PLATO WOULD HATE THIS:
TWO THEATRES WITH SUCCESSFUL CONTROVERSIAL WORK

A Dissertation

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Abstract

My dissertation, a multiple case study with auto-ethnographic aspects, investigates, examines and analyzes how two modern theatre companies are able to successfully produce controversial work in an atmosphere where theatres are pressured into discontinuing that type of work. I studied the Studio Theatre in Washington, DC and the Oval House Theatre in London, England, so readers could have a look at two theatre companies with different, but still controversial work and to be able to see the differences between a producing company and a presenting company. I specifically look at the role of artistic vision, finance, development and fundraising, and marketing and public relations to discover how these companies succeed where others have so often failed.

My study begins with research showing that although there is an abundance of material written about controversial theatre and censorship, these studies look at why theatre companies are discontinuing the production of controversial work. My study also raises interesting questions concerning research methods where controversial subjects are covered, but confidentiality is not possible in any real terms. Rather than provide a purely standard multiple case study, I examine my own experiences within the theatre in general and at both the Studio Theatre and Oval House Theatre. These autoethnographic

connections provide not only insight into my motivations, but a more personal look at the work of both theatre companies.

I then discuss the anti-theatrical prejudice that has been with us since Greek times with Plato and follow that thinking to modern times. Here, I cover commercial, nonprofit, government sponsored and public funded theatre and the role of organizational management. I then provide current examples of controversial work at the end of the twentieth century and beginning the twenty-first century where theatrical productions have either been censored or major efforts were made to censor the work. The main focus of the study is the research concerning Studio Theatre and Oval House Theatre. Both companies are located in major, world capitals. Both companies are involved with controversial work in different ways. I found the success of both theatre companies has depended on a strong artistic vision where finances, development and fundraising and marketing and public relations are used to serve the needs of the artistic vision instead of the artistic vision being defined by the ideas put forth in these areas. Even though both companies are successful, I provide for recommendations on how they can make their organizations stronger so they can continue their work.

Dedication

To my Mother, Janet Kush, and my Father, William Marchant, for all of their love and support and for giving me the strength to follow my dreams no matter where they take me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

> The purpose of serious theatre can be stated simply – to challenge the audience to examine everything that they don't want to face about themselves and their world. (Davis, 2006)

In 2005, the New York Theatre Workshop canceled its plans to produce the play *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, a controversial play taken from the letters, emails and journals of a young American woman who was killed in Gaza when an Israeli ran over her with a bulldozer as she protested with Palestinians about the destruction of their homes (Davis, 2006). New York Theatre Workshop had a reputation for producing cutting edge theatre that explores the "political and historical events and institutions that shape contemporary life" (p. 1). The New York Theatre Workshop Artistic Director, James Nicola, stated they were indefinitely postponing the work because they needed time to prepare the community and "that in the current climate the work could not be appreciated as 'art' but would be seen in political terms" (p. 1). New York Theatre Workshop did not just postpone the production, but did not produce *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (Davis).

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Ralph Grillo, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sussex, wrote about violent protests in

December 2004 that caused the Repertory Theatre in Birmingham to cancel a controversial play, *Behtzi* (2007). *Behtzi* was written by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, a British-born Sikh woman who won the Blackburn Award for the play. The Blackburn Award is given to a woman playwright for creating “an outstanding work for the English speaking theatre” (p. 6). The play is set mostly in a Sikh temple and involves issues of domestic violence against women. Some members of the local Sikh community believed the play was offensive to their faith and wanted the setting removed from a Sikh temple. The theatre company entered into talks with those who believed the play was offensive and agreed to hand out flyers to the audience explaining the grievances. The Repertory Theatre’s response to hand out flyers was not acceptable to those who believed the play was offensive and so they began to protest the play. The protests turned violent and protestors broke into the theatre during a production causing the theatre to be evacuated. The play was closed. The Repertory Theatre management stated they could not guarantee the safety of the people involved in the production or the audience.

Those who produce controversial theatre see theatre as needing to upset and challenge traditional notions of propriety and morality (Houchin, 2003). Many playwrights want to challenge audiences and present them with ideas that defy traditional beliefs and morals. The Artistic Director of *Repertorio Espanol,* Robert Weber Federico, in New York City believes it is the goal of the theater to lead the community, not just to follow what the community wants the theatre to do

(Building Audiences, 1996, p. 7). Additionally, David Edgar (2006) finds the stage, “provides a site in which you can say things that are riskier and more extreme than the things you can say elsewhere, because what you say is not real but represented” (p. 73). Others believe theatre should be entertaining and it should not be objectionable or offensive (Houchin, 2003). They see theatre as something to reflect the beauty in society and they want to maintain or restore the boundaries that prescribe sexual behavior and keep the genders separate.

Even though controversy can be at the heart of what many playwrights are writing, there is enormous pressure to keep theatres from producing controversial work (Houchin, 2003). This is done through a number of means, including removing funding for theatres, protesting productions, and attempting to change the laws so the work being presented is considered unlawful (Houchin, 2003; Edgar, 2006; Davis, 2006). Many theatres have given up producing controversial work because they do not know how to do it and still remain as a successful producing company (Houchin, 2003; Building Audiences, 1996; Edgar, 2006; Davis, 2006).

In England, the government’s censorship office that dealt with theatrical performances was abolished in 1968 (Edgar, 2006). This has certainly not prevented calls for the censorship of controversial work in British theatre. In addition to the Sikh protests of *Behtzi* described above, there were also protests by Christian Voice, a religious right organization in the United Kingdom, concerning the production of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (Edgar). In addition to

holding protests at the performances of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the *Christian Voice* protested the BBC's decision to show the production by publishing the home phone numbers of the BBC executives (Edgar).

In the United States, the tension between two definitions of the purpose of theatre described above exploded in what is now referred to as the culture wars (Houchin, 2003). This reached a pinnacle in the late 1980's and early 1990's Those opposing funding of the arts argued the material produced by artists were objectionable and immoral and should not be funded by the government. The National Endowment for the Arts was required to have the artists who received funding sign a loyalty oath stating that the grant money would not be used to produce obscene material (Houchin).

In both the United Kingdom and the United States, there are a large number of nonprofit theatre companies that depend on the support of various government and private foundations to survive (Houchin, 2003; Building Audiences, 1996). Increasingly, this funding comes with requirements that the theatre company not produce material that is considered objectionable (Houchin, 2003). Some religious organizations have been instrumental in curtailing the production of controversial work. In the United States, religious organizations have been successful at getting funding to theatre companies stopped when the company produces work they find offensive. In England, there have been attempts to make it unlawful to insult religion or glorify or condone political violence (Edgar, 2006). The law passed in England makes it unlawful to incite

religious hatred and that incitement must be intended and threatening (Edgar). Although the law passed, some lobbyists were successful in including protection for those involved in “criticism, abuse, insult or ridicule of any religion” (p. 70).

Much of the literature looks at what happens when theatre companies are censored or their work is protested and the changes companies are making away from producing work that some people might find objectionable. The purpose of this study is to look in depth at two theatre companies, one in London, England and one in Washington, DC, that are able to produce controversial work on a consistent and successful basis. Oval House Theatre is the company in London, England, and The Studio Theatre is the company in Washington, DC. Both companies have been around for more than thirty years. There are similarities between the organizations, but there are also a number of differences. Some of these surface differences are described below. Oval House Theatre brings in outside artists to perform, but does not produce their own theatre. Studio Theatre produces its own work. Additionally, Oval House has a number of non-performing arts ventures such as a visual arts gallery and a café and Studio Theatre has an Acting Conservatory attached to it. Government funding generally plays a larger role in theatre companies in the United Kingdom than in the United States. Unfortunately, the United Kingdom also made significant funding cuts to the arts recently, which may have had an impact on Oval House. Although this limited case study will not be generalizeable to all theatre companies, this study should allow theatre companies interested in producing

controversial work to look at models where it is being done successfully. If theatre is going to lead society, as stated by Robert Weber Federico, Artistic Director of *Repertorio Espanol,* then theatre companies must have models of those who are doing the work successfully.

Statement of the Problem

To stay in business, many theatre companies have chosen to only produce work that would not be considered controversial in their communities. Funding for the arts in the United States was decreased significantly during a period of time referred to as the Culture Wars. Senator Jesse Helms was able to amend legislation for the National Endowment for the Arts in 1989 so it barred from funding work that is "obscene, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts which, when taken as a whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" (20 USCS § 954). Obscenity in the United States is very ill-defined and even the U.S. Supreme Court has a very flexible definition of obscenity that lets a jury decide after the artist or those involved have been arrested (Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15, 30, 1973). It does not really tell the artist what can or cannot be created. This is the world theatre companies are working within.

Many theatre companies have had to make the choice between producing controversial work and going out of business or rejecting controversial work and staying open. In this study, I investigated how theatre companies were able to

successfully produce controversial work involving sexuality, religion, and politics. A multiple case study of two theatre companies allowed for an in depth look at how each theatre company works and the environment they work in. The problem of producing controversial work is not just occurring in more conservative environments, but also includes New York City where most people believe theatres can produce anything.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a theatre company that had been producing controversial work around issues of sexuality, and politics, discontinued that work because they were told by a marketing director the work was alienating their audience and they needed to produce more mainstream work if they were to succeed (Lila Wallace Readers Digest, 1996). In Cobb County, Georgia, a theatre company that was able to produce controversial work for years was forced to decide between closing and discontinuing their history of producing this type of work (Houchin, 2003). They no longer produce controversial work. In response to the violent protests in Birmingham over the production of the play *Behzti*, other theatre companies did not wait "to be attacked before pulling risky material," but instead chose to forego doing controversial work that might be seen as inciting violence (Edgar, p. 70).

Edgar finds the production of controversial work allows people to 1) "imagine other worlds and other times through stories told either from or about them;" 2) "plan, which relies on the ability to imagine a series of actions and their consequences and, on the basis of that speculation, to choose between them;"

and, 3) empathize (Edgar, 2006, p. 74). These lessons are lost when "there are subjects too important, too profound, too dangerous for writing…to touch" (p. 74). The issue of free speech is not just about the speaker, but also about the listener. Edgar argues the audience has just as much right to listen to what some people consider "offensive material" as the writer has to produce it.

Primary Research Question

How do theatre companies successfully produce controversial work involving sexuality, religion, and politics?

Sub-Questions

1. What role does artistic direction/vision play in the successful production of controversial work?
2. What role does marketing play in the successful production of controversial work?
3. What role does fundraising and development play in the successful production of controversial work?

Rationale for Study

Surveying theatre companies to see who is producing controversial work is less important at this point as the literature is clear the number of theatre companies producing such shows is declining (Houchin, 2003; Building Audiences, 1996; Edgar, 2006). By utilizing a multiple case study, I look in depth at two theatre companies successfully producing controversial work involving sexuality, religion and politics. A survey would not produce this in depth

knowledge of how theatre companies can do these types of productions. Using the autoethnographic elements in the multiple case study let me draw on my own experiences with the companies to find out how theatre companies producing controversial work are able to succeed in an environment that seems opposed to this type of work.

Theatre in the United States and the United Kingdom overlap substantially and what is produced in one country most likely gets produced in the other at some point. In choosing two companies, I spoke with professionals in the nonprofit theatre world to see what companies they thought were producing controversial work successfully. Adela Ruth Tompsett, professor at Middlesex University in London, England, suggested the Oval House Theatre in London and Gail Humphries, Professor and former Chair of Performing Arts at The American University and Barbara Tucker Parker, head of Costume Design at The American University, suggested the Studio Theatre in Washington, DC. Both companies are at least thirty years old and have produced work that people would label as controversial. Both companies are based in major capital cities with thriving theatre communities. Further, both companies produce contemporary work that is often at the center of controversy.

Limitations for Study

The first limitation is that this study assumes the production of controversial work involving sexuality, religion and politics is positive. This study is also limited by only looking at two theatre companies. The information

obtained from this multiple case study may not be generalizeable to other theatre companies. Other theatre companies may also be successfully producing controversial work in different ways, but this will not be covered in this study.

Additionally, there has been a limited amount of research about the production of controversial theatre at the collegiate level. In his survey of community college theatre programs, Edward Lee found fifty-two percent of those surveyed indicated there were plays they wanted to produce, but could not, because of controversy (1998). This study will not be addressing theatre produced at the collegiate level, but at the nonprofit professional/semi-professional, but non-commercial level.

Chapter 2 deals with the research methods for this multiple case study and includes information on the autoethnographic connections in my own life and also covers the area of confidentiality when dealing with controversial material. In Chapter 3 as part of the literature review, I discuss the anti-theatrical prejudice, commercial, nonprofit and government sponsored and public funded theatre. I also write about censorship within performing arts and look specifically at instances of censorship in the United States and the United Kingdom over the last fifteen years. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the research involving the Studio Theatre in Washington, DC and Chapter 5 deals with the research at Oval House Theatre in London, England. The final chapter provides the reader with my conclusions with regards to this study and recommendations for both further

research and how each of the companies researched may improve management of their organizations.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

Autoethnography

> Many of us "do" ethnography but "write" in the conservative voice of science...In short, we often render our research reports devoid of human emotion and self-reflection. As ethnographers we experience life but we write science. (Sparkes 2000, p. 21 quoting Krizek, 1998, p. 93)

Andrew Sparkes (2000) points out that sociologists have always included themselves in their research, but they were not always aware they were doing so (p. 22). "It is the voice of traditional science that is committed to 'rationality,' 'objectivity,' and a range of dualisms that include subject/other" (p. 28). How can the attempted removal of the self from our writing bring about anything but a bland look that nobody is interested in reading and that removes emotionality, which is so important to how people interact. What good is research if it does not accurately reflect reality and how we ourselves are fitting into that reality?

According to Sparkes, the charge of self-indulgence is waiting in the background whenever a researcher delves into the world of autoethnography and he shudders when it is raised because the person raising it does not usually have the background to understand how autoethnography works (Bochner & Ellis,

2002). In the article "Autoethnography: Self-Indulgence or Something More?", Sparkes (2002) creates a piece of autoethnography to explain the charges of self-indulgence in the genre (pp. 209-232). Sparkes points out that in traditional texts, researchers "are expected to emulate Victorian children: that is, to be seen (in the credits) but not heard (in the text)" (p. 213). The charge of indulgence is the "universal charge" leveled against autoethnographers (p. 214).

Relying on Church, Sparkes (2000) discusses how the charge of self-indulgence is often linked to including the emotional in your research (p. 30). Another researcher finds that the charge of self-indulgence negates the fact that often times, the work is not just about the self, but how the self is interacting with the other (p. 31). Sparkes notes his fear of the charge of self-indulgence may have played a part in his initial draft of the article "The Fatal Flaw" as he made sure to sandwich his story in between sections of pure theory and a literature review (p. 31).

Sparkes (2002) looks at what autoethnographies should be and that is "self-knowing, self-respectful, self-sacrificing or self-luminous," while trying to avoid actually becoming self-indulgent (p. 214). Sparkes lets the reader know that this universal claim of self-indulgence is based on a world view where removing the self from research is considered of tantamount importance (p. 215). This can be seen in the area of political science that has attempted to shy away from the genre of autoethnography because it is seen as less scientific (Burnier, 2006). Burnier is addressing the idea that autoethnography can be divided into

the evocative and the analytical and sees attempts to create an analytical autoethnography as a way to again remove the self from the research context. Autoethnography directly challenges this world and if this world of self-denial is the real world we are working in, it is hardly surprising that alternative forms of research would be challenged. At the same time that many researchers utilizing experimental writing look at transforming the world through their work, Paul Atkinson (2006) supports the division of autoethnography into the evocative and analytical and states that "we need to guard against any implicit assumption that self-transformation is the main outcome of such research processes" (p. 403).

Evaluating Autoethnography

Sparkes (2000) addresses the issue of what happens in evaluation "...when standard, traditional criteria of what makes a good sociological telling are applied, the autobiographical will always disappoint" (p. 28). Ellis (2006) notes it is difficult to address the critics because the autoethnographer finds himself on defensive ground and finds the defense is based in the arguments of the critic rather than in the value of autoethnography (p. 434). Ellis finds that the

> [G]oal is to open up conversations about how people live, rather than close down with a definitive description and analytic statements about the world as it 'truly' exists outside the contingencies of language and culture. I believe the conversational style of communicating has more potential to transform and change the world for the better. As a multivoiced form, conversation offers the possibility of opening hears and increasing understanding of difference. (p. 435)

Sparkes (2002) comes up with a list of questions that can be utilized as criteria for evaluating autoethnographies:

> What substantive contribution to our understanding of social life does it make?
> What is its aesthetic merit, impact, and ability to express complex realities?
> Does it display reflexivity, authenticity, fidelity, and believability?
> Is it engaging and evocative?
> Does it promote dialogue and show potential for social action?
> Does the account work for the reader and is it useful? (p. 211)

The idea Sparkes (2000) presents is that "[t]he flexibility of nonfoundational lists is important to emphasize, lest one form of dogma is replaced by another in the face of the chronic uncertainty that we now have to live with as part of the postmodern condition" (p. 38). New models should not be forced into old criteria and new criteria should not be developed that is as inflexible as their predecessors.

Linking Science and Emotion

Carolyn Ellis (2006) finds that a researcher is attempting to limit the worldview in research to that of the mind without taking emotions and the rest of the body into account (p. 431). It would be interesting to look at and compare the danger of removing yourself and your emotions from your work. Horrible atrocities have been committed in the name of scientific advancement and the ability of the researcher to remove himself from his part in the experiment is at the heart of how people can do terrible things. Some researchers are trying to

interject the personal and the emotional back into scientific research while others are trying to pull autoethnography back into the traditional scientific world that still believes in the idea of objectivity. There is a third direction that will allow for traditional forms of research while still viewing these traditional forms through the lens of autoethnography. This allows me to use traditional research while still providing myself as the moral and emotional compass in the research.

As a child growing up in then fairly conservative New Hampshire, I had very little access to the theatre, although I was drawn to the performing arts at a young age when I first saw *The Nutcracker* at the age of five in Boston on a field trip. I was involved in the only two theatre productions my high school produced while I was in school. The theatre and life in college changed all of that when I moved to Washington, DC to attend school at The American University. I found myself cast in productions dealing with issues surrounding Nazi occupied France and poverty and homelessness in the United States. I worked on shows that dealt with issues of prostitution and alternative relationships. My eyes continued to be opened by the work I was doing in the theatre.

In addition to working on shows at The American University and with a couple of children's theatres, I also began seeing theatre produced in Washington, DC. I saw shows such as Christopher Durang's *Sister Mary Ignacius Explains It All to You*, that provided for humor and criticism of religion for the first time as well as a production of *As Is*, dealing with issues surrounding politics and AIDS, which I describe further in Chapter 4. I was also introduced to

productions such as Brad Fraser's *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love,* a controversial Canadian play that presented dysfunctional heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Although I still enjoy the plays and musicals that are just fun to watch, over the years, I became more and more drawn to the work that also challenged the audience with their own preconceptions of the way the world should be. Rather than finding theatre to be a source indicating the decline of society, I found that theatre provides a voice for those in society that are not so easily accepted. When I began looking at theatre companies, I needed to include my own experiences in the theatre in general and with the chosen theatre companies specifically.

As much as we try, research is not always very clinical. We are involved and bring our own backgrounds and issues to bear on not only how we research, but also what we choose to research. It is certainly possible to research how controversial material is successfully produced in theatre within a traditional framework, but something would be missed. Strong emotions are intimately linked to the production of controversial topics. Attempting to research these issues in a solely traditional format would weaken the emotional insight that comes through autoethnography. Not including more traditional forms of research would deny people the data that lets people see the results clearly.

Study Design

Since theatre companies are becoming less likely to produce controversial work, the multiple case study with autoethnographic aspects is the most

instructive way to investigate the question of how do theatre companies successfully produce controversial work involving sexuality, religion, and politics. Although I have conducted qualitative interviews at the Studio Theatre and informal interviews at Oval House Theatre, the information I obtained with my personal involvement with the organizations is necessary for a complete picture of both theatre companies. As noted in an article on the online newsletter *Counter Punch*, Walter Davis (2006), Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University, stated many theatre companies have "forgotten what serious theatre is" and "much written and produced under that label is no such thing." The theatre companies for the multiple case study were narrowed down by speaking with people in the field about who has a reputation for producing controversial work and collecting and analyzing documents concerning each company's productions. Since theatre between the United States and the United Kingdom is fluid and both are dealing with problems with producing controversial work, concentrating the multiple case study on a theatre company from each country provided an opportunity to look at similarities and differences between them and how they were able to produce controversial work in each country.

The Oval House Theatre in London, England was the best choice as they are engaged in producing controversial work in all three areas of sexuality, religion and politics and have been producing theatre since the 1960's. The Studio Theatre in Washington, DC has also produced controversial work since the late 1970's. According to Stake (1995), access is one of the most important

pieces needed when participating in a case study and access to these theatre companies was based on my internship with Oval House Theatre and the connections I have with Studio Theatre through former professors at The American University.

Studying the companies as a whole allows me to look at all aspects of each theatre company involved to get a holistic view of how they run and are able to produce the work other companies would like to produce (Mason, 2005). Mason (2005) finds that arguments in qualitative research can be made "about how something has developed…how something works or is constituted…[and] how social phenomena compare" (p. 175). All three of these types of argument will be addressed with the data gathered in this multiple case study.

Data Gathering

Data was gathered from two sources, documents and people working or volunteering with the case study theatre companies. As noted above, Stakes (1995) found that access and permission is necessary and this applies specifically to the data. I interned in the Theatre Programming Department at the Oval House Theatre in the summer of 2008 and I have interviewed staff at the Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. and I have been in the audience for some of their productions. Both of these companies have an extended history of producing controversial work. Both companies were proud of the work they do in this area and see theatre as a means to challenge audience members about the world we live in. The autoethnographic aspects of the data reflect my personal

interactions with the theatre companies, their work, their staffs and my personal reflections on the traditional data collected.

The documents gathered include financial records, history and materials of productions, organizational policies and procedures and records of complaints. Many of these records were public as both theatre companies are nonprofit organizations. The financial records provided information on what role finances and fundraising played in the production of controversial work. Historical records and materials from past productions were instrumental in determining what was and was not controversial at the time of production. Organizational policies and procedures lead to answers on how these organizations can succeed while others are failing. Finally, records of complaints were helpful in determining how each company has dealt with controversy when it has presented.

The second area of data was information held by the staff of each of the organizations. This data was gathered in qualitative interviews with staff of each of the organizations as well as my personal interactions with staff. The qualitative interviews were conducted in person. These interviews were recorded as mp3 files before they were transcribed for analysis. Information from the staff was important in determining the role the individuals and groups have played in the production of the controversial work.

