of the workshop (January 14th) will be a discussion with Mr. Adams himself regarding his intentions as a composer of the work to be rehearsed later that afternoon. We would expect to hear his choices surrounding the creation of the work, some of the criteria and intention associated with making those decisions, and his expectations for audience responses to those decisions. These are certainly insights at the statement level of 9.2 and will be provided with complete authority by the composer himself.

From Mr. Adams as the performer, we would also hope to get an understanding of the musical values and the conducting strategies he expects to be important in the rehearsal to follow. We would hope to be informed, in musical terms, of just what to listen for and what to expect in terms of creating a personal authentic experience of the work.

We hope to provide attendees at the workshop with the unusual experience of multiple aspects of the Historical and Cultural Context together with the Aesthetic Response Standards. By discussing our own reactions we will then be ready to model this in the classroom. This will be the focus of day two of the workshop: to explore ways attendees can re-create that experience for their students.

PAEA Advocacy Toolkit

The Pennsylvania Art Education Association (PAEA) will soon be releasing an Advocacy Toolkit for use by members. It will include resources such as: sample advocacy letters, posters, and research on the importance of arts education. Please contact your Region Representative to make arrangements to receive your copy or visit PAEA at www.paea.org.

Politics of Educational Reform



by **Dr. Sarah Tambucci,**
Director, AEC

Michelle Rhee has become a 'revolutionary and polarizing force in American education' – so says Amanda Ripley in her November 26, 2008 *Time Magazine* article.* Michelle Rhee is the new chancellor running the notoriously troubled District of Columbia Public Schools system. At Anacostia High School where the graduation rate is 24% and only 21% of its students are reading at grade level, she has her work cut out for her.

Beginning when Mayor Adrian Fenty named her chancellor, her appointment stunned the city. At 37, Rhee had no experience running a school yet alone a failing school system with 46,000 students. Rhee is convinced that the key to high performing schools is a relentless focus on identifying and rewarding strong teachers and *purging* incompetent ones. She also strongly supports weakening the tenure system. At issue with the teacher unions is the issue of her ability to measure the quality of teachers. Like other districts, Washington is tracking whether students' test scores improve over time under a given teacher. More emphasis on test scores as a measure of all student learning – just what we need.

Further, her characterization of education is alarming- "The thing that kills me about education is that it's so touchy feely." "People say, 'Well, you know, test scores don't take into account creativity and the love of learning.'" "I'm like, 'You know what? I don't give a crap.' Don't get me wrong. Creativity is good and whatever. But if the children don't know how to read, I don't care how creative you are. You're not doing your job."

This fall, both presidential candidates met with Rhee to discuss school reform and both tried to claim her as his own. With the election behind and dooming realities of our domestic and international issues on the horizon, the new president has already demonstrated that he is focused on identifying leaders and putting together teams to solve real world problems. President-Elect Obama and educational leaders from around the country will be watching to see what happens in Washington.

Rhee's success or failure may have far-reaching implications. Is the ability to improve test scores the

only sign of a good teacher? Is the ability to read and compute the minimum skill set we desire for all of America's children and youth? A new definition of what constitutes an excellent teacher as well as a description of skills that describe a well educated citizen is at jeopardy. Will we continue to support a political agenda that continues to narrowly define student success and inadequately prepares our most precious resource to identify and solve problems?

President-Elect Obama, our position as a world power is in your hands to select exemplars who will guide educational policy in a way that shapes our national future – for better or for worse.

*November 26, 2008 Time Magazine article *Rhee Tackles Classroom Challenges* http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1862444,00.html?iid=perma_share.

In The News...

Arts Policy Brief Sent to President-Elect Obama

Several national arts and arts education organizations recently submitted a policy brief on the arts to President-elect Obama and his transition team.

According to the brief, "The arts and cultural community welcomes the opportunity to communicate with President-Elect Obama and his staff in re-imagining how the federal government can inspire and support creativity in communities nationwide through robust policies that advance participation in the arts for all Americans."

The brief covers recommendations for the National Endowment for the Arts; cultural exchange; arts education in school, work, and life; national service and the arts; the role of the arts in the not-for-profit community. The brief also requests that the President appoint a senior-level administration official to coordinate arts and cultural policy.

To view a copy of the brief, visit: http://www.americansforthearts.org/pdf/get_involved/advocacy/legislative_news/obama_transition.pdf.

Opportunities & Events

Attack Theatre & Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

What: Holiday Pops

Date: December 17 - 21, 2008

Join Attack Theatre this holiday season at Heinz Hall with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Attack Theatre will perform three newly choreographed pieces for this evening of symphonic holiday music. For tickets and more information, visit www.pittsburghsymphony.org.

The Mattress Factory

What: Artist Talk: David Ellis

Date: December 18, 2008

Time: 7 pm

David Ellis arrived at the Mattress Factory with a personal archive of collected papers and images and a Quonset-hut like structure in which to paint and be photographed. Essentially transporting the studio inside the Mattress Factory for his residency period, Ellis painted from morning to night inside the curved structure for 15 days in the museum's lobby. Working in a tunnel of white light with a still camera pointed down from the ceiling, and producing a high-speed camera shoot over one weekend, the cameras captured the artist painting from a bird's eye view perspective every few seconds. The only record of the continuous layering of paintings that he produced is this volume of digital images, now edited into an animated motion painting entitled OKAY.

