THE UNSEEN WORKFORCE

Shining a spotlight on those who don’t stand in it —
the magic behind the scenes

Introducing Jr Hi/HS students to a wealth of lesser-known but essential and well-paid opportunities in the entertainment industry
The focus of most arts education and arts funding only considers those most seen or heard — performers, visual arts, directors, and sometimes producers.
INTRODUCTION

In fact, there is a wealth of lesser-known, “invisible” but critical jobs in the entertainment industry that marry creative and technical skills, and also offer consistent and well-paid employment. There are constant requests for those who can support the behind-the-scenes teams.

However, representation in these fields is still primarily white and male.

The goal of this program is

— First, to introduce these opportunities in a manner that invites young people to consider them as careers; and
— Second, to expand the talent base to include more diverse and inclusive representation from underserved and underrepresented youth.
DIVERSITY STATS — an example

National Equity Stage Managers by Race/Ethnicity in 2020

Stage Manager Contracts by Race/Ethnicity: National
Total contracts = 12,061

Assistant Stage Manager Contracts by Race/Ethnicity: National
Total contracts = 4,985

Stage Manager Contracts by Person w/ Disability: National
Total contracts = 12,061

Assistant Stage Manager Contracts by Person w/ Disability: National
Total contracts = 4,985
Diversity Statistics among industry behind-the-scenes jobs are currently being researched by the appropriate unions and the info will be shared once they are completed.


IATSE: a labor union representing over 140,000 technicians, artisans, and craftspersons in the entertainment industry, including live theatre, motion picture and television production, and trade shows in the United States and Canada

USA (United Scenic Artists) a labor union and professional association of Designers, Artists, Craftspeople, and Department Coordinators

CSA (Casting Society of America)
Obstacles

— Awareness in the first place of this industry as an economic engine and job source!
— Falling into these jobs by accident — “sorry you didn’t get cast but hey, we need someone to stage manage”
— Gatekeepers — people hire those they know and have worked with before
— Economic and technical requirements:
  Income base/family wealth
  Access to technology
  Access to basic information about the industry
  Lack of time factors such as 2nd and 3rd jobs
  Being a caretaker: as example, being single parent, having disabled or senior family members
— Limited role models
— Skills are not taught and are not related to life skills
— College degree: it is necessary?
— Unpaid internships
— Connecting to professionals for mentorships leading to work
THE GOAL (to reiterate)

○ The program recognizes, honors and develops creative and technical skills leading to work. It also teaches life skills to build a successful future.

○ To introduce these opportunities in a manner that invites young people to not only make them aware of these jobs but also consider them as careers

○ To expand the talent base to include more diverse and inclusive representation from underrepresented communities.

HOW:

○ Targeted demographic outreach (ethnic background, lower income communities)

○ Youth ages 13 to 18, or in 8th through 12th grade

○ Curriculum-based program of 12 weeks

○ Facilitated through Zoom/online or, when available, in person

○ Additional opportunities: internships, apprenticeships, and coordination with community college programs for further education

○ Curriculum spotlights:

  1. Stage management

  2. Designers and their support teams for Lighting, Set, Costume, Sound, and Props

  3. General art skills: Graphic Design

  4. Public Relations, Communications, and Marketing

  5. Crew/Show Support: ongoing work attached to a venue or a specific designer for consistent work

  6. (possible future inclusion) House Management/Production Management/TD work/Casting

Participants are introduced to these topics along with opportunities to advance through further training and internships.
The first outing will be with Native Voices at The Autry
In all areas of the entertainment industry, members of Indigenous communities have, by far, the smallest representation.

Initially, this program will be under the aegis of Native Voices at the Autry, a union theatre company devoted to developing and producing new works by, for, about and with members of the Native community.

The outcome for Native Voices and other underrepresented theatre companies will allow them to create work utilizing members of their respective communities, and in addition will also change the face of theatre.

What this can accomplish
Training for and access to good, viable and extant jobs that pay a living wage, and lead to long-lasting careers with consistent work.

Builds skill sets that apply to every aspect of life such as observation skills, teamwork, creative problem solving, self confidence, leadership, work ethic

Honors and develops creative and technical skills leading to work, and to successful relationships in their daily lives.

CHALLENGE: Locating targeted students
Schools/community organizations
Schools in lower income areas, skid row
Local community-specific theatre companies
https://lanaic.lacounty.gov/resources/indian-organizations/
Indigenous Environmental Network, Honor the Earth, NDN collective
SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

Skill Set Exercises
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lmfmMy8JqisBV-sFlzjnPnBZ0k3fQhrG6AucZtMaIOE/edit?usp=sharing

Translation to Performance
Reading the script:
Students will anticipate various needs based on a few pages of the script. What is the information shared in both stage directions and lines?

Manifesting on stage:
Students will see how well their predictions match what actually happened on stage during the matching sections of the archive video. They will then go back and review the script with an eye to what they saw, and discuss how each element supported the script whether or not it was mentioned, and tie it to the exercises. It will include paying attention to timing of the cues and watching them manifest, and seeing what’s not on the page.