The theatre companies have very different size staffs. Oval House Theatre has fifteen paid staff. Of these fifteen, all but three are upper level positions with responsibility for an area of the company. At Oval House Theatre, I had

interaction with most of the staff in my internship, but I had more in depth interaction with the Head of Theatre Programming, Ben Evans, the Head of Press and Marketing, Debbie Vannozzi, General Manager, Gary Stewart, and Artist Advisor, Michael Atavar. On the other hand, Studio Theatre has forty-six employees involved with the theatre company and another nineteen instructors in the attached acting conservatory. I interviewed the Executive Director of Institutional Development Morey Epstein, the Director of Communications, Liane Jacobs, and the Associate Literary Manager/Dramaturg, Sarah Wallace.

Data Analysis

Mason (1995) points out there are different ways to organize and index your data involving either cross-sectional data indexing or case study forms of data organization. Case study forms of data organization allow the researcher to "gain a sense of the distinctiveness of the different parts or elements of your data set…understand intricately interwoven parts of your data set…organize data around themes, issues or topics…place great emphasis on context" (pp. 165-166). This does not mean that cross-sectional indexing will not also occur, but the outcomes for a case study form of data organization will allow the context to take a much greater role and this multiple case study lends itself to the necessity of context. This allowed emerging ideas to reveal themselves and be incorporated into the analysis.

Stake looks at two ways to analyze data either through categorical aggregation or direct interpretation (1995). Both ways of analyzing are necessary

as Stake points out that a researcher involved in direct interpretation “sequences the action, categorizes properties, and makes tallies in some intuitive aggregation” and those involved in categorical aggregation may find “some important features only appear once” (1995, p. 74). The studies in the literature review provide a lens for analysis that include an assumption that producing controversial work is a positive thing (Houchin, 2003; Edgar, 2006; Davis, 2006).

Documents, including financial records, historical records and materials on productions, organizational records on policies and procedures, and records of complaints are analyzed to see what role controversial work has played in each theatre company. The controversial work is analyzed by comparing the work produced with the work discussed in the literature as controversial. The interviews with staff is analyzed utilizing various organizational theories once it is determined what organizational theories guide each company and whether these organizational theories are important in production of the company’s work.

Stake further notes the case study is utilized either specifically to make the individual case understandable or to provide generalizeable knowledge from the case study (1995). Unfortunately, the smaller case studies, such as the one presented here looking at two individual theatre companies, “are not as strong a base for generalizing to a population of cases as other research designs” (Stake, 1995, p. 85). Rather than providing generalizeable knowledge, the analysis of the data in this multiple case study provides knowledge about each of the theatre

companies that other theatre companies can utilize as examples if they are interested in producing controversial theatre.

Validity for the documents analyzed and the qualitative interviews are determined by checking results with those involved. Independent research on the controversial nature of the work was sought by reviewing news stories and other sources that protested the work.

Significance of Study

We live in a time where people have been successful at stopping the production of controversial work in the theatre both here in the United States and also in England. The controversial work that seems to cause the most problems currently involves issues of religion, sexuality and politics and any combination of these three areas. Shows have been closed and theatres have been forced to decide between producing challenging and controversial work that makes the audience think and closing or producing shows with little to no controversy that seek solely to entertain and stay open. There is a large amount of scholarship looking at censorship in the theatre and the reasons theatres are not able to produce controversial work as well as the dichotomy of theatre as entertainment and theatre as a means to make the audience think. However, this study looks at theatre companies that are and have been successfully producing controversial work around issues of religion, sexuality and politics in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Theatre in both of these countries tends to overlap significantly and both are facing similar challenges although

sometimes what is controversial in one place may not be considered controversial in the other. Previous study has focused on those theatre companies that have had to stop producing controversial work (Houchin, 2003; Building Audiences, 1996; Lee, 1998; Edgar, 2006; Davis, 2006). This gap in the research is important as many in the theatre see the production of controversial work as one of the main roles of theatre (Houchin; Edgar; Davis). With this understanding, theatre is meant to make people uncomfortable with their world and to make them think about those things that make them uncomfortable. We know many theatre companies have to refrain from producing controversial work because of socio-cultural and economic issues, but we need to know how those who are continuing to produce such work on a consistent basis are able to do so.

Unique Research Issues: Sensitive Topics Research

Background

Although the magnitude of harm in social science research is generally much less than in biomedical research, three experiments in social science are utilized as prime examples of unethical behavior on the part of researchers. These are the experiments of Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo and Laud Humphreys (Haggerty, 2004). Stanley Milgram's research looked at obedience to authority. Philip Zimbardo's research looked at how people interact in a prison like setting when placed in the roles of guards and prisoners. Laud Humphreys studied what was referred to as tearoom activity among homosexual men. These cases illustrate the need for oversight of social science research.

Milgram wanted to research individuals' obedience to authority figures (Haggerty, 2004). He told the study subject they were participating in a different experiment than they really were. I utilize subject here rather than participant because the way Milgram treated the people, subject is a much more appropriate word than participant. The subject was told the study was about learning. One person acted as the learner and the subject actually participated as the teacher. Each time the learner gave a wrong answer to a question, the teacher was to administer increasingly strong electric shocks to the learner. The learner was not really receiving shocks, but was acting as if each shock was greater. Around 60 percent of the teachers would end up thinking they were giving electric shocks that were capable of killing the learner. This experiment was condemned for harming the subject in a psychological manner.

Zimbardo's experiment was trying to get at the psychological response people have to incarceration (Haggerty, 2004). The subjects in this prison experiment were assigned randomly to the roles of prisoners or guards. The experiment had to be cut short after six days because the guards had begun abusing the prisoners through verbal abuse, ridicule and harsh punishments. This experiment was attacked because it had not clearly informed the subjects of the risks they might experience "psychological stress, physical discomfort, and humiliation," which they were subjected to (p. 400).

In the third case, Laud Humphreys was researching sexual activity between men in public restrooms (Haggerty, 2004). In the first part of the

experiment, Humphreys did not disclose that he was a researcher, but instead acted as a lookout for the men involved in case the police showed up. Humphreys took down the license plate numbers for these men's cars and then later showed up at their homes and posed as a health service official so he could get information about their personal lives.

Although social science was not looked at as seriously as medical research, these three cases highlight issues surrounding deception, manipulation of participants, invasion of privacy and informed consent in research. In response to the unethical behavior of researchers in the past, in 1974 a Commission was created to look at the basic ethics necessary when dealing with human participants in research (Belmont Report). The Commission created the Belmont Report, which provides the basic ethics principles in research as: 1) respect for persons; 2) beneficence; and 3) justice (Belmont Report). These have led to the ideas surrounding anonymity, not doing harm or at least maximizing the possible benefits and minimizing the possible harms and clarifying who gets the benefits and who bears the burdens.

In the United States, research that takes place in any organization that receives federal funding, are required to have Institutional Review Boards ("IRB") that review the research and make sure the basic ethics described by the Belmont Report are taken into account (Corbin & Morse, 2006). There are risks involved when conducting qualitative social science research, but the risks are not the same as those in biomedical research. Some IRB's believe that the risk

of harm in most qualitative research is minimal and they perform expedited reviews. Unfortunately, many IRB's utilize the same model for approving research whether they are dealing with social science or biomedical research. There is concern that participant harm could occur from unstructured, interactive interviews so Corbin and Morse set out to look at the risks and benefits associated with this type of research.

Today, harm to the participant in qualitative social research usually deals with damaging a participant's reputation, relationships or finances or the research may upset, offend or traumatize the participant (Haggerty, 2004). Corbin and Morse see the risks as breaking confidentiality or that interviewing on sensitive topics could arouse powerful emotions. They note at the beginning of the study that they have combined experience totaling fifty years and have not had to deal with any harmful incidents.

High Risk/Sensitive Topics

In biomedical research, the participant is presumed to be physically vulnerable and in need of the special protections provided by confidentiality and anonymity (Yu, 2008). In social science research, participant vulnerability generally refers to a lack of knowledge, poverty or the capacity for the participant to make decisions on their own. There is a difference between sensitive subject material and vulnerable participants. Sensitive research is "research that intrudes into a deeply personal experience, research that is concerned with deviance and social control, research that impinges on the vested interests of

powerful persons, and research that involves things sacred to those being studied" (Kavanaugh, 1998 p. 92). Of course, any subject can be a sensitive one, depending on the context (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

The biggest risk when dealing with sensitive topics is that the participant will be revictimized by recounting the story to the researcher (Corbin & Morse). There is worry that the participant will become emotionally distressed either during the interview or after the interview is over. Where this is the case, some researchers believe they should follow-up within a couple of days of the interview to make sure the participant is not distressed. Corbin and Morse found that most participants enjoyed the opportunity to tell their story even if they felt distressed at the time. Researchers can use other clues during the research process to see if a participant is really willing to discuss a subject. When a participant tends to cancel meetings and is frequently unavailable for the interviews, then the researcher may want to question whether the participant is really unavailable or is not willing to talk about the subject.

As Corbin and Morse (2003) note, even where the researcher is delving into sensitive areas that are deeply personal, the participants still have a lot of control over the process. Even though the participant has control over the interview, the researcher should adapt the interview to respond to the needs of the participant. This means the researcher should let the participant lead the way and choose their own words to tell the story. If the story does become distressful

for the participant, the participant should be the one to decide if the story telling should continue or come to an end.

Even with the risks associated with sensitive topics, participants tell their stories so they can be heard (Corbin & Morse, 2003). To counter the harm that might occur in research in sensitive areas, Corbin and Morse rely on Hutchinson's seven benefits of qualitative research: "a) serve as a catharsis, b) provide self acknowledgement and validation, c) contribute to a sense of purpose, d) increase self-awareness, e) grant a sense of empowerment, f) promote healing, and g) give voice to the voiceless and disenfranchised" (p. 346).

Tuffrey-Wigne researched in the area of doing research with people who have learning disabilities as well as cancer (2008). In this situation, the participants are seen as being vulnerable and the topic is also seen as being sensitive. Early in the article, Tuffrey-Wigne notes that it is important to have people with learning disabilities involved in research studies. She points out that there are ethical issues around the areas of informed consent, anonymity, and the boundaries that are supposed to exist between researcher and participant. When dealing with participants who are vulnerable, Tuffrey-Wigne recommended that the researcher create a research advisory board that could review the research and safeguard the vulnerable participants.

Rather than focus on the risks to the participant, Lee-Treweek looks at the danger to the emotional health of the researcher when the researcher is exposed

to multiple stories about sensitive topics and becomes involved on a deeper level with the participants (2000).

Interviews to Obtain Data

According to Corbin and Morse (2003), participant control over the research process varies with how the data is collected. They found in the unstructured qualitative interview that the participant had the upper hand in the power relations, control over the interaction and was able to direct the interaction. They point out that in the unstructured format, the participant sets the agenda by the stories they choose to tell and is able to control the timing of the interview and how deeply the participant wants to delve emotionally. In the semi-structured interview, the power relation switches because the researcher determines the agenda and structure of the interview, but the participant controls the amount and quality of the information provided. The direction of the interaction involves both the researcher and the participant equally. Finally, in the quantitative interview, the researcher is in the position of power and controls the interaction as a whole and the direction of the interaction. The only option the participant has is whether to respond or not.

The interview is broken down by Corbin and Morse (2003) into the pre-interview stage, the tentative stage, the immersion stage and finally emergence. The pre-interview stage is the time when the researcher thoroughly goes over the research, the participant's role in the research as well as the consent form for the research. Participants should be reminded that they always have the right to

withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher uses this time to determine if the participant understands what is being asked of them and the relationship between the two begins. The researcher can also try to determine what the participant is hoping to gain from participation in the research.

The next three stages, tentative, immersion, and emergence are what would be described as the official interview although the conversation may flow easily from the pre-interview stage into the actual interview without a break (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The qualitative interview does not usually jump right into the sensitive areas of the research. The tentative phase is usually more casual conversation while the participant gets a read on the interviewer and decides how much information they are willing to provide to the researcher. By the time the interview reaches the sensitive material that the participant is providing, the interview is in the immersion stage. At this time, the researcher must be conscious of how the participant is responding to discussing these sensitive areas. The researcher should provide a supportive environment and allow for breaks if the person being interviewed becomes emotional. Once the participant has regained control, the participant should be given the choice whether to continue or stop at their own discretion. At the end of the interview, the researcher should shift the focus away from the more sensitive and emotional material and begin discussing lighter topics and allow the participant to ask questions of the researcher. This does not mean that important information may

not come up in this phase as well, but the researcher needs to allow the participant to take the lead.

Some of the problems caused by qualitative interviewing have to deal with the relationship that develops between the researcher and the participant. The relationship can cause problems with the expectation of friendship, the participant sharing too much and the voluntariness of the participation (Thompson, 2002). Thompson looks specifically at how people with developmental disabilities might think of the relationship in terms of friendship rather than researcher and participant although this could certainly occur with participants who were not disabled in any way.

Since qualitative interviews are often done in the participant's space to make them feel more comfortable, the participants may feel so comfortable with the researcher that they may provide a lot more information than they had anticipated (Thompson, 2002). They may also not realize that the additional information may be used in the research as well. The same things that are utilized to make both the researcher and the participant feel comfortable can be the same things that cause confusion about the relationship between the two. The participant may also view the information told outside of the formal interview as not being a part of the research so the researcher needs to be clear about what is being utilized and that the participant is ok with that inclusion.

Finally, once the research has begun, the researcher may not know why the participant has become uncomfortable (Thompson, 2002). They may be

regretting the entire interview or the fact that they provided information they had not intended. Thompson noted that most researchers obtain informed consent at the beginning and do not address the issue again, but Thompson found that researchers should be continually verifying consent throughout the entire process. Miller and Bell have addressed the issue of what happens when the researcher obtains access to the participants through an outside source and the importance of re-emphasizing the voluntary nature of the participant's participation (2002). This can be difficult because the participant may be receiving pressure from the outside source to participate even if the researcher is not providing this pressure.

Consent

Researchers have utilized process consent to help minimize the risks associated with using qualitative interviews in research (Kavanaugh, 1998). Process consent is defined as "the immediate renegotiation of consent as circumstances change or unexpected events occur during the interview" (p. 92). Thompson also found that the consent should be tailored to the particular circumstances of each of the participants (2002). Thompson provides a legal definition of informed consent as encompassing "capacity, voluntariness, and information" (p. 97). Capacity refers to the participant's ability to make and communicate rational decisions with regard to participation in the research. Voluntariness means that the participation is free from any type of coercion, duress or constraint. The last area deals with the information the participant is

provided concerning the research and requires the researcher to let the participant know what the researcher is and the participant's role in that research. Informed consent can have many problems when the researcher is dealing with individuals who are vulnerable in some way that could negate one of these three areas. The researcher must remember that informed consent is ongoing and the researcher should check with the participant at various stages in the research.

In qualitative research utilizing interviews, participants retain a large measure of control over the process as they can end the interview at any point (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Corbin and Morse also point out that once participants are informed about the nature of the research and the voluntariness of their participation, those who are frightened by the interview process will most likely turn down participation in the research. They note that the consent forms used in this process should make it clear that participants are free to choose to participate or not.

Confidentiality

Although issues of confidentiality began with the medical profession, it has spread to most fields and confidentiality and anonymity for participants is generally considered the default position for research, including qualitative research (Yu, 2008). Allowing participants to keep their personal information out of the research is seen as giving the participant autonomy. Even though confidentiality and anonymity are the default position, it is difficult in some qualitative research settings to maintain anonymity when the people being

interviewed are well-known within their community (Snyder, 2002). Yu finds it is difficult if not impossible for all of the information provided to the researcher to be kept between the participant and the researcher when the ultimate goal of the research is the dissemination of knowledge.

Member checking is seen as a way to give participants control over the information they have provided, but in many ways, member checking serves to negate confidentiality (Yu, 2008). By providing for member checking, the researcher has to have a way to return to the specific participant and it is this return that can allow for a loss of confidentiality (Snyder, 2002). The signed consent forms also serve to negate the idea of anonymity (van den Hoonaard, 2003). Where the sample size is small, participants may recognize one another even when the information the researcher finds as identifying is removed (Snyder; van den Hoonaard). Snyder also finds there is an inherent contradiction in allowing participants to see the entire document for member checking. Many times, the participants can easily figure out who the others are even if the material is deleted from the final report.

Some researchers noted that their participants did not care about confidentiality, but for the researcher, it showed a level of professionalism (Yu, 2008). Providing confidentiality was seen as showing a researcher's trustworthiness and integrity in the research process. Since researchers presume providing confidentiality, they do so without bothering to ask if this is what the participants actually want. Many participants not only want their identity attached

to the research, they tell family and friends about their participation, so they defeat the confidentiality the researcher is trying to maintain. It is also pointed out that recognition of the participants' contributions is not given when confidentiality is maintained. Of course, Yu's discussion fails to address the fact the participant is not bound by confidentiality and their autonomy is still maintained if they decide to talk about the research.

Snyder (2002) found that researchers should do the following:

1) clarify the research and the realities of confidentiality/anonymity with all of the participants;
2) allow for member checking with regard to accuracy and identifying information;
3) the researcher should understand the degree of confidentiality/ anonymity the participant wants; and,
4) the researcher should create individual consent forms based n the varying desires of the participants.

Another problem is caused when the material that needs to be deleted to maintain confidentiality is the same material that is a necessary part of the research.

Van den Hoonaard (2003) breaks his research on confidentiality down into the areas of data gathering, analysis, and publication. Anonymity in large surveys do not provide the same problems that qualitative interviews provides. Van den Hoonaard addressed the issue of anonymity when the number of research

participants is small (2003). During the data gathering phase when dealing with small communities, van den Hoonaard points out that those located in the community will most likely recognize one another because people in small towns tend to know one another in ways urbanites do not understand. In these smaller environments, participants may know what other participants have told the researcher because the material may distinctive even if the researcher did not realize it. Van den Hoonard lets the reader know that even providing pseudonyms provides little in the way of hiding the identities of the participants. He also points out that signed consent forms and taped interviews readily link the participant to the information they have provided and that it sends the wrong message to the participant if the researcher states that the tapes will be destroyed.

In the analysis stage, van den Hoonaard also notes that the researcher is confronted by an enormous amount of data in the area of field notes, tapes and transcribed texts (2003). He states there is a direct connection between the amount of data to be analyzed and the accompanying threat to anonymity. At this point, it is unrealistic for the researcher to remove identifying characteristics from the data because it will only serve to confuse the researcher and possibly confuse the data. Removing identifying characteristics before this stage would also not allow the researcher to go back to participants for clarification. It would also prevent the researcher from taking part in member checking that many

researchers see as vital to not only protect the participant, but to provide validity for the research.

Anonymity runs into the deepest problems when the research is published in any format (van den Hoonaard, 2003). Even when identities are removed, if the researcher has described a unique setting or event, the identity of a participant may be revealed. Van den Hoonaard also points out that some participants may see the use of their pseudonym as breaking anonymity as many people utilize pseudonyms when communicating in online environments. Here, van den Hoonaard is making the assumption that the researcher has utilized a real pseudonym of the participant and not one that had been randomly assigned for the research alone. In publication, researchers often provide general background information that in the case of small research populations might serve to identify the community and possibly the individuals.

Van den Hoonaard believes the problems with anonymity in ethnographies and qualitative interviewing have not been addressed because the ones who need to complain are the participants and in many ways, they just do not care enough (2003). Van den Hoonaard points out that he sent drafts of his research to participants and he had little response and one person did not even remember taking part in the research. He then points out that most researchers under-use their data so the possible chances for breaking anonymity are slim.

The only ways van den Hoonaard sees to address the problems with anonymity in qualitative research is for the participants to voluntarily allow their

real names to be attached to the research or for the research to become covert (2003). Van den Hoonaard is not calling for covert research, but he sees it as one of two ways to protect the idea of anonymity. He does not see either using real names or covert research as the ultimate answers, but he thinks social science researchers need to begin looking at these problems.

Researchers have begun looking at the option of allowing participants the choice in disclosing their identity in the research although they do not address the issues surrounding participants whose anonymity is already threatened by the research process as a whole (Giordano, O'Reilly, Taylor & Dogra, 2007). Giordano, et al. see this discussion as necessary if researchers are really going to respect participants' autonomy. The only real choice that many participants currently have is whether they will participate in the research or not. They address a number of ethical issues surrounding confidentiality and anonymity when the research is done in the medical field and deals with the health records of participants as well as the field of psychology where disclosure is not an option. They also look at the field of anthropology, which allows researchers to let participants make the decision about anonymity. The ethical rules still require the anthropologist to present the possible impact disclosure will have on the participant. Although the code of ethics for the American Anthropological Association allows for disclosure, the code does not make recommendations and the researchers here see that as a problem. They believe that researchers are not experienced enough to know what the consequences of disclosure will be

even though they are required to discuss this with the participants. They see a conflict between the autonomy of the researcher to control the experiment and the right of the participant to disclose their identity. They recognize cases where anonymity is not possible, but find that further study is necessary.

Finally, returning to Snyder's discussions of anonymity, she found it was not possible to provide anonymity to directors in the programs she was researching because the directors were of local and historical importance and they were known widely in their communities for the work they were doing. The directors' contributions and role in the programs being studied could not be addressed without providing information that would identify the directors. To help address some of these issues, Snyder allowed the directors to review the material before it was sent to the full staff for member checking. This allowed the director to request to have highly personal information removed because she had not intended it for public consumption even though it came up during the interview.

Application to Current Research

Qualitative interviewing in the area of controversial theatre raises questions about the role of consent, anonymity and confidentiality in the research process. Controversial theatre may cover areas that many people consider high risk or sensitive topics. Many of the guidelines in the high-risk topic area are applicable to the research into controversial theatre, but the research done in this area is not directly on point. It is possible that individuals involved in theatre

companies that are producing controversial theatre also have personal problems in the same areas of the topics being presented by the theatre, but this cannot be assumed and will most likely not be known until it comes up in the actual qualitative interviews. Participants need to given every opportunity to end the interview if they so desire for any reason although the information sought is not personal experiences with the material presented at the theatre and why the controversial theatre is presented, but how the theatre is able to present such material. Participants were given the opportunity to review the research to see if personal material is provided that they would prefer was not present.

There were also issues with confidentiality in this multiple case study of controversial theatre. The sample size of two theatre companies made it difficult to disguise the individual participants and the companies as a whole. Even if the names of the companies were not used, an internet search of the plays produced would quickly narrow down the field of possibilities and using a pseudonym for the theatres would not hide their identities. The information would not be less useful if the readers did not know what companies were the objects of the study. The positive nature of the research also makes it likely that the theatre companies will want their names published as the work they are doing would be seen as enhancing their reputation.