Father Ryan Arts Center

What: A Christmas Carol - A Ghost Story

Date: December 12-21, 2008

"A Christmas Carol - A Ghost Story" directed by Mary Randolph and adapted for the stage by James Critchfield from Charles Dickens' classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and the spirits of Christmas, is a holiday tradition filled with the magic and wonder of the season. Performed by members of Actors Civic Theatre, the professional theater company in residence at the Father Ryan Arts Center, this beloved holiday classic is a treat for the whole family to enjoy. For more information, please call 412.771.3052. Ticket information: \$10 for adults; \$5.00 for children 12-years-old and younger.

Westmoreland Museum of American Art

What: Celebrate Westmoreland 2009

Date: December 31, 2008

Time: 7 pm - 12 midnight

As part of its Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations, The Westmoreland has banded together with several area organizations to create a family-friendly New Year's Eve event in the spirit of "First Night." There will be many activities on and around our campus, including an outdoor synthetic ice rink, musical entertainment, a laser show countdown to midnight, and a confetti launch to welcome 2009. Free program. Call 724/837-1500 ext. 33 or visit www.wmuseumaa.org for more information.

City Theatre

What: Young Playwrights Festival

Date: January 7-11, 2009

Join us January 7-11, 2009 for City Theatre's Ninth Annual Young Playwrights Festival! This year's festival will feature staged readings by 6 winning middle school and high school playwrights, as well as new works by past YPF winners to celebrate the Pittsburgh 250 (a special project funded by the Allegheny Regional Asset District's Renaissance Grant). Tickets are \$5.00 to all performances and may be ordered by calling 412.431.CITY. For more information on the Young Playwrights Festival, visit www.citytheatrecompany.org/education OR contact Kristen Link, Director of Education, at klink@citytheatrecompany.org or 412.431.4400 x 274.

The Studio for Contemporary Craft

What: Teacher Workshop: *The Narrative Ceramic Figure: Form and Surface*

Where: The Society for Contemporary Craft

When: January 19, 2009

Time: 9 am to 4 pm

Teachers rediscover their own creativity as they work with internationally recognized ceramic artist Matt Nolen. In the morning, build a portrait head using slab construction from soft pattern pieces. In the afternoon explore the use of slip, stain and underglaze to address surface development. Nolen also provides tips for adapting his techniques to the classroom. Seven Act 48 Credits will be awarded for this workshop. To register: call 412-261-7003 X 25.

Opportunities & Events (Cont.)

Pittsburgh CLO

What: *The Incredibly Innovative Innovators of Pittsburgh*

When: January-May 2009

This show has been extended due to popular demand! Let Pittsburgh CLO's Gallery of Heroes help fulfill your PA State Educational Standards in the Arts & Humanities; Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening; and History. Explore Pittsburgh's brilliant past, present and future with this fully-staged in-school contemporary musical. We invite your class to meet the local men and women who have helped change the world, including Rachel Carson, George Westinghouse and Jonas Salk. Call 412-325-6459 or visit pittsburghCLO.org.

Silver Eye Center for Photography

What: Point of View Writing Workshops

Date: Sundays in February and March 1 & 8

Time: 10 am - 12 noon

The Point of View Writing Workshops are a collaboration between Silver Eye and Sherrie Flick, artistic director of the Gist Street Readings series (www.giststreet.org). These writing workshops introduce a new way of looking at and responding to photography. Through a series of generative writing exercises, participants construct short stories related to the gallery's current photography exhibition. Teachers and non teachers welcome. This is a six week workshop limited to 10 participants. Call Sylvia Ehler, Education Coordinator, at 412.431.1810 for more information.

Surdna Arts Teachers Fellowship Program

Deadline: February 2009

Recognizing that such teachers often lack the time and resources to reconnect with the artistic processes they teach, the Program provides grants of up to \$5,500 to enable selected teachers to make art with professionals in their

disciplines and stay current with new practices and resources. A complementary grant of \$1,500 is awarded to each Fellow's school to support related post-Fellowship activities. The program offers teachers the opportunity to immerse themselves in their own creative work, interact with other professional artists, and stay current with new practices. For more information, visit http://www.surdna.org/programs/programs_show.htm?doc_id=326426&attrib_id=12040.

Prime Stage Theatre

What: 2008-2009 Season Student Matinees

Where: The New Hazlett Theater

Prime Stage Theatre will once again offer its popular student matinee performances during the 2008-2009 school year. All performances will be held at The New Hazlett Theater on Pittsburgh's North Side (6 Allegheny Square, East, Pittsburgh, 15212) and ticket prices are \$8 each. Each production will have three student matinee performances which will be held on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10:00 a.m. For more information on the matinees, visit www.primestage.com.

Please submit your Upcoming Events & Opportunities to Dana at: castod@artsedcollaborative.org
Due to limited space, submissions will run on a first come, first serve basis.

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Dora Baraky: Director of Operations
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