EXAMPLE:
Observation exercise using archive video from the Playwright’s Arena production of BLOODLETTING OR this entire exercise (script and archive video) from a Native Voices show as available.
Bloodletting was produced by Playwrights Arena in Los Angeles. The play is based in Filipino culture and mythology, contrasting modern beliefs with ancient tradition and the modern existence of ancient beings known as aswangs.

It was written, directed, designed and performed by predominantly Filipino artists. The archive video of the show is used with permission to demonstrate both specific skills and the many invisible jobs that supported this production.
Breaking it down — examples

Pre-existing script — using either Bloodletting or a script specific to that culture/community

Breakdown basics — what do you see in the script: (WWW/French scenes + all info provided)

Looking for cues: SM/Sets/ LD/SD/Costumes/Props — what do you see in the video

What is needed based on what you see/ What is needed based on what you don’t see/ What was added?

Creating paperwork

Design for each dept
   Students tie to the new play series, working on their own, then w the SM and director, perhaps observing casting and in each case being able to ask questions
LESSONS LEARNED

Students demonstrate their knowledge by building a breakdown from a preexisting scene or by writing their own scene, and listing existing elements as well as creative ideas to manifest them.

Students not writing their own can use a preexisting script from any canon, preferably playwrights who are POC/PWD/LGBTQ++/NonBinary/Women. Referral to the Kilroy list and membership in the National New Play Network website will be included.

Identify and propose solutions to perceived challenges.

On paper, the students will perform the work necessary for this to be presented and, potentially, brought into physical space in a scholastic situation for a wider audience using a cast of classmates or professional actors.
Guest Speakers

Initial wish list (All will be POC/PWD)
  Chris Murillo (Set Designer)
  Ed Haynes (Set Designer)
  Raul Staggs (Casting Director)
  Howard Ho (Composer/Sound Designer)
  Elizabeth Harper (Lighting Designer)
  Andy Lowe (Fight Choreographer)
  Monique Holt (Deaf Choreog/Diretor)
  Annie Weigand (Deaf Lighting Designer)
  Porsche McGovern (LD)
NEXT STEPS

Mentorships, observation opportunities and apprenticeships with guest speakers or others interested in generating broader opportunity

Connection/Feeder to Tech Theatre/Entertainment training at technical programs taught at the College of the Canyons and other schools

Courses designed to train the support staff for all departments, leading to work in a variety of entertainment industry arenas:
- Stage Management: Crew, PA, non-union ASM
- Lights: initial hang/focus/program; repair lights and lamps as needed through a run
- Costumes: run/repair wardrobe for plays/film/theme parks
- Sound: initial laying cable, supporting the sound design; mix sound for performances
- House Management: Ushering, box office and house management work
- Casting: Casting assistant, casting director
- Props: researching, building and repairing/maintaining props
- Film/TV work: DP, AD, Gaffer, Best Boy, Script Supervisor
- Production: Production manager, managing director, dramaturg, program and one-sheet design

Review of the many areas of potential work, from theme parks to opera, rock concerts to symphony orchestras, traditional theatre to events, benefits and conventions and more.
## COST FACTORS: Guesstimates for one year

### BASIC RUNNING COST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Manager</strong> (20 hours/week at $30/hour, annual part-time)</td>
<td><strong>$31,200</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Artist</strong> (10 hours/week at $25/hour - 12 week + 2 weeks training) plus payroll taxes</td>
<td><strong>$3500 + payroll taxes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Training and pay for future teachers for this and other communities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker</strong> ($300/each, x 5)</td>
<td><strong>$1500</strong></td>
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<td>Range is from $50 to $200 + gas / parking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supplies</strong> ($250/participant, for 10 participants)</td>
<td><strong>$2,500</strong></td>
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<td>Script copies, school supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong> stipends ($150/participant, for 10 participants)</td>
<td><strong>$1500</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Telecommunications</strong> stipends ($150/participant for 10 participants)</td>
<td><strong>$1,500</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use of preexisting / archive materials</strong> ($500 - $1,500/archive)</td>
<td><strong>$1,500</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pay for all contributors to presented work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROUGH TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$43,200+</strong></td>
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**Additional expenses (see sidebar)**: Approx $7-10K

**Additional expenses to include:**

- Native Voices as program host
- Funding for mentorships/apprenticeships
- PR/sales/outreach
- Membership in the National New Play Network/New Play Exchange
- Other areas TBD
MAKE THIS PROGRAM A REALITY

While it would cost around $50,000 for an entire session of this pilot program, up to $25,000 would allow this groundbreaking project to launch. Sponsorships of even $5,000 can take this first step towards making a real paradigm shift in both the entertainment industry, and in access to available jobs for young people entering the industry’s workforce.
VALUE TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Becoming more inclusive and diverse, creating opportunities for work

Authentic representation

Disrupt the preexisting white male supremacy model

Putting action to words, taking action on promises to change the industry
<table>
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<th>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</th>
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<td>Workforce Development grants</td>
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<td>Corporate sponsorships through DEIA initiatives</td>
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<td>LA developers 1% arts funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working industry professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development Initiatives</td>
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WHAT’S NEXT —

Adjusting the program to be flexible, creating culture-specific opportunities along with broader intersectionality available for all at-risk, low-income and underrepresented students, building a structure that can be taught to and led by other teaching artists.
Let’s continue the discussion.......