Finally, informed consent was of the highest necessity because individual anonymity will be difficult if not impossible to provide for the higher level directors at each of the theatres. The artistic director of one theatre has been in the job

since the theatre was founded in the late 1970's and the director in the other has been in the job for more than fifteen years. These figures are known widely within theatre circles and within their local communities. Although names will not be used unless the participants want them to be used, any veil of anonymity will be very thin as the theatres are both well-known in their communities and the participants are known within the history of each of these companies.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

> ***Angels in America* aims to subvert the distinction between the personal and the political, to refuse to be closeted, to undermine the category of the 'normal', and to question the fixedness and stability of every sexual identity.** (Savran, 1995, p. 132)

Tony Kushner's goals, for his play *Angels in America,* are at the heart of arguments concerning the purpose of theatre and it is exactly what those opposed to controversial work are afraid of. In support of the violent protests by some members of the Sikh community in Birmingham, England, Grillo, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sussex, quotes a right-wing paper, the *Daily Mail*, who state they condemned the violence but have

> a scintilla of admiration for the willingness of Sikhs to protest at what they regard as a gross insult to their faith. At least here are a people who believe religion is a vital force in sustaining homes, decent family life and are prepared to fight for it. (Grillo, 2007 quoting *Daily Mail*, 2004)

Even those who claim to condemn violence, state those who force the closure of a show through violence are to be admired. The related literature for this research can be broken down into different areas involving the general prejudice against theatrical work, differences in the commercial, nonprofit, government sponsored and public funded theatres, controversial/provocative theatre and censorship, obscenity law, organizational management in the

nonprofit performing arts setting and contemporary examples of attempts to censor controversial or provocative theatre.

The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice

Jonas Barish (1981) takes the reader chronologically through the anti-theatrical prejudice from Plato to the mid-twentieth century. He lets the reader know that he is not trying to provide an explanation for the anti-theatrical prejudice, but to provide a description of that prejudice and highlight some of the arguments utilized throughout time.

According to Jonas Barish (1981), Plato is credited with beginning the written prejudice against not only the theatre, but also epic poetry, painting, sculpting and music. All of these forms of art are considered by Plato to be imitations of the real. Plato believed that people who imitate tend to become what they imitate. At this point, Plato is not knocking all imitation because he finds that the Guardians in his Republic should only imitate characters that are courageous, temperate and devout. Plato was specifically against the idea of mimesis, art that imitates real life.

In Plato's Republic, each person has a role that nature intends for him to play in society and he should not be allowed to stray from that role. The role of the state is to reinforce the roles nature has appointed. Plato condemns most imitation because it allows people to imagine their lives as being different from reality. If people can imagine their lives as different then they will not be satisfied with the life they are destined to have. For Plato, art comes from the individual

and in many ways it reaches back out to individuals. This conflicts with Plato's purpose in serving the state.

Theatre is the antithesis of Plato's Republic, where each person knows and accepts their assigned role in life. In Plato's world, they should not even be able to imagine something different. Theatre is all about memorizing numerous roles and altering those boundaries that nature has set. If a person really becomes what they imitate, then actors can never be satisfied with just their lot in life and the audience who sees actors constantly changing roles will want to change their own lives in a similar way.

Barish (1981) sees Plato's attacks against the theatre as a response to the power he sees in the theatre. The only theatre Plato might accept is one under the complete authoritarian control of the state. This would allow the state to control the message so people would always accept their place in life. It is interesting that all of these attacks were occurring at a time when theatre was thriving in Athens. Plato saw the Athenian focus on theatre and the arts as leading to the eventual downfall of the Athenian state.

Barish (1981) notes that almost right away, Aristotle backed off of Plato's harsh view of the theatre. Plato may have attacked mimesis, but Aristotle found it to be a source of great value in the area of education. Plato believed that the theatre was powerful enough to change people and that the change could be either positive or negative. Art seems to elude the control that Plato finds

necessary in the running of a society. Even as Plato attacked the theatre, it continued to thrive in Athenian society.

In the Roman Empire, theatre was still plentiful, but it had become completely disreputable although there is little that is concrete left to show why this shift occurred. This shift is historically puzzling, but at the height of the Roman Empire, those involved in the theatre were denied their civil rights. The theatre people were treated poorly, but they were also not allowed to leave the theatre either. So, although the theatre had fallen into disrepute, the theatre was still attended by enormous crowds, even as those directly involved in the productions were discriminated against.

At this time, Christianity came out harshly against the theatre and began to try to have the theatre suppressed. Barish (1981) found that the spectacles that were really serving as theatre had become obscene and bloodthirsty. At this time, Barish does not see this as being a bad position. Some of the initial Christian critics of the theatre equated acting with teaching the masses all that is evil in the world. By portraying evil through bad acts, actors were teaching the masses how to be evil. Portrayals of heroic deeds were seen as poor imitations. Many condemned the theatre because it gave pleasure and this was a distraction from religion.

Barish (1981) tells the reader that Christians must have been flocking to the theatre because priests began to fervently protest against it. Theatre was seen as a way to subvert men and lead them away from the worship of god.

Pretending to be something that was evil was seen as the same thing as being evil so both the evil and its imitation were bad. They saw no difference between the idea of play and nonplay. Pretending to do something is the same as actually doing it.

Augustine was able to rescue some of the areas of art in the way of poems, jokes and fables. Theatre could not be saved because actors intend to present something they know is false to the world. Augustine continues to see imitation by actors as a negative thing. Here, Augustine had been involved in the theatre when he was young and although he condemns it, he utilized the theatrical experience to explain Christian life.

The Christian festivals that re-enact the Passion of Christ and other miracle plays had become popular with Christians, but they were also eventually attacked as blasphemous. The idea of acting as a form of play was seen as a bad thing because it made things pleasurable and it detracted from the focus on the worship of god. Theatre had come to be seen as the darkest of sin, worse than others, because it was a direct connection to the devil. The miracle plays became to be seen as idolatry because the actors were imitating god. Those condemning the theatre continued to see the power in the theatre, but even when utilized with Christian messages, it was seen as distracting the masses from the message from the pulpit.

The sin of the theatre was seen as corrupting not only the actors involved, but the audience as well. The Puritans actually began a pamphlet campaign

against the theatre because acting was seen as being intrinsically evil. The popularity of the theatre can actually be seen in the anti-theatrical rants in this material.

Barish (1981) further found that the anti-theatrical responses come in “streaks, or bursts” (p. 221). Depending on the timing, a single letter can bring it right back to the surface, even when those in the theatre thought it was done. Even when the theatre was heartily embraced, some of those doing the embracing saw the purpose of the theatre as strengthening virtue and negating vice. This meant that anything evil or sinful could not be shown because people would follow it. Even as a critic railed against modern plays as immoral, he held up the classics as ideal although the same charges of immorality had been made against these same classics. In very little time, actors were again seen as being in league with the devil to corrupt the masses.

Another argument against the theatre focused on how it encouraged people to waste their time. Instead of attending the theatre people should be concentrating on learning their trade and spending their leisure time in religious activities. Plays were seen as wasting time and money. Those in charge of both the religious institutions and the factories and other places of employment also did not like the fact the plays in many ways made fun of those in society that should have been looked up to by the masses. If the masses could see their betters made fun of in the theatre then they might begin to think that way about their betters in general. The view was that plays were immoral and profane

because they weakened the grip religion had over the common man. The power of the church needed to keep the common man in his rightful place. Plays were seen as giving workers ideas about lives that were very different from their own and therefore made them unhappy with their destined lot in life. Previously, plays had been condemned because they failed to educate in a meaningful manner. Now, they were condemned because they were seen as educating the common worker too well and gave him ideas about what he could do and be.

Rousseau's argument in the *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* returns to the idea that the theatre is harmful to people's morals (Barish, 1981). Imitation as something that is intrinsically bad is again brought to the forefront of the argument. Rousseau, the 18th century philosopher from Geneva, sees imitation only as a way to "ridicule others and degrade themselves, or else to impose on their fellows by fraud" (Barish, p. 263). Rousseau also sees theatre as an amusement that is harmful because it distracts the people from their familial duties. At this point, Rousseau sees plays as lowering the "moralistic rigidity" and people are willing to accept horrific things they would not have been willing to accept earlier. Instead of making us horrified by a crime in a play, Rousseau believes the audience will empathize with the characters who commit the crimes. He believed that attending the theatre made the audiences less judgmental about the things they should be judgmental against.

Rousseau expands his argument and states that plays bring out the empathy of the audience for falsehoods, so the audience does not have to show

these feelings in real life. Prior arguments had been worried that the audiences would enact in real life the feelings they saw in the play and this was also seen as a bad thing. Barish (1981) stated that if we have learned to shed tears in the theatre then we are more likely to shed tears in real life.

Even where theatre was permitted in the nineteenth century, it was not encouraged. Playwrights were seen as defiling minds by showing immoralities on the stage. Barish (1981) provides examples of men who attended the theatre regularly, but who would have banned it in their own versions of utopia. They viewed the theatre as being irrational and immoral. Critics now begin to separate out the writing of drama from the actual performing of theatre. They continued the prejudice against actors.

Barish (1981) then looks at societal ideas that were leading the official way out of this long-standing anti-theatrical prejudice. He begins with the defenses of theatre provided by Oscar Wilde and Charles Dickens. Critics of the anti-theatrical prejudice begin drawing attention to the hypocrisy in religious arguments that condemn the theatre, but that utilize the same skills from the theatre in their sermons to the masses.

In the final chapter, Barish (1981) describes how the theatre turned against itself. Critics actually began using the theatre to criticize itself during the twentieth century, up until the 1960's. Barish identifies how those in the theatre who attempt to bring reality to the theatre were fighting against what they saw as the falsehood presented in theatre. Their ideas were that the theatre should be

seized from the immoral so it could be used as an agent of moral reform. The twentieth century saw an end to much of the prejudice against the theatre as Barish notes that even actors are getting knighted in England, but arguments against some forms of theatre continue. Since the critics were not successful in getting rid of theatre, they focused on controlling what messages the theatre presented. Barish ends by stating if we ever reach the point in our society when people completely stop railing against the theatre, then maybe the need to present theatre will end as well.

Commercial Theatre

Currently, Broadway in New York City and the West End in London provide the main strength of commercial theatre (Simonoff & Ma, 2003). Although the musical is seen as a traditionally American art form, in Autumn 2008, there were thirty-one musicals playing in the West End and thirty-two musicals on Broadway (Simonoff & Ma; Broadway.com, 2008; London Theatre Online, 2008). Eleven of the shows playing on Broadway and in the West End included: *Avenue Q, Billy Elliott, Chicago, Grease, Hairspray, Jersey Boys, The Lion King, Mamma Mia, The Phantom of the Opera, Spamalot* and *Wicked* (Broadway.com; London Theatre Online). In addition, there are a large number of new musicals that are based on popular films, such as *9 to 5, Dirty Dancing, Shrek, Mary Poppins, Billy Elliott, Edward Scissorhands* and *Sister Act*, both Broadway and the West End are also inundated with rivals of musicals such as, *Grease, Guys & Dolls, Gypsy, Pal Joey, South Pacific, Carousel, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor*

Dreamcoat, and *La Cage Aux Folles* (Broadway.com; London Theatre Online). With information like this, it is easy to see how much Broadway and the West End have in common, at least when it comes to the musical.

Tourism plays a significant role in the commercial theatre of both Broadway and the West End (Hughes, 1998; Bennett, 2005). Bennett, a University of Calgary Professor who publishes widely in the field of theatre, indicates that scholars in theatre have focused on a very broad range of theatre, but have typically ignored contemporary, commercial theatre (2005). Even though Hughes is looking at the effects tourism has on theatre, he notes that more than a third of the London population attend the theatre and that this number for the country as a whole is around a quarter (1998). Hughes, professor of tourism management at Manchester Metropolitan University, found that the concentration of theatres in the West End played a significant role in tourists' attendance. Hughes noted two-thirds of the audience was from outside of London, either domestic or foreign tourists.

Hughes found that tourism had caused a shift in what was produced in the West End as the majority of productions switched from plays to musicals (1998). Hughes pointed out that in 1986, there were more seats available for plays, but this shifted by 1995 where 62% of the seats available were for musicals. Surveys of audience members in London in the early 1990's showed that the residents of London made up only 14% of the audience of musicals although they made up

40% of the audience in classical dramas and 39% of the audience in modern dramas.

Broadway's reliance on tourism was highlighted after the attacks in New York City on 9/11 and many Broadway shows did not have the audiences from local residents to continue running (Bennett, 2005). The commercialism involved in the tourist Broadway productions allowed those looking at increased income without looking at the fact that in the 1980-1981 season, there were sixty-seven productions on Broadway stages, but by 1988-1989, that number had sunk to twenty-nine, although ticket sales had increased by close to seventy million dollars from 194 million to 264 million. Bennett also credits tourism with reinvigorating Broadway and notes that by the 2000-2001 season, Broadway offered sixty-four productions, a large number of which were long runs and that by the 2002-2003 season income had exploded to 749 million in gross ticket sales. Surveys also found that by the 2002-2003 season, 49.3 percent of the audience was made up of domestic tourists and although foreign tourists only made up 6 percent of the audience during this season, the foreign audience returned to its average of 12 percent by the 2003-2004 season. Musicals have a better chance of having a long run than plays and no play in the study had more than 600 performances (Simonoff & Ma, 2003).

It is this reliance on tourism for profit that seems to be taking a toll on non-musical plays in the commercial sector. Hughes highlights the fact that foreign visitors accounted for 60% of the audience for musicals and only 25% for plays,

but when domestic tourists are added to the mix, tourists still account for 60% of the audience for plays (1998). When plays are profitable, they generally have well-known celebrities headlining the shows. Currently on Broadway, Daniel Radcliffe is starring in a revival of *Equus* (Broadway.com). Radcliffe performed the role in the West End before the show was brought to Broadway in the autumn of 2008. Radcliffe brings an audience from the *Harry Potter* movies and many of these people would probably never have been exposed to *Equus*. David Tennant is playing this role in London, where he is performing *Hamlet* in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production at the commercial Novello Theatre (London Theatre Online). Other plays have starring casts including Katie Holmes, John Lithgow, Dianne Wiest, John Leguizamo, Angela Lansbury, Rupert Everett, Jeremy Piven, Raul Esparza and Campbell Scott (Broadway.com). These celebrities bring in tourists to see shows they might not otherwise see.

Another area of recent study is that of the revival and many people see rivals increasing (Maddison, 2005). Hughes mentions that the revivals of plays are also seen as a problem because they limit the number of new plays that can be produced and that even though there are options to attend plays in the West End, most of these plays are revivals (1998). Maddison, professor of economics at University College London, found that it is true that revivals are more prevalent than they were in the past. Maddison found that although revivals tended to close sooner than new productions, producing revivals tends to be positive from a financial perspective.

Musicals are criticized for “limited plots, the spectacle and the emphasis on music and dance,” although these are the same things that make them appealing to broader audiences because the tourist does not need specialized knowledge to understand the shows (Hughes, 1998). In the world of theatre critics, the words used to describe musicals such as “popular, spectacular, blockbuster, entertainment, crowd-pleaser, [and] feel-good,” are used in a derogatory manner as if the work is beneath the serious theatre audience (Bennett, 2005, p. 407). The tourist audience is seen as being less discerning then those who attend theatre regularly and are not taken seriously because seeing a musical is more about checking off a list of things done. (Hughes).

Although critics like to attack the frivolous nature of the musical, not all musicals are light and airy. Michael Billington utilizes the musical *Miss Saigon* to make this point (2007). The musical opened in September 1989 at the Theatre Royal in London. The plot is based on the Puccini opera *Madam Butterfly*. The musical, a typically American art form that has been embraced by a large portion of the performing arts world, brought the music in a theatrical performance to the masses in a way that opera had not been able to do. The show looks at the relationship between an American soldier in Vietnam and the Vietnamese woman who bears him a child after the evacuation of Saigon. Billington notes that, “this was popular theatre with a political edge. The point it made was that the Americans never remotely understood the people they were supposedly protecting in Vietnam” (p. 295). This musical was also described as being

different from the other musicals of the times because it actually “had something interesting to say” (p. 295).

Theatre critics seem to put a high value on their work and what they are providing to potential audiences in the theatre (Senior, 2004). Senior finds that although there are number of reviews that pan or rave about a production, many reviews are somewhere in the middle and may be neutral, slightly positive or slightly negative. Simonoff and Ma (2003) found that a positive review in the *Daily News* was associated with a successful production, although a positive review in the *New York Times* did not correspond with a successful show. Many shows with poor reviews in the New York Times went on to be very successful and shows that got good reviews actually closed quite quickly (Simonoff & Ma). Senior also informs the reader that in many cases, the audiences love the shows that the critics are not fond of and do not attend the shows the critics like. Although critics can be out of touch with what audiences are interested in seeing, Senior still finds that theatre critics had a positive impact on theatres in the West End.

Both London and New York City have large, thriving commercial theatre communities. One positive aspect of this heavy commercialism in musical theatre and celebrity talent is that many people who cannot travel abroad get to see shows in either the U.K. or the U.S. Celebrity casting in plays also introduces many people to productions they would never have seen without a celebrity cast. Many of the people who see these blockbuster shows are probably unlikely to

see most of the more challenging theatrical work that exists out there. One of the negative aspects of these overlapping trends and focus on commercialism is that decisions are made based on what the tourists are interested in seeing and this may mean that more serious drama does not get produced. By relying on tourism, productions tend to be safe and predictable and many times do little to challenge the audience. Predictable and safe are generally some of the last words that those involved in the theatre world want to describe their work. There are exceptions to this idea of predictable and safe, but looking at many of the shows being created, predictable and safe seem like the appropriate descriptors.

Nonprofit Theatrical Productions

As can be seen in the discussion of commercial theatre, there is a large overlap of theatre productions between the United States and the United Kingdom. There is also a large overlap in nonprofit theatre, but there are multiple ideas about what the purpose of theatre should be. A Baptist minister in Georgia stated, “Theatre should feed the aesthetic taste and inspire and uplift rather than glamorize sexual distortion” (Houchin, 2003, p. 249). Joanne Scheff Bernstein stated that “Art by definition is provocative, challenging, and often unfamiliar and disturbing [and] [i]f fine arts patrons were all satisfied, artistic directors would not be living up to their responsibility to challenge and provoke” (2007, pp. 91-92). These ideas seem diametrically opposed to one another and as long as these two ideas are present, Houchin (2003) believes there will continue to be attempts

to silence playwrights' voices because they are seen as threatening the very make up of society.

The nonprofit theatre was instrumental in getting *Jerry Springer: The Opera* produced as it was first seen at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival before moving to the Battersea Arts Center in London and then it moved onto the Royal National Theatre. All three of these initial venues were nonprofit in nature before it relocated for a successful commercial run in the commercial West End of London. One of the negative features of the closeness of the theatre in the United States and the United Kingdom is that once a show has been perceived as being controversial in the United Kingdom, the less likely it is to receive commercial treatment in the United States. Individuals in London indicated they were completely taken by surprise by the strength of the protests against *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. They indicated they expected these types of protests from religious minorities in the United Kingdom and associated Christian protests with something that was really American in nature.

The protests against *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in the United Kingdom have direct connections to protests by religious groups here in the United States. The religious right protested *Corpus Christi* in a similar manner and for similar reasons as those protesting *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Corpus Christi looks at a group of gay men who follow a Christ-like leader who is both gay and interested in a sexual relationship with some of his friends, who take on the role of apostles in the show. *Jerry Springer: The Opera* is a parody of the American television

show. The first half of the show is filled with story lines that would appear on the Jerry Springer television show. The rest of the show occurs in hell where Springer mediates a confrontation between Satan and Jesus Christ, with appearances from the Christian god and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both shows were seen as immoral and as attacking the Christian religion. In the United Kingdom, protestors attempted to pass legislation that would have outlawed insulting religion (Edgar, 2006). In the United States, Senator Helms attempted to add a clause to funding for the NEA that would have forbidden funding "material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion" (Houchin 2003, p. 235).

Those protesting *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, did not just protest, but they brought a lawsuit against the producers based on blasphemy laws (Whitehead, 2008). Although the protestors eventually lost and have been required to pay a large sum of the expenses for the producers and the BBC for defending the suit, lawsuits such as this can have a chilling effect on the production of work that may challenge the status quo or calls traditional morals into question. In the United States, religious groups have on a number of occasions attempted to prevent or shut down productions of Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America* (Houchin, 2003).

In 1996, when the Charlotte Repertory Theatre in Charlotte, North Carolina announced that they were producing *Angels in America*, the religious right attempted to prevent the production (Houchin, 2003). In addition to

organizing public protests, they attempted to prevent the production through the use of state obscenity laws and finally through indecent exposure laws. The theatre company was warned by the police and district attorney that allowing the brief nude scene in the play would violate the law. The theatre company had to go to court to prevent the police and district attorney from closing the production down. The judge in the case issued a cease and desist order three hours before the opening, preventing the police and district attorney from interfering with the show. The show went forward without interference from the government and attracted record numbers in the audiences. The courts have generally invalidated all attempts at curtailing free speech through government threats of prosecution, but the threats have been successful because many organizations cannot afford the legal battles necessary when the government threatens artists (Hein, 1993).

Although both the United States and the United Kingdom have had problems with attempts by religious organizations to censor material they see as immoral, the religious right has been more successful on a number of occasions. In the example in Charlotte, North Carolina above, Charlotte Repertory Theatre was able to produce *Angels in America*, but those in opposition were able to get all funding for the arts revoked in 1997 (Houchin, 2003). This win was short lived because voters proceeded to remove three out of the five commissioners who voted to end funding and a fourth chose not to run. With new members of the city commission in place, funding to the arts was restored in 1998. This was an unsuccessful attempt to end funding for the arts, but the religious right had been

successful in 1993 when they helped end all funding for the arts in Cobb County, Georgia. Although the religious right in the U.K. was not successful in shutting down *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, they were successful at getting one third of the venues to cancel showing the touring production and were able to get the ACE to revoke the funding for the tour.

One of the interesting things about productions of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* was that there have not been similar large-scale protests here in the United States over the show. Although the show did not take the expected route to Broadway, the show has been produced in Chicago, Illinois, Washington, DC, Las Vegas, Nevada and Madison, Wisconsin. Most people involved in culture production would have thought the problems that occurred in Britain would have occurred here in the United States because the religious right in the United States has always seemed so much more organized than the community in Britain.

The theatre community in the United States has been dealing with the religious right in attempts to censor and end funding for the arts in a large way since the culture wars in the early 1990's and earlier. Although the United Kingdom has an extensive past when dealing with censorship in the theatre, the problems they are facing with an organized, Christian religious right seems to be following in the path of the similar movement in the United States. Since the theatre in the United States is used to dealing with these arguments by now,

hopefully those in the United Kingdom theatre can learn from what has already happened here.

One of the good things about the cross fertilization of theatre between the United States and the United Kingdom is that if it is not possible to get a play produced in one environment, the playwright can always try getting it produced in another. Although this question is limited to the United States and the United Kingdom, Canada is also involved in cross fertilization in the theatre.

Government Sponsored Theatre

One very big difference between theatre in the United States and theatre in the United Kingdom is the National Theatre, which was created in 1963 (National Theatre, 2008). The stated aims of the National Theatre are:

> The National endeavours to maintain and re-energise the great traditions of the British stage and to expand the horizons of audiences and artists alike. It aspires to reflect in its repertoire the diversity of the nation's culture. It takes a particular responsibility for the creation of new work – offering at the NT Studio a space for research and development for the NT's stages and the theatre as a whole. (National Theatre)

The Arts Council of England represented thirty-eight percent of the income for the National Theatre (2008). Thirty-one percent of the income comes from the box office receipts and this includes income from commercial tours of shows that go on to perform in the West End and also on Broadway. Seventeen percent comes from commercial operations involving the sale of programs, the bookstore, catering, parking and renting costumes. Only ten percent of the income comes from direct fundraising. The Executive Director, Nick Starr, points

out that it is unusual, but almost everything done in the shows is done in house. Productions at the National Theatre account for twenty-eight percent of the total audience attending plays in London.

The United States does not have a national theatre company that is mostly funded by the federal government. The closest thing the United States has to the National Theatre is The Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center produces and presents “theater and musicals, dance and ballet, orchestral, chamber, jazz, popular, and folk music, and multi-media performances” (The Kennedy Center, 2008). Within the Kennedy Center, there is a National Symphony Orchestra, but no national theatre. The federal government provides funding for the operation, maintenance and capital improvement of the physical structure of The Kennedy Center, but not for the productions that are produced or presented there. The annual report for The Kennedy Center was not provided, but no expenses concerning the production or presentation were included in the request to Congress for funding.

Public Funding

Another contrast between theatre in the United States and in the United Kingdom is in the area of public funding for the arts. Up until the late 1970’s, early 1980’s, many performing arts organizations were in the for-profit sector rather than the nonprofit sector (West, 1987). A shift was made in the U.S. and most arts organizations by the late 1980’s were nonprofit in nature. If as Joanne Scheff Bernstein (2007) stated above, the purpose of art “by definition is

provocative, challenging, and often unfamiliar," then the nonprofit theatre might provide the best way to meet that definition (pp. 91-92).

Both countries have national organizations that deal with public funding for the arts. The United Kingdom has the Arts Council of England ("ACE") and the United States has the National Endowment for the Arts ("NEA"). The most recent annual report for the NEA shows the government invested $124,406,353 in this arts agency (NEA, 2008). The ACE announced that between 2006 and 2008 they would be investing 1.1 billion British pounds in supporting arts and arts development (ACE, 2008). In this fluctuating economy, the comparison between the U.S. dollar and the British pound changes daily, but the British pound is worth more than the U.S. dollar and while studying in England in the summer of 2008, the exchange rate ran as high as $2.12 to one British pound.

Funding for the arts in both countries declined in the early to mid 1990's (ACE; NEA). Interestingly, in 1997, Tony Blair stated, "the arts should not be an add-on on page 24 of the manifesto but something that is central to a decent country" (Billington, 2007, p. 363). Of course, a year later Sir Peter Hall stated, "I know both political parties are excellent supporters of the arts when they are in opposition. Come the dawn, what happens? A cut in the Arts Council grant. Why? It saves tuppence and it's going to ruin a number of small theatres and dance companies" (p. 363). The ACE materials did not provide information on how much the funding declined, but noted that, between 1996 and 2005, funding

had increased by 64%. The report did not give amounts invested, but also found that investment in the theatre had increased by 100% since 2002 (ACE).

The NEA also does not break out the figures for investment in the theatre, but they provide a breakdown of all of those who are funded as well as information between the high budgets in the 1980's forward (NEA). The budget for Theatre decreased by 74% from $10,252,950 in 1987 to $2,687,000 in 2002. The interesting change here was that the number of programs funded only decreased by 42% from 242 in 1987 to 141 in 2002. The amount of funding and the number of grants provided has fluctuated only slightly from 2002-2005.

Both the ACE and the NEA look at funding on regional levels. The ACE stated 50% of funding in the 2006-2007 fiscal year was to areas outside of London and 14% of that number was invested in rural areas. Just as a large percentage of the funding in the United Kingdom goes to arts organizations in London, anywhere from 30%-34% of the NEA's investment goes to New York (NEA). Funding has fluctuated between the East, South, Midwest and West, but California and New York were always looked at on their own as they received the bulk of the funding and including them in one of the listed regions would have skewed the numbers for that region.

The ACE had been changing their focus to funding smaller organizations so funding to national companies fell from 41% of the total funding to 30% of the total funding. In the United States, funding at lower levels has decreased dramatically since the 1980's. In 1987, most of the grants given out were in the

category of under $10,000 (NEA). In 1987, there were 1,019 grants given in this category. By 2005, this number had dropped to 35 grants. By choosing to fund organizations at significant funding levels, the NEA is leaving out a large number of small arts organizations that cannot afford the complicated applications process for funding.

The ACE announced earlier in 2008 that it was increasing funding in a number of projects (BBC News I). Of course, the reality of this increase became known when they also announced that they were cutting funding to 194 organizations, nearly a quarter of those currently funded (BBC News II). The ACE stated they were trying to fund fewer, but better organizations (Lister, 2008). Celebrity actors, Sir Ian McKellan, Kevin Spacey and Joanna Lumley all immediately came out against these cuts. Even those who found the change to funding based on excellence to be a good thing were surprised at some of the organizations to have their funding cut. Those protesting the ceasing of funding for some organizations point out that excellence is not the question since organizations that have reputations for producing excellent work were among those cut (Blacker, 2008). People protested the lack of transparency and public notification regarding the proceedings to make these enormous cuts (Lister, 2008). Some people are calling for the ACE to be disbanded and for arts funding to be done directly by the government, the same way museums and galleries are funded.

The one fear cited about direct government funding is that people are afraid the government will interfere with what groups like the National Theatre put on the stage (Lister, 2008). Although Lister points this out as not being a genuine fear, this is an interesting overlap with the federal funding in the United States. In a time referred to as the Culture Wars, members of Congress began attacking the NEA specifically because of some of the work they had funded (Houchin, 2003). This led to attempts to defund the NEA and Senator Jesse Helms wanted to specifically prevent the funding of anything that included obscenity or indecent material including sadomasochism, homoeroticism, sex acts, or those that denigrate the "the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion" (p. 235). This fight over the NEA was seen as an attempt to restore traditional values. When the dust had cleared, Senator Helms was unable to pass his entire amendment, but he was successful in getting the NEA to censor the arts rather than encourage and support them. This might not happen if the British government was involved in directly funding the arts, but the lessons from the fight over funding of the NEA should not be lost on British artists.

Another area of interest in the public funding of the arts is the idea public funding allows theatres to produce less conventional and more challenging work. Two economic ideas sit at the heart of public funding, including the consumption/production externality and the option demand argument (Cameron, 1993). The first argument deals with the idea that without subsidized theatre,

actors will not receive enough training before appearing in commercial theatre where the audience expects a high level of competency. The second argument is that the free market fails in the area of the arts because the public does not place high value on less conventional work although it advances the art form as a whole. It has been argued by some that unsubsidized theatre might produce less conventional work because the director would want to enhance their own reputation by producing material that is considered “high brow” (O’Hagan & Neligan, 2005). Researchers have argued that commercial shows are more financially successful. This is because the costs associated with continuing the run of a production are much smaller than creating new productions. A successful commercial production may run for years without additional creation costs, whereas in the nonprofit theatre world, there is a continuous stream of new productions. Therefore, the more work a theatre company produced, the more expensive the costs.

O’Hagan and Neligan (2005) found that the higher the percentage of income from public funding, the more likely the theatre company would have a non-conventional repertoire. Conversely, the more dependent on market demands that a theatre company was, the more likely the theatre would produce more conventional work. In their study, O’Hagan and Neligan also found that less conventional theatre was produced by companies with small budgets and limited seating and that larger communities such as New York City and London had more innovative theatre than those outside of these areas. The researchers,

O'Hagan and Neligan, hoped to isolate factors surrounding the number of students in the population, but their study was unable to separate this variable. They were not able to look at some variables such as the educational or financial wealth levels of the audience, although, they surmise these might also have a role in the production of less conventional work. They were also not able to look at the specifics of theatre companies to see if it was something unique within the structure of the company.

It is difficult for producers to figure out what will be a commercial success. Theatre productions also have to run for longer times than they used to if they are to become commercially successful (O'Hagan & Neligan, 2005). This is why many plays will begin in the nonprofit sector and move to the commercial sector if there is enough interest. Unlike a large portion of the industrial world, many of the expenses for a theatrical production cannot be decreased because it takes the same time now to design, build and rehearse a show as it did in the past. Additionally, the audience is still limited to the number of seats in the theatre and the only way to get back the investment through traditional capitalist, economic models is to sell more seats, meaning longer runs, at typically much higher prices.

Although O'Hagan and Neligan (2005) mention the United States in their study results, they focused the study on less conventional theatre in the United Kingdom. Initially, the United States government delegated the definition of artistic excellence to the NEA, but with all of the protests in the 1980's and

1990's, this changed (Lewis & Brooks, 2005). At one point in the 1980's, the NEA actually required artists to sign an obscenity oath that they would not use NEA funds to produce work that violated the compromise standard that was passed by Congress at Senator Helm's behest. Although the obscenity oath was found to be unconstitutional, the obscenity clause remains even though the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Helms' clause was only discouraging in nature and not a requirement. This still seems like a long way from the idea that subsidized funding allows theatres to produce less conventional theatre.

Controversial Theatre & Censorship

The main focus of this research deals with the production of controversial theatre in the nonprofit professional/semi-professional setting. Much of the literature concerning controversial theatre is written in the context of its censorship. The literature looks at theatre companies that have made the decision to stop producing controversial work and the pressure they were placed under to do so.

In *Censorship of the American Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, John Houchin (2003) provides not only a history of censorship, but brings that history to current struggles concerning the production of controversial work in the theatre. Initially, Houchin looks at the beginnings of censorship and the theatre in the United States beginning in this country before the United States was formed. Houchin connects the success at curtailing controversial work to the linking of the religious right to the Republican party. Houchin looks at the opposing views of

the purpose of theatre. A Baptist minister, Nelson Price, in Cobb County, Georgia, stated, “Theatre should feed the aesthetic taste and inspire and uplift rather than glamorize sexual distortion” (p. 249, quoting Anderson, “Georgia County…,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 8, 1993). Attempts to silence the playwrights’ voices will continue to made as they are seen as threatening the fabric of society. Houchin’s work provides the backdrop and lens for looking at the production of controversial work in the theatre.

Michael Billington (2007) gives a history of the theatre in England in *State of the Nation: British Theatre Since 1945*. Billington leads the reader through the progression that removes theatre from under the censorship of the Lord Chamberlin and the subsequent attempts to bring a more direct censorship back. Billington indicates that he has covered theatre through 2006, it is noticeable that he does not include the play *Behtzi* by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti and *Jerry Springer: The Opera* by Richard Thomas and Stewart Lee as both plays received significant protests and both had also received notable awards for their work.

In *Shouting Fire: Art, Religion and the Right to be Offended,* David Edgar (2006) is looking at the trends toward self-censorship in a world based on the right of consumers not to be offended. Edgar looks at the slippery slope of how calls by victims’ families to be protected from distress has led to demands by larger groups to be protected from offense. With all of the attacks on the theatre, Edgar finds the stage, “provides a site in which you can say things that are riskier and more extreme than the things you can say elsewhere, because what you say

is not real but represented" (p. 73). Edgar also notes these attacks led by people who do not want to be offended mean that there are subjects that are too important, profound or dangerous to be addressed through the arts or even reporting. This frightens Edgar because he believes that fiction in general and theatre specifically teach people how to empathize and that the monsters that people are frightened of lack the same empathy that theatre instills. Edgar portrays monsters in history as people, because that is what they were. He finds that demonizing figures allows people to negate their own responsibility. Edgar concludes free speech is not only a right of the speaker, but also of the listener and that everybody has the right to offend and be offended.

Building Audiences: Stories from America's Theaters: What Theaters are Learning About the Role of Programming in Attracting Audiences, (hereinafter "*Building Audiences*") by Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund (1996), is a report showing what different theatres were doing with programming to attract audiences. The first group was Freedom Theater, one of the oldest African American theaters in the country and located in Philadelphia, began looking at broadening its African American audiences. The marketing director discovered a survey had been conducted two years earlier in 1993, which found that the primary audience was "90% African American, 70 percent female, mostly single and over age 35, college education, employed and relatively affluent" (p. 3). The survey also found the primary audience members wanted to "see plays that are about them, and they want to be entertained and have fun" (p. 3). They also

wanted to see stars in the shows and musicals held the most appeal. Additionally, they wanted shows they could take their children and friends to.

Freedom Theatre's season at the time had a play that had nudity and profanity in it, another play about James Baldwin and how he was rejected by the Black Civil Rights Movement because he was gay, and a new play that dealt with the gay subculture and AIDS (Building Audiences, 1996). The marketing director noted the season did not fit the profile of their primary audience and that ticket sales were down. The staff were told the options were to produce more work that appealed to the primary audience, which would bring increased revenue, or to continue to produce more difficult work and have to rely on grants to survive. The staff wanted to know why they could not do both and although the report mentions this, the idea is not addressed further.

The Artistic Director utilized the research provided by the Marketing Director and set a season for their target audience (Building Audiences, 1996). They decided to test market the new season and developed two focus groups for the project. The focus groups were provided with different concepts for print ad design for the shows. The groups were enthusiastic in their response and Freedom Theater doubled their ticket sales and the house capacity went from 55 percent the previous year to 70 percent when they produced shows aimed at their target audience. The question was never answered why the company could not produce both shows targeted to their audiences and more controversial and challenging work.

The second group looked at in *Building Audiences* was Repertorio Espanol, which is a Spanish language theater in New York City (1996). Repertorio Espanol took a different approach than Freedom Theater and relied on demographic and product research, their history of leadership in the area and an "aesthetic instinct." Watching the demographics became important to Repertorio Espanol because the Spanish speaking population of New York shifts with time. Initially, a large part of their audience came from a Cuban and Puerto Rican background, but at that time a shift was happening to other Caribbean islands, Central and South America.

Repertorio Espanol was looking at attracting new Latino immigrant audiences and English speaking Hispanic people (Building Audiences, 1996). They utilized informal demographic and product research material rather than formal studies. The Artistic Director of Repertorio Espanol, Robert Federico, believes there can be too much market research and it is the goal of the theater to lead the community, not just follow what they want to do. This theater "immerses itself in the culture, history and theater traditions of the target nationality" (p. 7). Federico looks for inspiration from those parts of the world that the immigrants come from and look at ways to bring that material to New York. By following his aesthetic instinct, Federico admits he often does not have any idea what the outcome of the choices he makes will be. Although Federico notes "We find time and again that you can't underestimate your audience," he also states the staff "know that the experience of coming to the theater has to be

enjoyable and unintimidating; audiences must feel comfortable sharing the experience with children and other family members; and stereotypes and vulgarities are unacceptable" (p. 7). With this statement, Federico is admitting there are works too controversial to produce because they fit into the ideas mentioned about what their audience would find unacceptable.

The *Building Audiences*' report is important to my study because it looks at some of the challenges facing theatre companies choosing to do controversial work even when the decision by one company was not to produce such work (1996). Both Freedom Theatre and Repertorio Espanol utilized marketing research to help them increase their audiences. The use of marketing as a tool may be important in my study as marketing will surely have a role in how theatre companies get audiences to come to see the controversial work they are producing. The management of Freedom Theatre chose to alter the work produced by the company even when the staff indicated a desire to continue producing controversial work. The Artistic Director of Repertorio Espanol stated the artistic vision for the theatre company is his even if he takes other things into consideration and he points out the goal of theatre is to lead society, not just follow it, but limits what can be produced by mentioning things his audience would find unacceptable. In both the Freedom Theatre and Repertorio Espanol, artistic direction and management are paramount in what gets produced and may be directly influencing theatres that are able to produce controversial work.

In the study *Censorship in Community College Theatre Programs* by Edward Lee (1998), Lee looks at self-censorship in the Community College theatre setting. Lee begins by telling the reader freedom of expression is usually associated with higher education, but notes education has been subjected to the same ideological battles as politics. Lee's position is clear from the beginning as he quotes M. Horne as stating people who use self-censorship are not freedom's friends. Lee then provides a brief background on the censorship of art and notes art has always been censored. In this study Lee was specifically looking at the areas of controversial plays, profane language, and sexual content, which included issues of homosexuality and nudity.

The results found that ninety-five percent of those surveyed had not been told by the college administration that they could produce a particular play (Lee, 1998). Although seventy percent indicated they had not altered language in a play, several of those surveyed indicated they do not produce plays with a lot of profanity. When it came to the area of nudity in plays, seventeen percent stated they had produced plays with nudity, although only fifty percent of that number performed the work with the nudity. Ninety-five percent of the respondents stated they had not altered or cut lesbian or gay content, but without being asked, thirteen percent noted this was because they would not produce a play with that content. The respondents found it was better to censor themselves than be involved in controversy.

Fifty-two percent stated there were plays they wanted to produce, but were unable to do so because of controversy (Lee, 1998). Seventeen percent stated there are plays unsuitable for the academic stage. The reasons for unsuitability varied from the difficulty of the show, to unsuitable language, sexually graphic scenes and homosexuality. Many of the playwrights deemed to be too difficult dealt with some of these same issues. Lee's study is important because it takes the time to find out, at least limitedly, where and why self-censorship is occurring in the community college setting, a setting meant to deal with controversial issues.

Organizational Management in Performing Arts

Organizational management of performing arts organizations most likely has an intimate role in the ability of the organization to successfully produce controversial work. There are many different styles of management and organizational structure and theory although it is not known at this point which theories guide the theatre organizations that will be studied here. This section will therefore provide an overview of some theories that may be involved, but the final analysis will probably require looking at different organizational theories as well.

One area at the heart of theatrical production and also at the center of misunderstanding and controversy within the arts community is the utilization of marketing. In *Arts Marketing Insights: The Dynamics of Building and Retaining Performing Arts Audiences*, Joanne Scheff Bernstein (2007) takes an in depth

look at the role of marketing in performing arts. Bernstein notes that many working in the arts fear they will have to sacrifice artistic integrity to the idea of marketing to the masses and she states this is not the case. Unfortunately, she still tends to shy away from looking at the artists' fears directly. Bernstein argues that using customer centered marketing does not mean "theatre must compromise his or her artistic integrity... It does mean creating a total experience that makes the production more accessible, enjoyable, and convenient and a better fit with more people's lifestyles" (p. 16).

Although Bernstein (2007) is quick to tell readers that artistic integrity does not have to be sacrificed to the masses, her marketing focus still seems to come from the idea that reaching the masses is always the leading goal. She states,

> Yet programming is only partially driven by the artists' and the artistic decision makers' vision. Selecting programming is a complex activity, requiring that the artistic director and the managing directors work together to solve a perpetual problem: how to create a series of programs that has artistic merit; is congruent with the organization's mission, competencies, and constraints; and serves the needs and interests of the community (p. 91).

Bernstein follows this up by stating "An art organization's season is best designed to balance artistic exploration with the preferences of the current and potential audience" (p. 91).

With the organization of nonprofit theatres in the United States, there can be conflict between what the board, the artists and the staff want. Bernstein (2007) sees this conflict as different perspectives of those involved (p. 66).

Bernstein discusses these conflicts and notes that boards can put fiscal responsibility first whereas the artists may put “artistic excellence and exploration” first (p. 66). She finds there is conflict between those who emphasize, “highly sophisticated programming that has limited appeal, whereas others may place a higher value on maximizing audience size or providing a broad spectrum of education outreach programs in the schools” (p. 66). Bernstein highlights these conflicts to show the necessity for long term strategic planning.

The focus on marketing has not prevented Bernstein (2007) from noting that, “Art by definition is provocative, challenging, and often unfamiliar and disturbing” (p. 91). She also lets the artist know that, “If fine arts patrons were all satisfied, artistic directors would not be living up to their responsibility to challenge and provoke” (p. 92). Bernstein does not spend enough time convincing the artists that marketing is a tool they can utilize without losing their artistic integrity. She tends to separate the artist out from those who know how to reach larger audiences in a more fiscally responsible manner.

Nello McDaniel and George Thorn (2004) provide a somewhat different approach in *Leading Arts Boards: An Arts Professional’s Guide for Creating and Leading an Effective Collaboration with Board and Volunteers*. McDaniel and Thorn point state that much of the structure for running arts organizations is based on the structure of foundations. According to McDaniel and Thorn, this lead to

> The fundamental stereotypes of arts professionals as immature and emotion, unable to plan, administer or be responsible for money. The belief is that money should go to the board, and it will serve as a parent to protect the organization from the professional staff." (p. 19)

McDaniel and Thorn (2004) believe arts professionals should be at the center of the nonprofit arts organization. They have found that arts professionals are inundated with superfluous advice from business people who have never worked in the nonprofit setting and believe this advice should be given, but it is the judgment of the arts professionals that should prevail. Rather than place marketing on an equal footing, McDaniel and Thorn write that it is the artistic process is "the best planning, decision-making, relationship-building and problem solving process available" (p. 21). They point out that marketing and fundraising are important, "but if an arts organization is successful it is because of the work it creates" (p. 21). They see the challenge in this way of management is getting the arts professionals to understand and apply the artistic process to the organization management as a whole and not just the rehearsals (p. 22). McDaniel and Thorn conclude that it is the job of the arts professionals to "make boards effective and eliminate the stress" (p. 68). Effective boards are the result of "healthy, balanced and productive relationships" (p. 67).

Contemporary Examples of Controversial Theatre

Although there are numerous examples of controversial or provocative theatre in both the United Stated and the United Kingdom, four examples are discussed here. The first is *Corpus Christi* written by award winning playwright

Terrance McNally. The second is *My Name is Rachel Corrie* edited by Katherine Viner and Alan Rickman from the journals, emails and letters of American Rachel Corrie. The third piece is the production of *Behtzi* by Sikh playwright Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti. The final show is *Jerry Springer: The Opera* by Richard Thomas and Stewart Lee, was initially produced in the United Kingdom and then separate shows were produced in the United States.

Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi in 1998 was an unwritten play being developed by the award winning playwright, Terrance McNally. McNally was interested in addressing issues of homophobia through a retelling of the story about Jesus Christ and his disciples, by making all of them gay men. The furor over *Corpus Christi* began on May 1, 1998 when *The New York Post* ran an article titled, “Gay Jesus May Star on B’Way” (Blumenthal II, 1998). The article described the play as being about a gay Jesus figure who had sexual relations with his apostles (Houchin, 2003). Although the script was not yet available, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights voiced their opposition to the production as being anti-Catholic (Blumenthal 1, 1998). The playwright, Terrance McNally, was raised Catholic (Applebome, 1998).

The Manhattan Theatre Club announced that it was canceling the production of Corpus Christi due to security problems (Blumenthal I, 1998). It was later reported that the cancellation was due to anonymous threats to kill the theatre staff, to kill playwright Terrance McNally, to burn the theatre down and to

set off a bomb (Houchin, 2003). William Donohue, the head of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights stated,

> We are delighted that the Manhattan Theater Club pulled the plug from this despicable play. While McNally has every legal right to insult Christians, he has no moral right to do so…[and] if some other production company decides to pick it up, it had better not be thin-skinned: we'll wage a war that no one will forget. (Blumenthal I)

Mr. Donohue denied any knowledge of the threats made against the theatre.

The artistic community in New York was not as thrilled as Mr. Donohue. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Coalition Against Censorship immediately protested the cancellation and called for the production to be reinstated (Bronski, 1998). Athol Fugard, a South African playwright, responded by withdrawing permission for the Manhattan Theatre Workshop to produce his most recent play, *The Captain's Tiger* (Blumenthal I, 1998). Athol found that the Manhattan Theatre Workshop had not only censored themselves, but also Terrance McNally and he found it shocking that the theatre would succumb to blackmail (Houchin, 2003). A number of playwrights started a petition that called the cancellation "a capitulation to right-wing extremists and religious zealots" (Bronski, p. 1).

The Manhattan Theatre Workshop responded to this additional furor by putting *Corpus Christi* back on the calendar for the 1998 fall season (Applebome, 1998). The playwrights who had signed a petition requesting the reinstatement of the play to the theatre's calendar, responded by stating "This is a brave and

honorable decision, unquestionably difficult to make" (Appleborn, 1998, p. 1). The theatre company hired special security to protect the theatre and those involved in the production (Bronski, 1998). The play opened to security that involved metal detectors for those entering the theatre and bomb-sniffing dogs to make sure there were no explosives inside the theatre (Houchin, 2003). There were protestors on both sides of the issue present at the opening of the play. Although the critics at the time generally did not like the production, when others have attempted to stage *Corpus Christi*, it is met with protests and lawsuits. In 2001, students made plans to stage *Corpus Christi* at Indiana University-Purdue University in Fort Wayne, Indiana (National Coalition Against Censorship, 2001). The production went forward, but twenty-five legislators sued, unsuccessfully, in federal court to stop the show.

Corpus Christi has also seen protests when it has been performed in the United Kingdom. In August 1999, the play made its United Kingdom premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and transferred to London for a limited run (McNally's Gay Christ Play Hits London). Even though the run of the show was sold out, religious groups protested and condemned the play as "hateful, wrong and vile" (p. 1). Christian groups were not the only ones to protest, an Islamic group in the United Kingdom issued a death fatwa against *Corpus Christi* playwright Terrance McNally (BBC News III, 1999). Copies of the fatwa, death sentence, against McNally were handed out at the opening of the show in London. The Anglican Archbishop defended the play and stated that "any victim

of a hate crime could have been transposed into the role" (Islamic Group Issues Fatwa Against Author, 1999, p. 1). A subsequent student production of *Corpus Christi* in the United Kingdom was protested by members of the Christian Voice (Green, 2004). Stephen Green admits to attending the show so he could answer charges about condemning something without seeing it. His actual goal was to gather material supporting a claim of blasphemy for the production of the show.

My Name is Rachel Corrie

My Name is Rachel Corrie is a play based on the letters, emails and journals of a young American woman from the state of Washington who was crushed to death by a bulldozer operated by the Israeli army as she protested the destruction of a Palestinian home in Gaza (Wolf, 2006). The show premiered to sold out audiences at the Royal Court Theatre in London in April 2005 and was shown again to sold out audiences in Autumn 2005 (Weiss, 2006). The play won "Best New Play" at the London Theatregoers' Choice Awards (Borger, 2006). Although the Royal Court indicated it had bids from around the world to produce the play, they agreed to have it produced at the New York Theater Workshop because the editors felt it was necessary to have the show play in Rachel Corrie's homeland (Weiss, p. 1).

In February 2006, the New York Theater Workshop announced it was indefinitely postponing its plans to produce the play *My Name is Rachel Corrie* because of concern about the play's political content (McKinley I, 2006). The artistic director of the New York Theater Workshop, James Nicola, stated he was

postponing the show “after polling local Jewish religious and community leaders as to their feelings about the work” and further that “I don’t think we were worried about the audience…I think we were more worried that those who had never encountered her writing, never encountered the piece, would be using this as an opportunity to position their arguments” (McKinley I, p. 1). Nicola did not poll local Palestinians or Arabs to gain insight into their viewpoint (McKinley II, 2006). New York Theater Workshop posted a statement on their website that the production of the show was not definite although the postponement was announced on February 27, 2006 for a show scheduled to open on March 22, 2006 (McKinley I). The online statement also stated they were not canceling or censoring the show, but delaying it due to problems with timing including “Alan Rickman’s pre-existing film commitments” (McKinley II). The Royal Court responded by stating the production in New York at the New York Theater Workshop was a done deal and that “[t]he flight for cast and crew had been booked; the production schedule delivered; the press announcement drafted and approved; [and] tickets advertised on the internet” (Viner, 2006, p. 1). Rickman stated “calling this production ‘postponed’ does not disguise the fact that it has been cancelled [and] [t]his is censorship born out of fear, and…all of us are the losers” (Borger, 2006, p. 1).

After the announcement that the show was being indefinitely postponed, the New York Theater Workshop began receiving criticism from the theatre community for what was seen as artistic cowardice and censorship (McKinley III,

2006). Both the artistic director and managing director seemed baffled by the negative response. A group of British, Jewish playwrights wrote an editorial to *The New York Times* stating their dismay at the postponement or cancellation of the show (Slovo, Pinter, & Fry, 2006). Part of the dismay for those in the theatre was that New York Theater Workshop had a reputation for producing cutting edge theatre that explores the "political and historical events and institutions that shape contemporary life" (Davis, 2006, p. 1). The New York Theatre Workshop Artistic Director, James Nicola, stated they were indefinitely postponing the work because they needed time to prepare the community and "that in the current climate the work could not be appreciated as 'art' but would be seen in political terms" (p. 1). This statement is in direct contrast to what they stated was their mission. Joseph Melillo with Brooklyn Academy of Music stated that he supports the New York Theater Workshop and that postponement is not cancellation (McKinley III, 2006). The artistic director of the Public Theater pointed out that Mr. Nicola "has a tremendous amount of integrity" and although he thought it was "a mistake to postpone the show," that people need to help the workshop (p. 1). The show went on to have a successful off-Broadway run and has been produced in other U.S. cities including Madison, Wisconsin (Cook, 2008). An Arabic version of the play was being produced in Israel and the West Bank.

Behtzi

Behtzi, written by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, a British-born Sikh woman, is a play set mostly in a Sikh temple and involves issues of domestic violence against

women and culminates in a woman's rape in the temple by an elder (Grillo, 2007). The word behtzi is Punjabi for dishonor (Britten, 2004). Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti won the Blackburn Award for the play (Grillo). The Blackburn Award is given to a woman playwright for creating "an outstanding work for the English speaking theatre" (p. 6). Behzti was set to open at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in December 2004.

Some members of the local Sikh community in Birmingham believed the play was offensive to their faith and wanted the setting removed from a Sikh temple (Grillo, 2007). Prior to the performance, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre engaged the local Sikh community in discussions about the play and agreed to include program notes with positive messages about Sikhism and to hand out flyers explaining the grievances of the Sikh community (Crow, 2007). This response by the Birmingham Repertory Theatre was not acceptable to those who believed the play was offensive and would only agree to the removal of the offensive material.

The play opened on December 9, 2004, with peaceful protests taking place (Britten, 2004). On December 18, 2004, approximately 1,000 members of the local Sikh community and beyond attended the protest. The city of Birmingham had twenty-five police officers present, but they called for another sixty reinforcements as fighting broke out. Even with the police presence, the protestors successfully broke into the theatre, set off fire alarms and caused the theatre to be evacuated and three police officers suffered minor injuries from

thrown objects (Grillo, 2007). David Edgar (2006) was the only person who pointed out that *Behtzi* had not actually been playing at the time of the protest and violence, but a children's play. The playwright began receiving death threats and the play was closed as management of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre stated they could not guarantee the safety of the people involved in the production or the audience (Grillo).

Although some members of the Sikh community stated they were disturbed by the violence, they were happy that common sense prevailed and the production was canceled (Grillo, 2007). The Roman Catholic Archbishop for Birmingham stated that the Sikh community had "acted in a reasonable and measured way in representing their deep concerns to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre" and he "regret[ed] that the Repertory Theatre, in the interests of the common good, ha[d] not been more responsive" (Britten, 2004, p. 1). The *Daily Mail* condemned the violence while admiring the Sikhs taking a stand through protests against a "gross insult to their faith" (p. 1).

Jerry Springer: The Opera

Jerry Springer: The Opera by Richard Thomas and Stewart Lee had its initial start at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the summer of 2002 (Horwitch, 2007). The show is a parody of the American television show, Jerry Springer. In the first act of the show, the audience is introduced to a large stream of controversial characters, such as those that appear on the television show. The character of Jerry Springer is killed and then proceeds to hell where he referees

a fight between Satan and Jesus Christ, with additional appearances by the Christian god and Christ's mother Mary. It first played in London at the Battersea Arts Center and became a cult hit before moving to the National Theatre (Whitehead, 2008). Finally, it moved to the commercial West End where it ran for two years and won a number of awards including the Laurence Olivier Award for best new musical in 2004 (Horwitch). The problems began when the BBC decided to broadcast the production. Christian organizations deluged the BBC with more than 47,000 emails to protest the decision to air *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (Tripathi, 2005). The BBC aired the show anyway and garnered an audience of 2.4 million, which was the largest audience for any opera performance on the BBC (Street-Porter, 2005).

The *Christian Voice*, led by Stephen Green, organized protests, petitions, threatened legal actions and when this did not work, published the home addresses of senior executives at the BBC (Edgar, 2006). They then followed by filing a lawsuit against the BBC for blasphemy (Whitehead, 2008). The protestors threatened to file lawsuits against any theatre that attempted to produce the show (Street-Porter, 2005). Green was successful in getting the Arts Council of England to rescind funding for the tour and getting one third of the venues to cancel the production. Although a third of the venues canceled, the U.K. national tour continued with protestors outside many of the theatres (Horwitch, 2007).

At the end of 2007, the High Court threw out Stephen Green’s case of blasphemy against the BBC and in the summer of 2008 ordered Green to pay

90,000 pounds of the costs incurred for defending the lawsuit by the BBC and Avalon, the producer of the show (Whitehead, 2008). Green has requested that both the BBC and Avalon waive the costs, “in the interests of goodwill and justice,” and has started a petition requesting that the costs be waived. Another petition has also been started requesting that the BBC and Avalon do everything they can to enforce the monetary judgment.

After all of the problems with the United Kingdom national tour of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, attempts to bring the show to Broadway in New York City failed (Horwitch, 2007). The pre-Broadway production in San Francisco was canceled and then plans to bring the show to Broadway in 2005 and 2006 also fell through. Producers were worried the show would receive the same kind of protests in the United States that had plagued the U.K. tour. Green stated he was surprised the show was opening in the United States after “the box office mauling it got here,” but the *Daily Mail* had to post a retraction that the show had been “losing money hand over fist” when it was shown that the show did well financially both in the West End and on tour (Horwitch, p. 1).

Despite opposition, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* has been produced at various cities in the United States. *Jerry Springer: The Opera* had its United States premiere in Chicago and the review by Christopher Piatt (2007) makes no mention of protests. Piatt credits the success of the production on the producing theatre, Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, and the fact "it's no secret that Bailiwick often veers deliberately toward the seedy in its programming, often functioning as

a low-rent gay burlesque house" (p. 1). This in no way hinders his review that the show "looks and sounds dynamite" (p. 1). Productions in Las Vegas, Memphis, Minneapolis and Des Moines went forward with little or no protests (Osborne, 2008).

In the winter of 2008, there was a concert version of *Jerry Springer*: *The Opera* at Carnegie Hall (Brantley, 2008). Brantley enjoyed the show, but in his review he points out that it was unwise for the British to show the production on television. He implies that the religious protesters would never have noticed the show if it did not appear on the BBC. Just as the Christian Voice was the main force behind the protests in the United Kingdom, here in the United States, the America Needs Fatima campaign of the American Society for Tradition Family and Property, lead the way in protesting productions of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. It was estimated that approximately 200 people stood outside of Carnegie Hall to protest the "indecent" show for attacking the "honor and purity" of their god (Absolutely No to Jerry Springer Show).

Subsequent productions of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in Cincinnati, Ohio and Boston, Massachusetts in 2008 and 2009 also had small groups of protestors from America Needs Fatima. Before the production opened, New Stage received a warning that their production would be protested if it was not cancelled (Osborne, 2008). At the time of the article, the theatre had received more than 14,000 letters, telephone calls and postcards protesting the show. The Artistic Director commented that he had not expected the protest to happen

so quickly, but they were standing by their production. McElfresh noted that on opening night there were approximately 30 protesters. McElfresh directly takes on the charge of obscenity and notes there is no nudity and very little suggestive behavior, although by dictionary definition it could also mean "abhorrent to morality or virtue" or "designed to incite lust or depravity" (p. 1). He finds these definitions as funny as the show.

In Boston, the protests began before the production took place as well (Tench, 2009). The Boston Arts Center answered the protests by stating all views should be heard and that they would not cancel the show, but they had no intention of discouraging protests either. America Needs Fatima announced that they were going to be protesting at the opening of the show. In her review, Louise Kennedy (2009) finds that Jerry Springer: The Opera is "...a piece of art. By turns hilarious and thought-provoking, obscene and moral, it both amuses and instructs. But mostly amuses" (p. 1).

Connections Between All Four Plays

It is easy to see the similarities among these examples of modern censorship in the theatre. The one thing all four examples have in common is the issue of religion in one way or another, with two dealing with Christianity, one with Sikhism and one with Judaism. Religious organizations actively protested *Corpus Christi, Behzti* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Although the Jewish community does not appear to have actively protested *My Name is Rachel Corrie* in New York City, the play was cancelled after the artistic director had

conversations with members of the Jewish community who felt the play was not appropriate.

The connections these shows have to religious communities cannot be overlooked. *Corpus Christi, Behzti,* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera* were all seen as shows that were attacking religion. Catholics saw *Corpus Christi* as anti-Catholic even though the playwright was a lapsed Catholic and *Behzti* was seen as being anti-Sikh even though the playwright was a Sikh woman. The playwrights in both cases received death threats because of the shows they had written. An obvious difference is that *Behzti* was closed and *Corpus Christi* was produced in spite of the protests.

Both *Behzti* and *Corpus Christi* have the connection of violence although it was only threatened in the case of *Corpus Christi*. Once some details about *Corpus Christi* came out, the theatre and those involved in the production were threatened with violence and the company initially cancelled the production because of the threat of violence. It does not appear that *Behzti* was threatened until its production in Birmingham. Both *Behzti* and *Corpus Christi* responded to these threats by providing security for the protection of the audience and those involved in the shows. The protests in *Behzti* turned violent and the theatre was broken into, fire alarms were set off and the production could not move forward. After the violence, the theatre in Birmingham announced that the show was closing to ensure the safety of the audiences and those involved in the show. In both cases, the protesting religious groups stated that the theatres were doing

the right thing by canceling the shows, although they also noted they did not support violence even though it was the violence and the threats of violence that were at least initially successful in closing the productions.

In both *Behzti* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, the producing companies chose to speak with those in the community they thought would be offended by the material. The theatre company in Birmingham contacted members of the Sikh community because they knew they were going to have problems with the show. The theatre company in Behzti had no intention of having the playwright change the play and the members of the Sikh community would only be satisfied if the play was changed to remove the offensive material. These talks were obviously unsuccessful and could not have been given the basic position for each side that they would not compromise on. In *My name is Rachel Corrie*, the artistic director stated that he had spoken with members of the Jewish community before deciding the timing was not right to produce the show. Critics pointed out that Nicola did not engage members of the local Palestinian community in these discussions and when pushed, Nicola stated he had looked at Palestinian websites. The obvious difference here is that Nicola canceled the production of *My Name is Rachel Corrie* and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre offered to add liner notes to the program and hand out flyers stating the Sikhs position.

Both *Behzti* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie* were the only productions that were completely shut down. Each of these shows had previously been seen in other places, but these productions were canceled in the specific venues

discussed. The difference is that *Behzti* closed because of the violence and fear for the safety of those involved and *My Name is Rachel Corrie* did not even open because according to Nicola the time was not right to produce the show.

In *Corpus Christi* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, both shows have been the focus of legal action by people who wished to suppress the shows. Lawsuits were brought against the groups producing each of these shows although the reasons behind the lawsuits were different as were those bringing the lawsuits. Both lawsuits utilized religion to try to close the shows. In *Corpus Christi*, the argument was based partially on the idea of the separation of church and state. In *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the lawsuit argued that the show violated the country's blasphemy laws. Lawmakers in the state of Indiana filed the lawsuit in *Corpus Christi* as they had been unsuccessful in getting a university to cancel the production of the show. A private citizen brought the lawsuit against *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Even though the courts sided with the productions in both cases, in the United Kingdom, the courts went a step further to discourage such frivolous lawsuits by requiring the plaintiff to pay part of the defense costs for the lawsuit. The federal court in Indiana did not do the same thing.

Jerry Springer: The Opera did not have problems with production in the United States and *My Name is Rachel Corrie* did not have production problems in the United Kingdom. Although it is surprising that a show is able to rile the Christian right in the United Kingdom, but not in the United States, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* has not been protested here as it was in Britain. Admittedly,

the shows produced here in the United States are being produced on more local levels so it appears not to have become as important to the religious right in this country. The protests in Britain began after the BBC decided to air the show on television. If the show were to air on television in the United States, the show would have to appear on a pay channel or be severely edited because one of the complaints in Britain was about the vulgar language and the language in question would not be permitted on television in the United States.

With *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, it is interesting that a show about an American citizen fighting for human rights would come under such a cloud of censorship in our own country when it is shown to wide acclaim in Britain. The show has played in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world and it has done so without incident. This is the only play of the four looked at that is also seen as being politically motivated. Rachel Corrie is portrayed by both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to suit their own needs. Supporting the play in the United States is seen by many as supporting terrorism and it does not have these same links when produced in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the world.

All four of the shows, *Corpus Christi, Behzti*, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, were actually examples of self-censorship. The companies involved chose to discontinue the productions based on pressure from the outside, but it was the choice of those running the theatre companies to end the performances. Although there were attempts made to file lawsuits to

close the shows, the final decision came down to those who had initially agreed to produce the shows.

Behtzi, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie* all received British theatre awards for excellence. Although each of these shows have received some poor reviews, all three have won British awards in the theatre. Censorship is not only for the shows that are completely out of step with the majority, but for those that do not conform to a narrow view of the world. Another interesting thing the three shows, *Behtzi*, *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, have in common is that the shows were all originally British shows, although both *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, were based on Americans.

Finally, artists protested the censorship in all four productions although these protests were certainly not equal. The strongest condemnation of attempted censorship came in the wake of the Manhattan Theatre Workshop to cancel the production of *Corpus Christi*. The artistic protestors did not just write letters and sign petitions, but one artist actually pulled his show from production with the Manhattan Theatre Workshop in protest over the company's caving in to religious pressure and censoring itself and the playwright. The condemnation by the theatre community was so thorough that the Manhattan Theatre Workshop immediately reversed itself and reinstated the show. The same could not be said for the community response to the canceling of *My Name is Rachel Corrie*. Although some members of the theatre community condemned the actions taken

by Nicola, others came out and said that even if they thought Nicola's actions were a mistake, they still supported him and the New York Theatre Workshop. This was a far cry from the unified condemnation eight years earlier. Some people in the theatre came out in support of Nicola by stating that postponing was not the same thing as canceling even though it was obvious at that point that they would not be producing the show.

The theatre community did come out against the censorship in both *Behzti* and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, but not quite to the same levels as had happened with *Corpus Christi*. One reason for this difference is that it was hard to condemn the theatre in Birmingham when they kept the show open until actual violence had occurred and they stated they were worried about the safety of the audience and those involved in the show. In the case of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the show was not censored by the BBC and two-thirds of the touring sites still produced the show. Those involved in the tour took pay cuts to make sure the show went on in those places that agreed. The surprise is that more people did not protest the actions of the Arts Council of England to cancel support for the show.

Chapter 4: Studio Theatre

> You could call it the miracle on 14th Street. Sidewalks long littered with trash and needles now have signs for million-dollar condominiums, and new restaurants and galleries are opening. Much of the credit for the transformation is due to the Studio Theatre. Through grit and drama, Joy Zinoman has brought new life to both her stages and the street. (Milk, 2003)

Background

As Is, by William Hoffman (1985), was one of the first plays to address issues surrounding the AIDS crisis. The main story was about a man coping with AIDS and the silence and indifference of the government and mainstream society. This was also the first play I saw during the 1986-1987 season at the Studio Theatre. I was a student at The American University and although I did not know anybody with AIDS at the time, I was actively involved in the fight against AIDS and government and public indifference. At school, I was part of a Gay Awareness Program, where students went into classrooms and discussed being gay and this always led to questions about AIDS. At twenty, I was educating people about AIDS and handing out condoms. I was living in the world where the government remained silent while people were dying. It was at this time that I saw *As Is* at the Studio Theatre and it made me realize there were people out there willing to speak up.

I lived in Washington, DC from August 1985 through October 1993. Although I was wrapped up in the theatre world at The American University where I worked back stage, designed or acted in more than sixteen separate shows from 1985-1990, I was not a frequent visitor to the Studio Theatre. It seems strange to me now looking back that I did not spend more time attending theatre there since they were doing such exciting things. Before I moved out of the Washington, DC area, I attended one other production at the Studio Theatre in their 1991-1992 season, *Falsettoland* by William Finn. *Falsettoland* takes place in the 1980's and deals with issues surrounding families, alternative families, homosexuality and AIDS. The Studio Theatre was yet again producing a show that challenged the status quo. Whenever I return to Washington, DC, I always find myself looking to see what the Studio Theatre is doing. In the summer of 2009, I attended a performance of *Rock 'N Roll* by Tom Stoppard and a number of performances in the Reading Series: Welsh Words. In the 2009-2010 season, I saw *Reasons To Be Pretty* by Neil LaBute, another playwright that tends to bring up controversy.

The mission of the Studio Theatre "is to produce the best in contemporary theatre" (Studio). Today, the Studio Theatre is made up of a production company as well as the Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory. The organization has four intimate performance spaces all of which seat 250 people or less (Studio). The theatres are designed in such a way that the audience members are never more than seven rows away from the stage. According to staff, the idea is that it is

better to increase the number of performances, rather than increase the size of the theatre. This means the intimacy created between the audience and performers is maintained.

History

Although the Studio Theatre opened in 1978, things really began in 1975 when Joy Zinoman founded the Acting Conservatory (Amato, 2008). The Acting Conservatory was and is a training program for actors that Zinoman started in a shared studio space on Rhode Island Avenue in Northwest Washington, DC. In 1978, Joy Zinoman and Russell Metheny decided to experiment with producing shows in the Rhode Island Avenue studio space that Zinoman was already sharing with a dance studio and a gallery (Amato). Since the space was shared, they needed to put together shows that could be taken down each night so classes could be taught the next day. In this initial, experimental season, Zinoman and Metheny with the help of arts advocate Virginia Crawford produced three shows in the shared studio space, *The Rimers of Eldritch, Five Finger Exercise* and *Hotel* Paradiso (Amato). What is now known as the Studio Theatre's pilot season was a success so Zinoman and Metheny decided to continue.

The first thing Zinoman and Metheny needed was a space for their theatre. They wanted to stay in the same neighborhood and were able to convert an abandoned hot dog warehouse on Church Street into a 100 seat theatre where the theatre continued to have sold out shows (Amato, 2008). The Studio

Theatre continued to grow and again found itself in need of a new space. Zinoman and Metheny again decided to stay within their same neighborhood in Washington, DC and created their new theatre in a leased old automobile show room where they built a 200 seat theatre called the Mead Theatre, a scenic shop and classroom space for the Acting Conservatory, which all opened in October of 1987 (Amato, 2008).

Joy Zinoman expanded the artistic reach of the Studio Theatre by creating two additional producing wings in the form of their Second Stage and Special Events (Studio). Second Stage allows for the experiment in directorial styles and presents work that is described as raw and edgy. A number of the shows produced within Second Stage fall within the realm of provocative and controversial work. The third area, Special Events features performing artists who might not otherwise be seen in Washington, DC.

The Studio Theatre purchased the building in 1993. By March 1997, the Studio Theatre had undergone further renovations and the major focus of the renovation was the Milton Theatre, a second 200-seat theatre space (Studio). The Studio Theatre had long ago run into the problem that it was difficult, if not impossible, to continue the run of a popular show when the next show was already scheduled in the theatre. With the creation of the two-theatre model, the Studio Theatre began scheduling shows in the two theatre spaces so shows did not open in the same space one after the other. Instead the shows were

scheduled in alternating spaces, which then allowed for popular shows to be extended.

As the Studio Theatre continued to grow, they purchased two adjacent buildings to their space (Studio). Both of these spaces had also been utilized as former automobile show rooms. Russell Metheny continued his design with the addition of the two new buildings. The new complex opened in 2004 and the Studio Theatre had added another 200 seat theatre in the form of the Metheny Theatre, a fourth performing space was added with flexibility as it has no fixed stage or seating and is utilized as the primary home of the Second Stage productions. The additional building space also allowed for additional classroom space for the Acting Conservatory, a full costume shop and prop and scenic shop. The middle space was converted into a more public space where audiences can mingle and it is capped with a beautiful atrium that unites the spaces and gives those inside a view of the city outside.

Organizational Structure

Organizationally, the Studio Theatre is similar to other nonprofit organizations. It has a Board of Directors, an Artistic Director, management staff and other staff in various departments (Studio). According to Morey Epstein (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009), the Board of Directors has 32 members who make a minimum contribution to the organization, support the gala and underwrite the productions. The Board of Directors is very active in the organization, but in a very defined role. They support the theatre, act as liaisons

to the community and provide expertise in areas that the staff do have. Epstein (2009) points out that the Board members are hand selected very carefully to make sure they are "first and foremost people who support the work of the theatre." The Studio Theatre wants people who support their work so they are unlikely to add somebody to the Board of Directors who is looking for social glamour or who wants the prestige of having their name associated with the organization.

The Studio Theatre divisions are broken down into the following: Administrative Staff, Box Office and House Staff, Artistic Staff, Production Staff and the Acting Conservatory (Studio). When looking at a list of the staff for the organization, it is easy to see the multiple roles that management staff play in the various parts of the organization. Joy Zinoman is the Founding Artistic Director of the Studio Theatre and the Acting Conservatory. In addition to her position as the head of the producing arm of the Studio Theatre, Zinoman also teaches in the Acting Conservatory and serves as the Director.

The multiple roles Zinoman takes in the organization serve as a model for other management level staff. The Managing Director, Keith Alan Baker, is in charge of Administration and is also the Artistic Director for Second Stage, which means he also directs shows for the Second Stage (Studio). Baker has been with the organization since 1983 (Epstein Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). Morey Epstein, Executive Director of Institutional Development, has been with the organization since 1988 when he was hired as the PR/Marketing/Development

Associate (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). Prior to his arrival at the Studio Theatre, Epstein worked in the theatre, also for a nonprofit organization, the Foundation for the Extension and Development of the American Professional Theatre before turning to the commercial world of advertising. At the end of his first year with Studio Theatre, Epstein became the Director of Development and although his title and responsibilities grew over the years, his core responsibility has always remained in fundraising. Associate Producing Artistic Director, Serge Seiden, is the head of the Production Department, directs shows and is an instructor in the Acting Conservatory. He has been at the Studio Theatre since 1990.

In September 2009, the Studio Theatre announced that the Founding Artistic Director, Joy Zinoman, was retiring at the end of the 2009-2010 season (Studio). Although the announcement was made to the press in 2009, the organization had been planning the succession since Zinoman made her plans known to the Board of Directors and management staff in 2005. Even with Zinoman's departure as Artistic Director, the three other management level staff, Baker, Epstein and Seiden have worked together for more than twenty years. The Studio Theatre has conducted a national search for a new Artistic Director and recently announced the new Artistic Director, David Muse (Marks, 2010).

Muse, a 26 year old associate artistic director at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC, has a Master of Fine Arts degree in Directing from Yale University and has directed a number of successful shows at the Studio

Theatre, including the award winning *Blackbird* and the Spring 2010 show by Neil LaBute, *Reasons to be Pretty* (Marks, 2010). Both of these shows are discussed further below as they both have controversial overtones. Muse indicated to the Washington Post that he would like to tweak the mission of the Studio Theatre to possibly bring in new plays as well as more international work (Marks, 2010).

The Studio Theatre has close to eighty employees including 32 full-time, 31 part-time, 10 apprentices and instructors within the Acting Conservatory (Studio). In addition to the multiple roles of some of the core management team, Roma Rogers is the Director of Administration for the organization and serves as the Director of Education within the Acting Conservatory. There are also an Executive Assistant and an Administrative Assistant under Administration. Morey Epstein is the Executive Director of Institutional Development and has a Development Administrator, a Donor Relations Manager and a Grant Writer also working in Development. Liane Jacobs is the Director of Communications and has a Marketing Manager, Subscriptions Manager, a PR/Marketing Assistant and two Graphic Designers and three Photographers also working in Communications. There is a Business Manager, Business Apprentice, Information Technology Director, Information Technology Manager and a Facilities Manager also working in the Administration. The Box Office and House Staff have a large number of employees including a Director of Ticket Operations, a Box Office Manager, an Assistant Box Office Manager, three Box Office Associate, eleven Box Office Assistants, an Audience Services Manager,

a House Manager, three Associate House Managers and one Assistant House Managers.

People who are part of the artistic staff include the Resident Set Designer (co-founder of the Studio Theatre), the Resident Costume Designer, the Resident Sound Designer, the Resident Lighting Designer, and Keith Alan Baker is also listed here as the Artistic Director of Second Stage. Within the Production Staff under Serge Seiden, Associate Producing Artistic Director, there is a staff including an Associate Production Manager, an Assistant Production Manager/Casting Assistant, an Associate Literary Manager/Dramaturg (Sarah Wallace), the Technical Director, the Master Carpenter, the Carpenter, the Master Electrician/Sound Technician, the Costume Shop Manager, the Paints Artisan and the Properties Master. The Acting Conservatory also has an additional sixteen instructors who are not working elsewhere at the Studio Theatre.

In addition to the staff, the Studio Theatre has an Apprenticeship Program and currently has eight full-time apprentices. These apprentices are divided between Administration/Conservatory, Development, PR/Marketing, Business, and four in Production in the areas of Company Management, Stage Management, Literary and Production Electrics. Apprentices work full-time for the Studio Theatre for a year and most receive housing and a small living stipend.

Organizational Finances

As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2 from the financial information pulled from the Studio Theatre's Federal 990 Tax Returns, from 1998 through 2008, the Studio Theatre's revenues have exceeded the expenses for every year. Although a large portion of the excess of income over expenses during this time period can be linked to the capital campaigns, since 1998, the organization has not produced a deficit. The smallest excess occurred in the 1997-1998 season with $627,584 in excess. It should also be noted that the Studio Theatre predicted it would have paid off the mortgage for their expanded space on 14th Street by early 2009 and according to Morey Epstein they accomplished this goal.

Table 1 and Table 2 show that Studio Theatre increased their revenue by 179% from 1998 until 2008. There was a corresponding 198% increase in expenses for this same period. The increase in Net Assets was significant at 456% during the 1998-2008 time period. The contributed income during this time period increased by 169% with program income increasing by 180% during this same time period.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Direct Public Support	$1,251,915	$1,415,961	$1,009,330	$2,591,992	$2,278,382
Indirect Public Support	$6,949	$5,648	$12,380	$10,622	$8,275
Government Contributions	$291,328	$371,566	$305,586	$338,851	$323,815
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED INCOME	$1,550,192	$1,793,175	$1,327,296	$2,941,465	$2,610,472
Program Revenue	$1,473,745	$1,707,135	$2,067,290	$2,161,754	$1,889,742
Interest on Savings	$23,988	$95,240	$133,753	$115,302	$55,753
Gross Rents					$28,186
Net Gain or (loss)		$(8,099)	$(974)	$(1,076)	$(2,017)
Special Events	$5,025	$(2,909)	$(5,469)	$(20,296)	$(15,582)
Other Revenue	$7,241	$6,311	$10,098	$8,536	$6,157
TOTAL REVENUE	$3,060,191	$3,590,853	$3,531,994	$5,205,685	$4,572,711
Program Services	$1,858,602	$1,950,853	$2,188,303	$2,345,939	$ 2,432,416
Management & General	$418,991	$323,079	$439,300	$506,094	$639,221
Fundraising	$155,014	$120,116	$61,862	$45,328	$32,428
TOTAL EXPENSES	$2,432,607	$2,394,048	$2,689,465	$2,897,361	$3,104,065
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	$627,584	$1,196,805	$842,529	$2,308,324	$1,468,646
Net Assets	$4,195,770	$4,823,354	$6,020,630	$6,863,159	$9,171,523
Changes in Net Balances	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
NET ASSETS	$4,823,354	$6,020,159	$6,863,159	$9,171,483	$10,640,169

Table 1. Studio Theatre Summary of 990 Financial Information 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Direct Public Support	$2,075,911	$4,438,419	$1,473,028	$4,105,114	$2,148,098	$ 2,421,381
Indirect Public Support	$22,273	$9,155				
Government Contributions	$298,460	$312,050	$2,331,457	$485,908	$399,579	$201,457
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED	$2,396,644	$4,759,624	$3,804,485	$4,591,022	$2,547,677	$2,622,838
Program Revenue	$2,106,470	$2,420,794	$2,577,680	$2,794,166	$2,547,124	$2,650,878
Interest on Savings	$23,502	$18,662	$38,035	$45,406	$98,640	$48,406
Dividends/Securities	$7,791	$5,871	$23,055	$35,353	$62,100	$120,302
Gross Rents	$28,975	$14,208				
Net Gain or (loss)	$(11,347)	$(780)	$(11,838)	$(9,163)	$906	
Special Events	$(20,563)	$27,107				
Other Revenue	$6,946	$10,228	$4,030	$4,634	$25,018	$26,222
TOTAL REVENUE	$4,538,418	$7,255,714	$6,435,447	$7,461,418	$5,281,465	$5,468,646
Program Services	$2,524,098	$2,558,701	$3,955,195	$4,009,102	$3,912,310	$4,231,410
Management & General	$558,580	$541,267	$218,710	$330,027	$418,603	$399,159
Fundraising	$71,253	$199,999	$190,220	$205,334	$182,676	$192,842
TOTAL EXPENSES	$3,253,931	$3,299,967	$4,364,125	$4,544,463	$4,513,589	$4,823,411
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	$1,284,487	$3,955,747	$ 2,071,322	$2,916,955	$767,876	$645,235
Net Assets	$10,640,169	$1,924,656	$15,903,823	$17,962,856	$20,864,527	$21,607,008
Changes in Net Balances	$ -	$23,420	$(12,289)	$(15,284)	$(25,395)	$(273,938)
NET ASSETS	$11,924,656	$15,903,823	$17,962,856	$20,864,527	$21,607,008	$21,978,305

Table 2. Studio Theatre Summary of 990 Financial Information 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

When looking at eleven years of the finances for the Studio Theatre, provided in the organization's federal 990 Tax Returns from 1998-2008, it is not possible to separate out the revenue for the capital campaigns that were occurring during these times that have the effect of increasing contributed income to significantly higher levels. The 990 Tax Returns are not created based on a calendar year, but on the organization's taxable year of September 1

through August 31. The 990 Tax Returns actually cover a season for the organization. The U.S. 990 Tax Return for 1998 covers the 1997-1998 season, 1999 covers the 1998-1999 season and for each following tax return and season. This becomes apparent as the numbers are analyzed as historical events had an impact on things such as fundraising and ticket sales, but at first glance do not occur in the appropriate time frame.

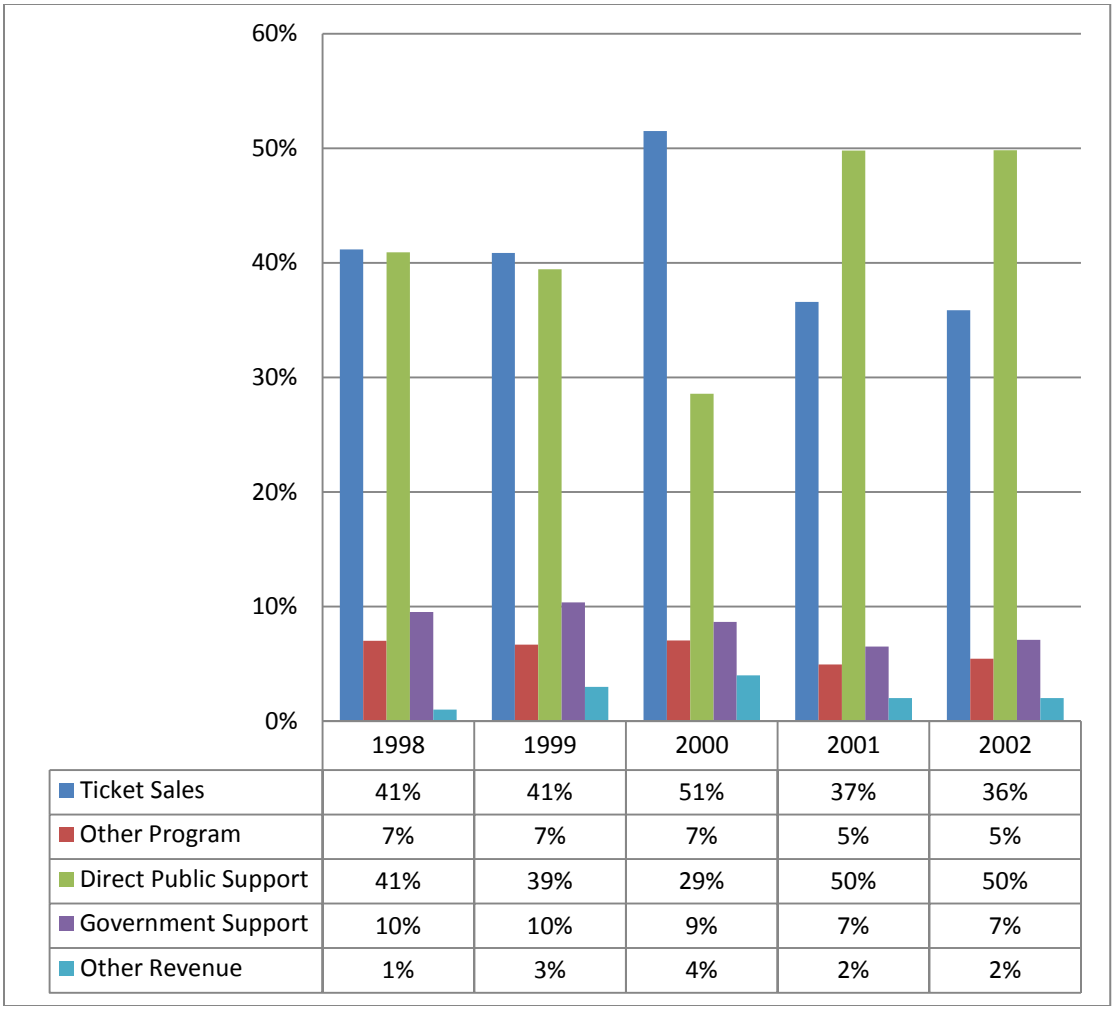
As seen in Table 3 Revenue from 1998-2002, total program revenue increased each year except for the 2001-2002 season, which may be attributed to the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The Acting Conservatory also enjoyed increases in tuition revenue from the 1997-1998 season through the 2000-2001 season. There was a slight drop in tuition revenue in the 2001-2002 season as well. As noted above, the Studio Theatre has been engaged in capital campaigns surrounding the purchase and expansion of the organization's working space. In all but the 1999-2000 season, contributed income exceeded program revenue and this can again be linked to the capital campaigns. The contributed income and total revenue for the same time period reflect the up and down nature of the longer term capital campaign as income from contributed income fluctuated from year to year.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Direct Public Support	$1,251,915	$1,415,961	$1,009,330	$2,591,992	$2,278,382
Indirect Public Support	$6,949	$5,648	$12,380	$10,622	$8,275
Government Contributions	$291,328	$371,566	$305,586	$338,851	$323,815
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED INCOME	$1,550,192	$1,798,175	$1,327,296	$2,941,465	$2,610,472
Subscription Sales	$527,373	$595,374	$735,991	$876,871	$967,330
Other Tickets	$689,038	$812,109	$1,020,119	$970,518	$626,063
Concessions	$42,854	$59,844	$62,593	$57,508	$46,833
TOTAL TICKETS	$1,259,265	$1,467,327	$1,818,703	$1,904,897	$1,640,226
School Tuition	$171,644	$197,758	$206,780	$213,500	$208,307
Programs	$42,854	$42,050	$41,807	$43,357	$41,209
TOTAL OTHER PROGRAMS	$214,480	$239,808	$248,587	$256,857	$249,516
TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE	$1,473,745	$1,707,135	$2,067,290	$2,161,754	$1,889,742
TOTAL REVENUE	$3,060,191	$3,590,853	$3,531,994	$5,202,685	$4,572,711

Table 3. Studio Theatre Revenue 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

Table 4 Revenue Percentages 1998-2002, shows the fluctuations between the separate areas of income. Ticket sales for this period average 36% to 41% of total revenue, except for a one-time dramatic increase to 51% in the 1999-2000 season. Correspondingly, in the 1999-2000 season, contributed income dropped to 29% of total revenue, whereas for the same 1998-2002 time periods, it averaged from 39% to 50%, not including the 1999-2000 season. The Other Program Revenue remained fairly steady for the period and for the first three seasons averaged 7% of total revenue and for the last two years averaged 5% of total revenue.



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Ticket Sales	41%	41%	51%	37%	36%
Other Program	7%	7%	7%	5%	5%
Direct Public Support	41%	39%	29%	50%	50%
Government Support	10%	10%	9%	7%	7%
Other Revenue	1%	3%	4%	2%	2%

Table 4. Studio Theatre Revenue Percentages 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

Table 5 Revenue 2003-2008 shows that the prior trend of fluctuations in total contributed income and total revenue from 1998-2002 continues here. Since the Studio Theatre was in the midst of an enormous capital campaign, these changes can be attributed to that campaign. Total contributed income peaked in

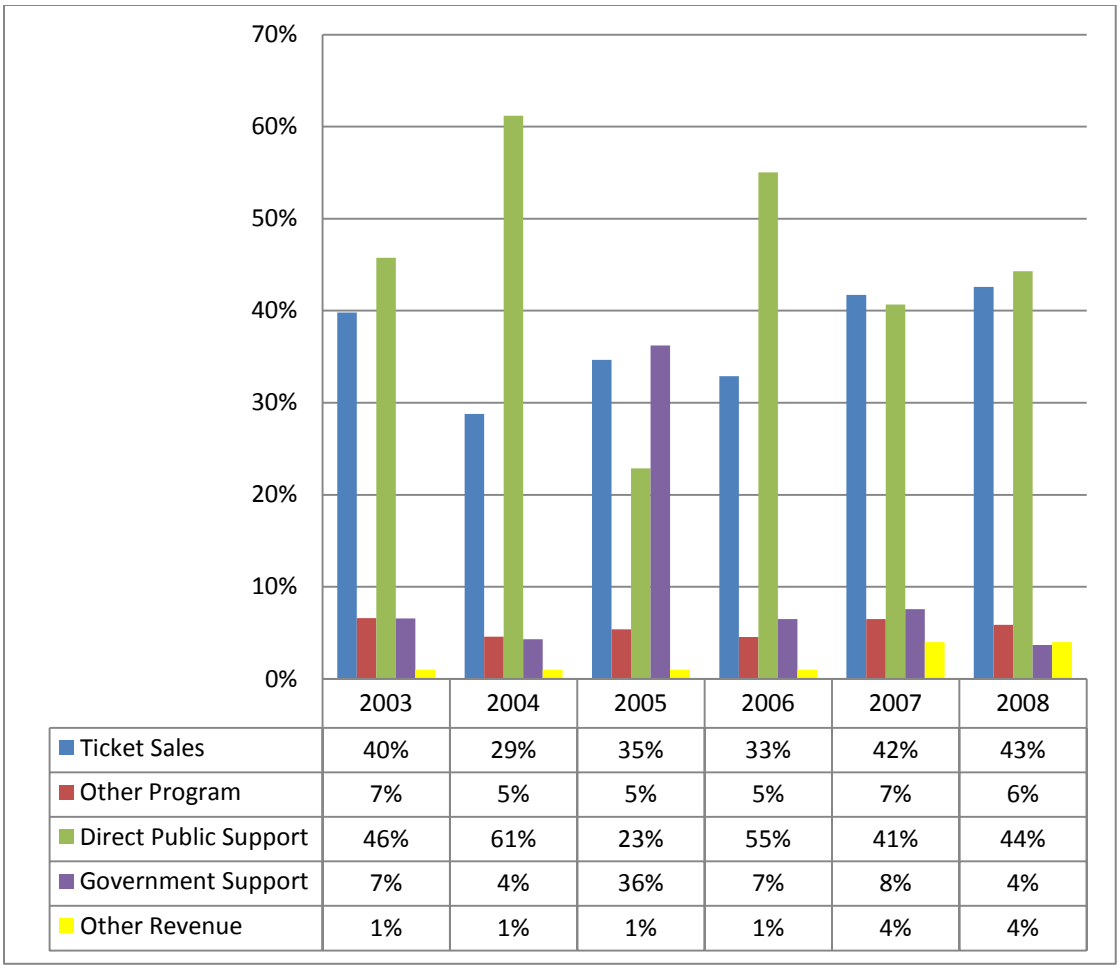
the 2003-2004 season at $4,759,624. Government contributions peaked at $2,331,457 in the 2004-2005 season. The Acting Conservatory had increases from the 2002-2003 season through the 2004-2005 season, followed by two seasons with smaller tuition revenue, before tuition revenue began increasing again in the 2007-2008 season. From 1998-2008, ticket sales peaked at $2,454,893 in the 2005-2006 season. Ticket sale revenues had increases each year from 2003-2008, except for the 2006-2007 season. Although there was another increase in ticket sale revenues in the 2007-2008 year, the sales did not reach the level from the 2005-2006 season. Ticket sales will be looked at more thoroughly in the section below on the Productions.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Direct Public Support	$2,075,911	$4,438,419	$1,473,028	$4,105,114	$2,148,098	$2,421,381
Indirect Public Support	$22,273	$9,155				
Government Contributions	$298,460	$312,050	$2,331,457	$485,908	$399,579	$201,457
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED	**$2,396,644**	**$4,759,624**	**$3,804,485**	**$4,591,022**	**$2,547,677**	**$2,622,838**
Subscription Sales	$948,823	$1,039,940	$865,143	$ 946,394	$1,061,415	$989,435
Other Tickets	$809,633	$1,000,666	$1,311,616	$1,463,973	$1,092,032	$1,277,378
Concessions	$48,588	$48,318	$53,456	$44,526	$49,682	$62,301
TOTAL TICKETS	**$1,807,044**	**$2,088,924**	**$2,230,215**	**$2,454,893**	**$2,203,129**	**$2,329,114**
School Tuition	$254,908	$275,575	$287,665	$275,956	$272,829	$275,935
Programs	$44,518	$56,295	$59,800	$63,317	$71,166	$45,829
TOTAL OTHER PROGRAMS	$299,426	$331,870	$347,465	$339,273	$343,995	$321,764
TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE	**$2,106,470**	**$2,420,794**	**$2,577,680**	**$2,794,166**	**$2,547,124**	**$2,650,878**
TOTAL REVENUE	$4,538,418	$7,255,714	$6,435,447	$7,461,418	$5,281,465	$5,468,646

Table 5. Studio Theatre Revenue 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

In Table 6 Revenue Percentages 2003-2008, one percentage jumps out and that is the very large increase in Government Support from 4% in the 2003-2004 season and to 36% in the 2004-2005 season. From 1998-2008, as noted in Table 3 and Table 5, Government Support has ranged from a low of 4% to the high of 36% with an average of 9.9% for the eleven year period. If the 36% is removed from the calculation, the average Government Support for the ten year period is 7.8%. Even this lower percentage is quite high for the United States. Morey Epstein indicated that the government numbers and percentages are skewed because of the theatre's location in Washington, DC where local funding is very limited, but the Studio Theatre qualifies for a federal program for over twenty years (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009).



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Ticket Sales	40%	29%	35%	33%	42%	43%
Other Program	7%	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%
Direct Public Support	46%	61%	23%	55%	41%	44%
Government Support	7%	4%	36%	7%	8%	4%
Other Revenue	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%	4%

Table 6. Studio Theatre Revenue Percentages 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

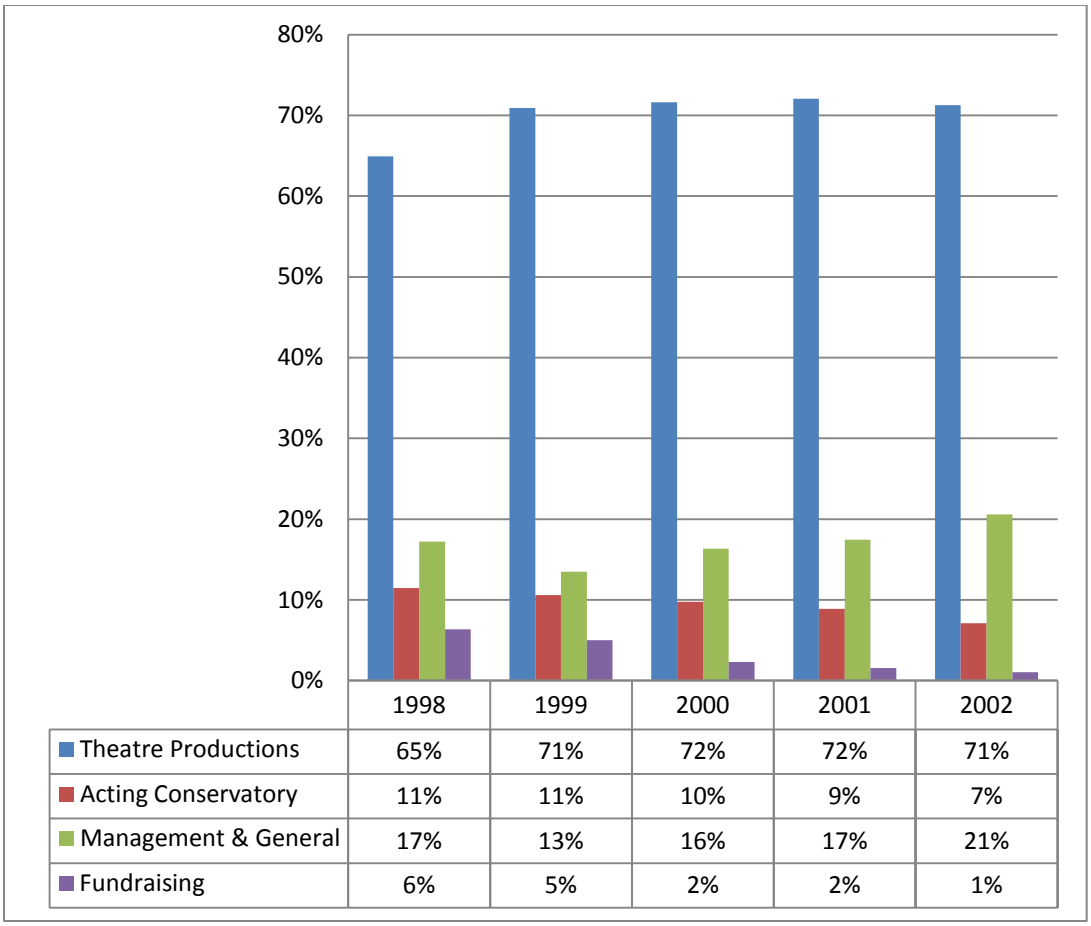
Table 7 breaks down the Studio Theatre's expenses from 1998 through 2002. The programmatic expenses were further broken down into expenses dealing with the theatrical productions and those dealing with education programs within the Acting Conservatory. The data is presented in Table 6 in a percentage format. The expenses related to the theatrical productions increased

from $1,579,812 in the 1997-1998 season through $2,211,711 in the 2001-2002 season. Although this is a 29% increase in theatre production expenses, the corresponding percentages of total expenses only increased from 65% to 71% during that same period. The management and general expenses actually decreased from the 1997-1998 season to the 1998-1999 season, but continued to rise through the 2001-2002 season with a 35% increase. The fundraising expenses decreased by 80% during this same time period. Although the data is not available here, this dramatic change was most likely not related to an actual decline in fundraising as can be seen in the corresponding revenue tables, but most likely is due to the reclassification of expenses from Fundraising to Management and General during this time period.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Theatre Productions	$1,579,812	$1,696,832	$1,925,707	$2,087,886	$2,211,711
Acting Conservatory	$278,790	$253,550	$262,596	$258,053	$220,705
Management & General	$418,991	$323,079	$439,300	$506,094	$639,221
Fundraising	$155,014	$120,116	$61,862	$45,328	$32,428
TOTAL EXPENSES	$2,432,607	$2,393,577	$2,689,465	$2,897,361	$3,104,065

Table 7. Studio Theatre Expenses 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Theatre Productions	65%	71%	72%	72%	71%
Acting Conservatory	11%	11%	10%	9%	7%
Management & General	17%	13%	16%	17%	21%
Fundraising	6%	5%	2%	2%	1%

Table 8. Studio Theatre Expenses Percentages 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

In Table 9 Expenses 2003-2008, it can be seen that the expenses related to the theatre productions continued to increase each season, except for a slight decrease in the 2006-2007 season with the increase continued in the 2007-2008 season. From 2003 through 2008 there was an 81% increase in theatre production expenses. During this same time period, there were corresponding

decreases in expenses related to the Acting Conservatory and Management and General expenses. The Acting Conservatory expenses decreased from a high in the 2003-2004 season of $266,900 to only $121,436 in the 2007-2008 season. This indicates a decrease of 55% from that period. Management and General Expenses decreased from a high of $558,580 in the 2002-2003 season to $399,159 in the 2007-2008 season, although the lowest Management and General expenses occurred in the 2004-2005 season with expenses of only $218,710. This indicates a 29% decrease in this line item.

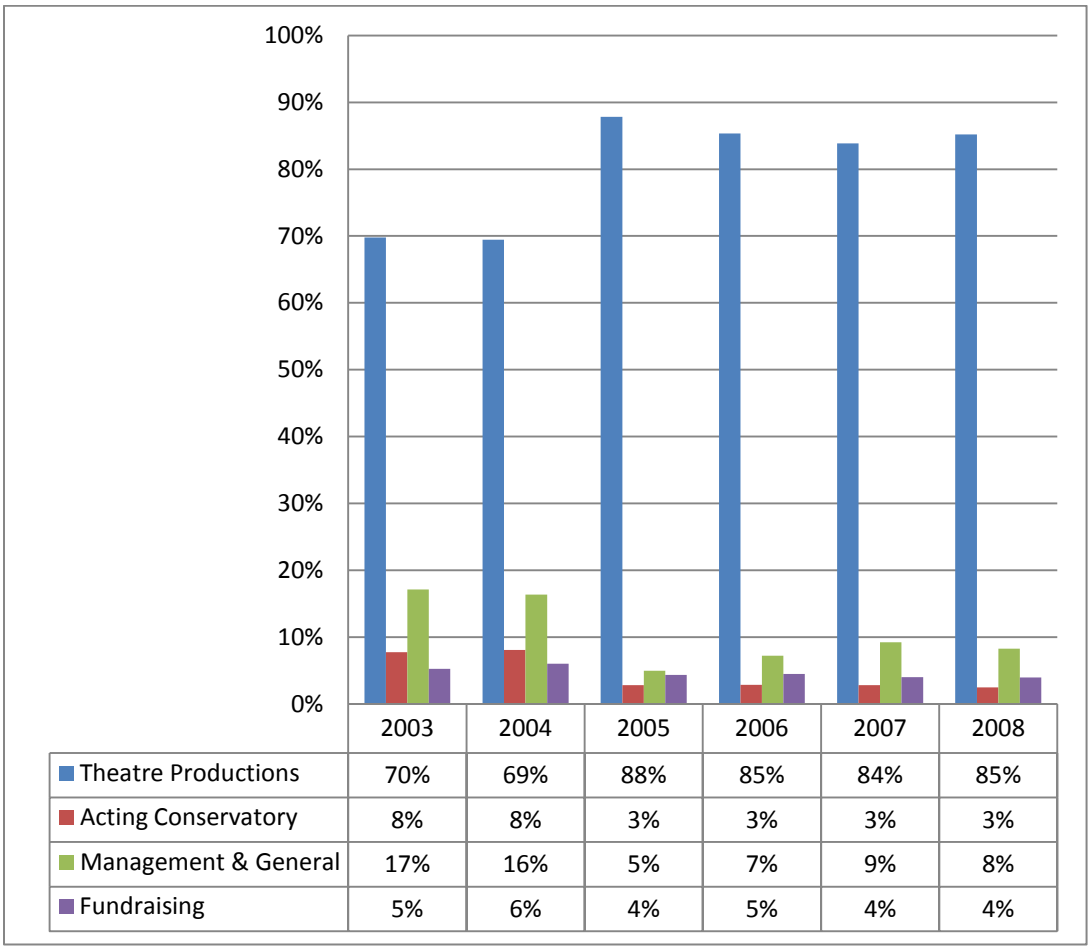
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Theatre Productions	$2,270,984	$2,291,801	$3,831,923	$3,877,543	$3,784,288	$4,109,974
Acting Conservatory	$253,114	$266,900	$123,272	$131,559	$128,022	$121,436
Management & General	$558,580	$541,267	$218,710	$330,027	$418,603	$399,159
Fundraising	$171,253	$199,999	$190,220	$205,334	$182,676	$192,842
TOTAL EXPENSES	$3,253,931	$3,299,967	$4,364,125	$4,544,463	$4,513,589	$4,823,411

Table 9. Studio Theatre Expenses 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

The percentages in Table 8 Expenses Percentage 1998-2002 and Table 10 Expenses Percentage 2003-2008 show a dramatic shift from the earliest seven- year period to the most recent four year period. Theatre production expenses accounted for anywhere from 65%-72% of the total organizational expenses in the 1998-2004 period. From 2005 through 2008, the theatre

production expenses increased to anywhere from 84% to 88% of total organizational expenses.



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Theatre Productions	70%	69%	88%	85%	84%	85%
Acting Conservatory	8%	8%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Management & General	17%	16%	5%	7%	9%	8%
Fundraising	5%	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%

Table 10. Studio Theatre Expenses Percentages 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

The federal government requires that nonprofit organizations involved in the Combined Federal Campaign have no more than 25% of their expenses as

administrative in nature (National Center for Charitable Statistics). This is often referred to as the Management Expense Ratio. Even though there was likely a shift in the record keeping process, the Management Expense Ratio for the entire period from 1998 through 2008 stayed below the 25% mark, even when combined together with the fundraising expenses. Since the 2004-2005 season, this combined ratio of Management and General expenses together with Fundraising expenses has been between 9% and 14%, which is significantly lower than that required in the federal campaign.

The Productions

Since almost the very beginning, the Studio Theatre has not shied away from taking risks and producing work that can be provocative and controversial. Morey Epstein, Liane Jacobs and Sarah Wallace agreed that the Studio Theatre is artist driven and it is this concept that is reflected in all aspects of the organization, including the Literary Committee that helps to select the seasons for the three producing sections of the Studio Theatre, the Board of Directors, development/fundraising and marketing.

In the beginning, the shows at the Studio Theatre were an eclectic mix, which allowed Zinoman and Metheny to experiment with style (Amato, 2008). In their first full season, Zinoman directed *Ssu Lang T'an Mu*, with an 18 member, all male cast that needed to be trained in Chinese opera, acrobatics and martial arts. The Washington Post recommended the show, this was considered a major production for such a young company (Amato, 2008). From the first full season to

the second, the Studio Theatre increased their season from three to four shows. In the 1982-1983 season, they had another increase and produced five shows during the season and continued to produce five shows a year through the 1986-1987 season. By this point, the Studio Theatre produced work that looked at contemporary issues in society, but they also produced important classics as well (Amato, 2008).

When it comes to choosing the shows, Sarah Wallace, Associate Literary Manager/Dramaturg, pointed out that the Studio Theatre actually has three separate seasons with the main stage productions, the Second Stage and the Special Events (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). She noted that most of the production expenses cover the main stage season. The Second Stage productions are not as expensive since they use non-equity actors and the shows are usual shown in the Fourth Stage flexible space, although for larger shows, they do utilize one of the three main theatres as occurred with the production of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. The addition of the Second Stage and the Special Events allows the Studio Theatre to produce or present works that either complement or juxtapose what is going on in the main stage season.

Wallace discussed the Literary Committee that has eight members. The Artistic Director, Managing Director, Associate Producing Artistic Director, the Executive Director of Institutional Development, the Associate Literary Manager/Dramaturg (Wallace), the Literary Apprentice, the Box Office Manager and a floating member who is chosen from a different department each year. At

the time of the interview, that person was from the shops. The idea behind this additional person is to give the committee a fresh perspective.

The meetings start in July more than one year proceeding the season (Wallace). Initially, they look at all of the things that had been looked at for the previous year that people may have been interested in, but were unable to do for some reason. For example, they might not have been able to obtain the rights. Starting in September, the committee begins meeting every two to three weeks. The Committee looks at various sources to see what is being produced in New York City, regionally around the country and in London, UK. They also hear directly from the agents for various playwrights.

Wallace points out that the Studio Theatre is not interested in unfinished scripts that need to be developed through the rehearsal process. The scripts generally need to be finished before the process is started at the Studio Theatre. The Committee does not have a perfunctory role, but seeks the input of all of the members. Wallace indicated that members would disagree and argue and some works championed by some people on the committee while others might hate it. Once the final discussions were over, the Artistic Director has the final say over what gets produced on the main stage and the Second Stage Artistic Director has the final say over what gets produced in that program.

Epstein and Wallace both agreed that the Studio Theatre does not seek work specifically because it is provocative and controversial. They seek out work that is written well and that is one of the priorities with the committee because

they want to produce good work. Wallace also commented that some of the work they do may not be as controversial because they are not the first ones producing the work. She stated that it is rare for them to produce a world premiere, although they generally do not produce shows that have been produced at other venues in the Washington, DC area either. When looking at shows, Wallace said that the biggest concern is whether there are actors who are in the area who will be able to do the characters justice. If they do not think they will have somebody who can do the role really well, they will not produce the show. Wallace also pointed out that they have decided not to do some controversial work, not because it was controversial, but because they do not like the writing. She did not think there was any subject that would be too taboo for production at the Studio Theatre.

Many of the issues concerning the production of provocative and controversial work appear in the areas of the Board of Directors or other funders of the organization. Morey Epstein emphasized that although the Board of Directors is very involved in the Studio Theatre as described above in the discussion of the Organizational Structure, they are not involved in the artistic choices that are made (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). Epstein focused on how the theatre is artist driven and that this includes the area of fundraising and development. The artists make the decisions concerning the content of the productions. According to Epstein, the Studio Theatre does not create programs to chase funding. The potential funders do not drive the organizational mission,

so it is Epstein's job to show funders that the productions and mission of the Studio Theatre fit the funders' objectives. Studio Theatre has taken the time to cultivate an audience that appreciates the work that they produce and some of these people have the resources to support the organization financially. The majority of contributed income usually comes from individuals who meet this criterion.

This continues in the area of marketing where Epstein stated that the artists are the ones who make the decisions regarding the content of the productions and it is the mission of marketing to get people in to buy tickets and see shows. Jacobs is the Director of Communications for the Studio Theatre and this puts her in charge of Marketing and Public Relations (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). According to Jacobs, the Studio Theatre has had the benefit of a founder with a strong vision for the organization. Zinoman and others have been able to find funders who share that vision. Jacobs pointed out that today almost anything could offend somebody. In the 2008-2009 season as part of their Special Events section, the Studio Theatre produced *Blackbird* by David Harrower, which deals with a relationship between a thirteen year old girl and a man who was in his 40's. Since the title is ambiguous, Jacobs had the challenge of finding an audience for this piece, even though they could not tell the audience what it was they were seeing. The show went on to win the Helen Hayes award for Best Play and also had the two actors nominated for awards.

Jacobs further found that you have to be strong enough to stand by your convictions. There are going to be audience members who are offended by something in the work the Studio Theatre produces, but the organization has to communicate in a straight forward manner that they are sorry the people were offended, but the mission of the Studio Theatre is to "produce the very best in contemporary theatre," and that is what they need to do. Jacobs pointed out that audience retention is an important part of her job in communications. Jacobs sees it as more difficult to get new people in the door than to keep them coming back for more.

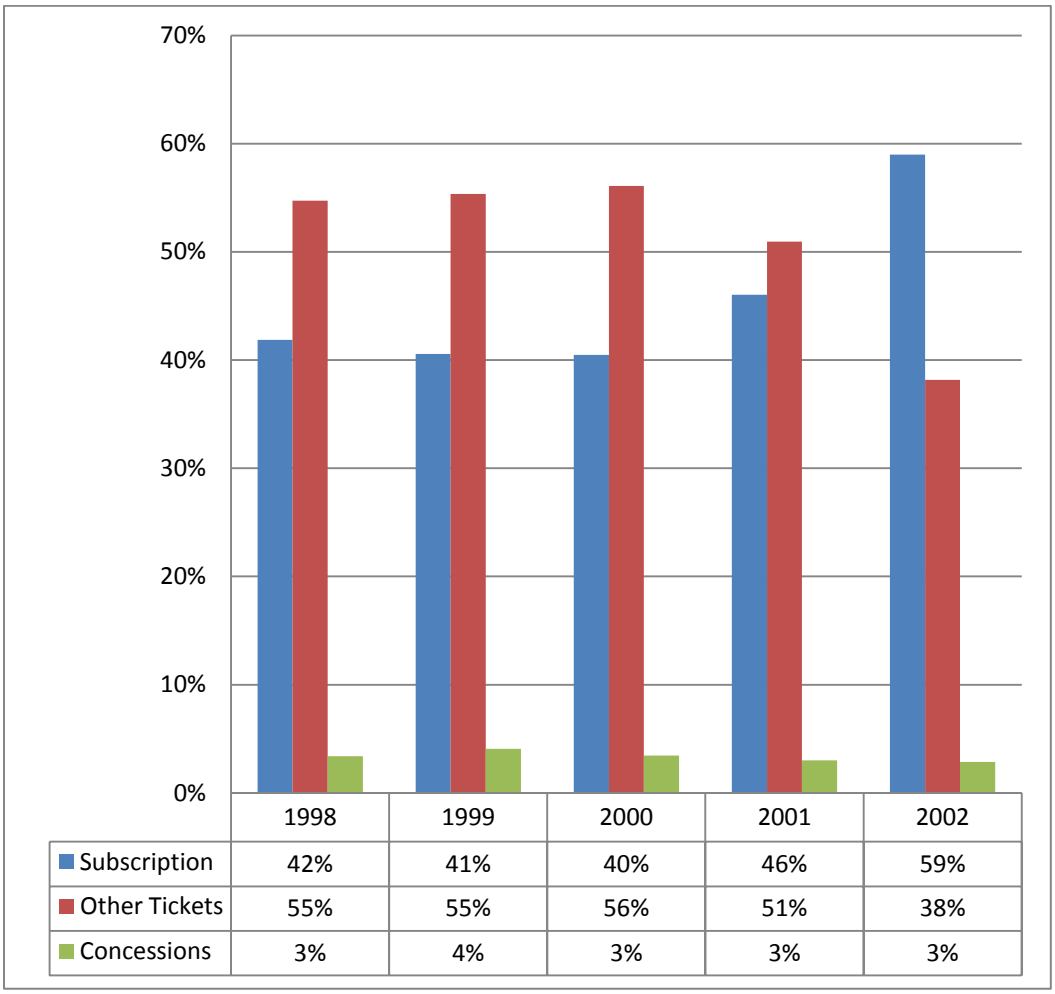
According to Table 11 Ticket Revenue 1998-2002 and Table 12 Ticket Revenue Percentage 1998-2002, ticket sales have fluctuated between subscription sales and individual ticket sales (other tickets). From the 1997-1998 season until the 2000-2001 season, single ticket sales outweighed subscriptions with subscriptions counting for anywhere from 40% to 46% of the overall ticket sales for the period and individual ticket sales making up 51% to 56%. In the 2001-2002 season, it is not surprising that subscription sales accounted for 59% of the overall ticket revenue with only 38% coming from individual ticket sales. This is the season that occurred after the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The sale of concessions accounted for 3% to 4% of overall revenue for ticket sales for the 1998-2002 period.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Subscription	$527,373	$595,374	$735,991	$876,871	$967,330
Other Tickets	$689,038	$812,109	$1,020,119	$970,518	$626,063
Concessions	$42,854	$59,844	$62,593	$57,508	$46,833
TOTAL TICKETS	**$1,259,265**	**$1,467,327**	**$1,818,703**	**$1,904,897**	**$1,640,226**

Table 11. Studio Theatre Ticket Revenue 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

Table 12 makes the consistency factor concerning the balance of revenue from subscriptions versus individuals more clear. From the 1998-1999 season through the 1999-2000 season, there is very little change in the percentages of the ticket revenue breakdown. In the 2001-2002 season, there was a dramatic shift to 59% subscription sales from the prior season where 46% of the ticket revenue was from subscription sales. This again links directly to the national problems facing the country surrounding the 2001 terrorist attacks. It makes sense that the season subscribers continued to support the work at a time when others were not coming out to see new things.



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Subscription	42%	41%	40%	46%	59%
Other Tickets	55%	55%	56%	51%	38%
Concessions	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Table 12. Studio Theatre Ticket Revenue Percentages 1998-2002

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1998; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 1999; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2000; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2001; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2002).

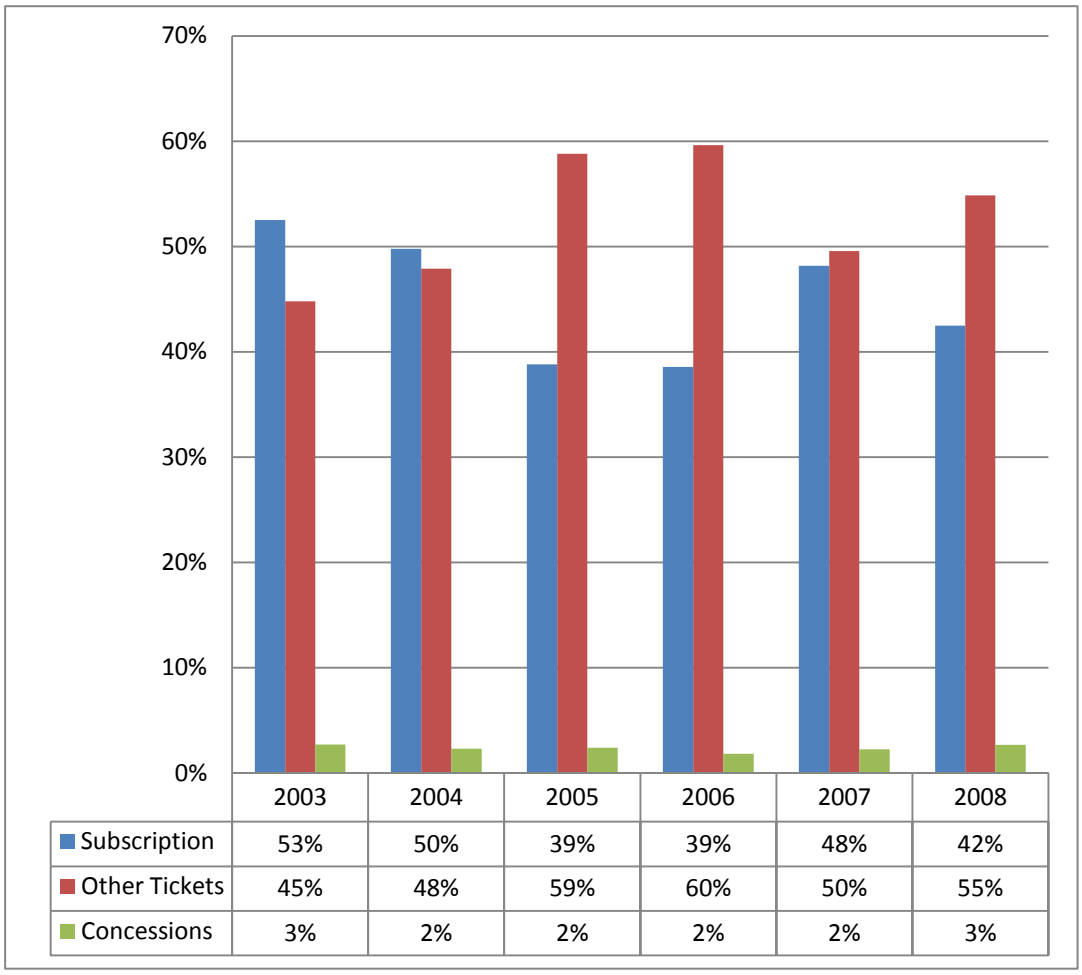
Table 13 Ticket Revenue 2003-2008 and Table 14 Ticket Revenue Percentage 2003-2008 show that the ticket sales peaked in the 2005-2006 season with a decrease in the 2006-2007 season before ticket sales again increased in the 2007-2008 season. Subscription sales were higher than

individual tickets in the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 seasons. Starting in the 2004-2005 season and continuing through the 2007-2008 seasons, individual tickets were larger than subscriptions. Concessions remain fairly consistent throughout the period with between 2% and 3% of the total ticket revenue. It should be noted that the ticket sale numbers are based on total revenue and not the number of patrons who are subscribers versus those who purchase individual tickets. The number of subscribers might still be larger than the number of people who purchase individual tickets as subscribers are given a discount to subscribe to the whole season.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Subscription	$948,823	$1,039,940	$865,143	$946,394	$1,061,415	$989,435
Other Tickets	$809,633	$1,000,666	$1,311,616	$1,463,973	$1,092,032	$1,277,378
Concessions	$48,588	$48,318	$53,456	$44,526	$49,682	$62,301
TOTAL TICKETS	$1,807,044	$2,088,924	$2,230,215	$2,454,893	$2,203,129	$2,329,114

Table 13. Studio Theatre Ticket Revenue 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Subscription	53%	50%	39%	39%	48%	42%
Other Tickets	45%	48%	59%	60%	50%	55%
Concessions	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Table 14. Studio Theatre Ticket Revenue Percentages 2003-2008

(Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2003; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2004; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2005; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2006; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2007; Studio Theatre, 990 Tax Return, 2008).

As discussed in the Organizational Finances section, the theatrical productions account for the majority of expenses for the organization. When comparing the 1998-2002 revenue from ticket sales in Table 9 with the 1998-2002 organizational expenses in Table 5, the ticket revenue has covered anywhere from 52% to 68% of all of the organizational expenses. If you compare

only the revenue from ticket sales with the theatre production expenses for the same time period, the revenue covers anywhere from 74% to 94% of the theatre production expenses. This trend continues, but also varies as can be seen when comparing the 2003-2008 revenue from ticket sales in Table 11 with the organizational expenses in Table 7. From 2003-2008, revenue from ticket sales covered anywhere from 48% to 63% of total organizational expenses for the same time period. When the ticket revenue is compared to the theatre production expenses for the 2003-2008 time period, there is a greater discrepancy. During this time period, the ticket sales revenue covered anywhere from 57% to 91% of the total theatre production expenses. This percentage dipped in the 2001-2002 season to 74% and rebounded to 80% in the 2002-2003 season and further to 91% in the 2003-2004 season before dropping significantly to 58% in the 2004-2005 season and thereafter remaining lower for the 2005-2006 through the 2007-2008 seasons ranging between 57% and 63% of ticket revenue covering theatre production expenses.

Since Liane Jacobs has been at the Studio Theatre since 2003, the only show to have people up in arms in a very obvious way was the Second Stage production of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in the summer of 2008 at the end of the 2008-2009 season (Qualitative Interview, July 6, 2009). This production had organized protestors from the group America Needs Fatima, which is a subgroup of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (2009). Jacobs noted that people had protested at other shows in the past, but this

protest was arranged by an organization that follows the show anywhere in the United States that is produced. Jacobs said the protests started about six weeks before the opening when the organization was bombarded with approximately 1,500 emails. There were some postcards that were mailed to the organization, but most of the protests prior to the production opening came in the form of the emails. Jacobs was involved in having the press do a feature on the actor playing Jerry Springer so she provided the reporter copies of the protest materials.

Jacobs discussed how on opening night about an hour and a half before the show, a group of gentlemen dressed in religious vestments and carrying a statute appeared across the street from the theatre. They only appeared on opening night. The *Washington Post* reported the incident in an article entitled "'Jerry Springer' May be Unholy, But Sales Are Divine" (Argetsinger and Roberts, 2008). The reporters described the protest as standing out from traditional protests in Washington, DC because the protestors wore white robes, red capes, chanted "Hail Mary," and had somebody playing the bagpipes. Argetsinger and Roberts described the scene as the show starting early on the sidewalk and quoted a passerby as saying the show must be really good if they are protesting it so much. Although the show had a sold out run, the President of the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, stated that their demonstrations had caused many people to refuse to see the show (2008).

The email protest was part of the grassroots campaign of America Needs Fatima and the emails consisted of material that was cut and pasted from other

sources (Jacobs). The emails cited concerns with the portrayal of Jesus and Mary as well as concerns about gay themes, sexuality and pretty much everything to do with the show according to Jacobs. Once the article appeared in the *Washington Post*, the Studio Theatre began receiving calls from other theatres around the country that were interested in producing *Jerry Springer: The Opera* and wanted to know how the they had dealt with the protests.

Jacobs has run into other issues surrounding controversial work, but adapts her communication plan accordingly. In the summer of 2009, the Studio Theatre was producing *Fucking A* by Suzan-Lori Parks. Here, the issue dealt with how to advertise the show without using the word fucking in the title. Jacobs discussed how different organizations have different rules about where they have to put the asterisks when advertising. They did not have the option of just not advertising with those sources as the *Washington Post* was one of them and you need to advertise in the *Washington Post*. Jacobs described how the advertisement included discussions with the corporate attorneys for the *Washington Post*. Jacobs stated that they also had to deal with getting different publishers for the show's materials since some would not print the promotional material. There was no problem with finding somebody who would print the material, but it took a little longer than they were expecting. With the use of promotional magnets, the clearinghouse company utilized by the Studio Theatre had to go through three different companies before they could get somebody to print the magnets.

Studio Theatre has been successful in the areas of communications including marketing and promotions, but has not really delved into the area of new media and social networking. Studio Theatre in Washington, DC is a large theatre in a major city, but a search of new media connects the viewer to another Studio Theatre at Wayne State University in Michigan. Although the communications plan is working fine at this point, Studio Theatre will need to enter the realm of new media in the near future to reach different types of audiences.

The Helen Hayes Awards organization was created in 1984 in honor of actress Helen Hayes who was born in Washington, DC and took an active role in the organization until her death in 1993 (www.helenhayes.org). Although the organization is involved in a lot more than just giving out awards, these awards are Washington, DC's equivalent to the Tony Awards for Broadway (Pressley, 2009). The awards were created to honor the achievements of those in professional theatre in Washington, DC (www.helenhayes.org).

The Helen Hayes Awards for Studio Theatre are broken down in Table 15. The first awards were given out in 1985 and the Studio Theatre received six nominations that first year and took home one award. Studio Theatre has received nominations for its work every year since then totaling 265 nominations with 58 wins. The main stage of Studio Theatre has received a total of 221 nominations since the awards were first given in 1985 and has received 46 total awards. Since the Second Stage program was added in the 1988-1989 season,

they have been nominated for 32 Helen Hayes awards and have received 8 awards. Although the Special Events program was not instituted until the 1997-1998 season, the non-resident productions at Studio Theatre have received 12 nominations with 4 awards. The most nominations Studio Theatre has received in any year was 18, which happened in the 1999 and 2000 award years although they have also received 17 nominations in 1998 and again in 2009. On three occasions in 1996, 2000, and most recently in 2009, Studio Theatre has received 7 awards. In any given year, the Studio Theatre has never received less than three nominations. The Studio theatre did not receive any Helen Hayes awards in 1987, 1989 and 1990, although they did receive 9 nominations, 3 nominations and 4 nominations respectively for those same years. Although awards and award nominations are not a guarantee of success, it is obvious Studio Theatre is doing something right when it comes to producing work that people find worthwhile.

	Mainstage Nominations	Mainstage Awards	Non-Resident Nominations	Non-Resident Awards	Second Stage Nominations	Second Stage Awards	Total Nominations	Total Awards
2009	13	2	1		3		**17**	2
2008	8	3			8	4	16	**7**
2007	9	1			3	1	12	2
2006	7	3	2		5	1	14	4
2005	6	1					6	1
2004	4	1	3	2	1		8	3
2003	5	1	2	1	3		10	2
2002	13	2					13	2
2001	7		2	1	1		10	1
2000	18	7					**18**	**7**
1999	16	2	1		1		**18**	2
1998	12	1			5	2	**17**	3
1997	10	1					10	1
1996	15	7					15	**7**
1995	3	1			1		4	1
1994	5	2					5	2
1993	10	3	1		1		12	3
1992	10	2					10	2
1991	11	1					11	1
1990	4						4	0
1989	3						3	0
1988	9	1					9	1
1987	9						9	0
1986	8	3					8	3
1985	6	1					6	1
Totals	**221**	**46**	**12**	**4**	**32**	**8**	**265**	**58**

Table 15. Studio Theatre Awards 1985-2009

(www.helenhayes.org).

Chapter 5: Oval House Theatre

Background

I first heard about Oval House Theatre when I began looking for a theatre in London that was doing controversial and provocative work, even though they have been around since the 1960's. I met Dr. Ruth Thompsett while she was working as a visiting lecturer at The Ohio State University in the Winter Quarter of 2008. She was co-teaching a class with Dr. Lesley Ferris from the Theatre Department. When I began looking for a company to research in more depth, Dr. Thompsett suggested Oval House Theatre as a small, nonprofit theatre that was presenting new work that dealt with controversial issues surrounding minorities, immigration, disability, and sexuality.

In the summer of 2008, I arranged to work as an intern with the Theatre Programming Department at Oval House Theatre for six weeks. Ben Evans, Head of Theatre Programming, worked with me to develop an internship that dealt with presenting programming at Oval House Theatre. I was able to review work submitted to Ben for possible presentation at the theatre, to see staged readings from playwrights seeking to have their work presented at Oval House Theatre and was able to work with the first production in the Autumn 2008 season. This summer internship gave me a great opportunity to meet and

interact with the staff at Oval House Theatre and provided insight into the ways that work is presented there.

History

Oval House Theatre has been producing theatre since the 1960's when the program was founded by Peter Oliver. Although Oliver was the artistic founder of the theatre, its roots go back to the 1930's as Christ Church (Oxford) Clubs, which is still the legal name for the organization. The transition in the 1960's to experimental theatre was not an easy one. When Oliver arrived at Christ Church Oxford United Clubs at Kennington Oval, he replaced an athletic program with drama. Oliver had a "knack of bringing disparate communities and groups together and under his benign stewardship, there was no distinction between amateur and professional" (Woddis, 2007, p. 1). Woddis discussed how young people from Southwark public housing, lighting talents form New York's radical theatre and Black Panthers all co-mingled in Oval House Theatre's coffee bar. Woddis also noted that a number of artists, such as "Athol Fugard, David Hare... Salman Rushdie ... Steven Berkoff, Pierce Brosnan, Mike Figgis [and] Mike Westbrook," all came through Oval House Theatre and "The work was playful, political, rigorous, international and totally uncompromising" (p. 1).

Oliver left in 1974 to follow his dream to act, but Oval House Theatre continued supporting experimental theatre in the 1970's and 1980's with gay, lesbian and women's theatre and the development of Black and Asian writing in the 1990's (Oval House). Oval House Theatre has also won awards for its

presentation of emerging work by people with disabilities. When looking back at the founding in the 1960's and 1970's, Pierce Brosnan discussed how he discovered theatre at Oval House, "I joined this workshop. I went twice a week. I went down to Oval House Theatre club every night after work and eventually gave up the job in commercial art" (Oval House).

Unfortunately, the historical information for Oval House Theatre is not organized in an official manner so a lot of the past is not available for analysis. The production history on the organizational website only reaches back to the Autumn 2001 season (Oval House). While I was interning with the organization, a part-time staffer indicated that she was working on putting together a more formal production history for the organization. Although that person is no longer listed on the staff at Oval House Theatre, they should continue to research their archives and put together such a formal history that will be useful in institutional marketing of the organization and will provide a better overview of the Oval House Theatre.

Organizational Structure

Oval House Theatre is officially registered as Christ Church Oxford United Clubs and is managed by a Board of Trustees [hereinafter "Board"] (Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2009). The members are elected for a period of three years and must resign at the end of that period, although they may also stand for re-election. One third of the Board should be up for re-election each year. The Board needs a minimum of eight members and no more than twenty-four and the Board members do not receive

remuneration for their services. At the end of the last reporting period, there were twelve current members with four resignations in the prior year. The Board is responsible for the governance of the organization as well as for the appointment and termination of both the Director and the General Manager.

Deborah Bestwick has been the Director of Oval House Theatre for more than twenty years and has overall responsibility for the organization and Gary Stewart, the General Manager, has been with them for a number of years as well. Bestwick is in charge of programming and advocacy while Stewart is responsible for finance, operations and infrastructure. Both share responsibility for fundraising, development, policy and personnel. During my internship in the summer of 2008, there were 14 employees working for Oval House Theatre with one position, Press and Marketing Assistant, filled in the autumn after I left. A current staff list shows that there are currently 13 staff members, with no positions listed for the Arts Education Assistant and the Press and Marketing Assistant. This loss of lower level staff is probably due to the current economic conditions. Two positions have either gone through name changes or had the positions restructured. There is no longer a Centre Manager and an Administrator, but there are positions for Theatre Manager and Premises Supervisor. The staffing for the organization has been very stable with 10 of the positions being held by the staff member for a number of years.

Even with such a small staff, Oval House Theatre still covers a lot of ground in their programming. The Theatre program and the Artist Advisor are the

focus for this research, but Oval House Theatre also has programs in Arts Education, including a program called Back on Track, which helps those who have been removed from the traditional educational settings, and Youth Arts, which is a voluntary program for students who access the program in their own free time. Due to the limited number of staff, each person has responsibility for what in most organizations would be entire departments.

Since funding for nonprofit arts organizations is different in the United Kingdom, it is necessary to focus on some of these differences. One of the main differences is that in the United Kingdom, government funding through grants is a primary way for nonprofits to meet their financial obligations as opposed to the role of individual donors in the United States. As can be seen by the finances described below, fundraising is an enormously important function at Oval House Theatre, even if the bulk of funding is coming from the government. The work that is done at Oval House Theatre has been acknowledged by the Arts Council of England on multiple occasions. When the Arts Council of England chose to restructure their funding and cut a large number of organizations from receiving funding in 2008, Oval House Theatre received increased funding. This can still be an area for concern. When the Arts Council of England cut programs in 2008, some of the cut programs were successful and popular, but still lost funding (Blacker, 2008). Oval House Theatre was given a three year grant through the 2010-2011 season and looks likely to continue receiving significant funding in the near future.

Organizational Finances

As can been seen in Tables 16, 19 and 22, Oval House Theatre has increased its revenue by 244% from £429,223 in 1995 to £1,047,897 in 2009 and its expenses by 261% from £451,785 to £1,177,329 during that same time period. There has also been an increase by 329% in Net Assets or Fund Balances from £174,050 to £572,295. The greatest increase incurred in 2006 and actually equaled a 495% increase from 1995, but the balance decreased by 34% from 2006 to 2009. Although Oval House Theatre has ended each year in the positive when including the Net Assets or Fund Balances, expenses have been greater than revenue for nine out of the last fifteen years. Inconsistencies as provided in the tables here are due to how Oval House Theatre altered how its financial data was tracked, rather than problems with the data. These inconsistencies do not alter the finances of the organization, but they will be discussed in the individual sections on revenue and expenses below.

Table 16 provides an overview of the finances for Oval House Theatre from April 1, 1994 through March 31, 1999. During this time period, the organization had a deficit for four out of the five years, but also had a positive increase in the Net Assets or Fund Balances for four out of the five years. The Net Assets or Fund Balances increased by more than 342% for the time period.

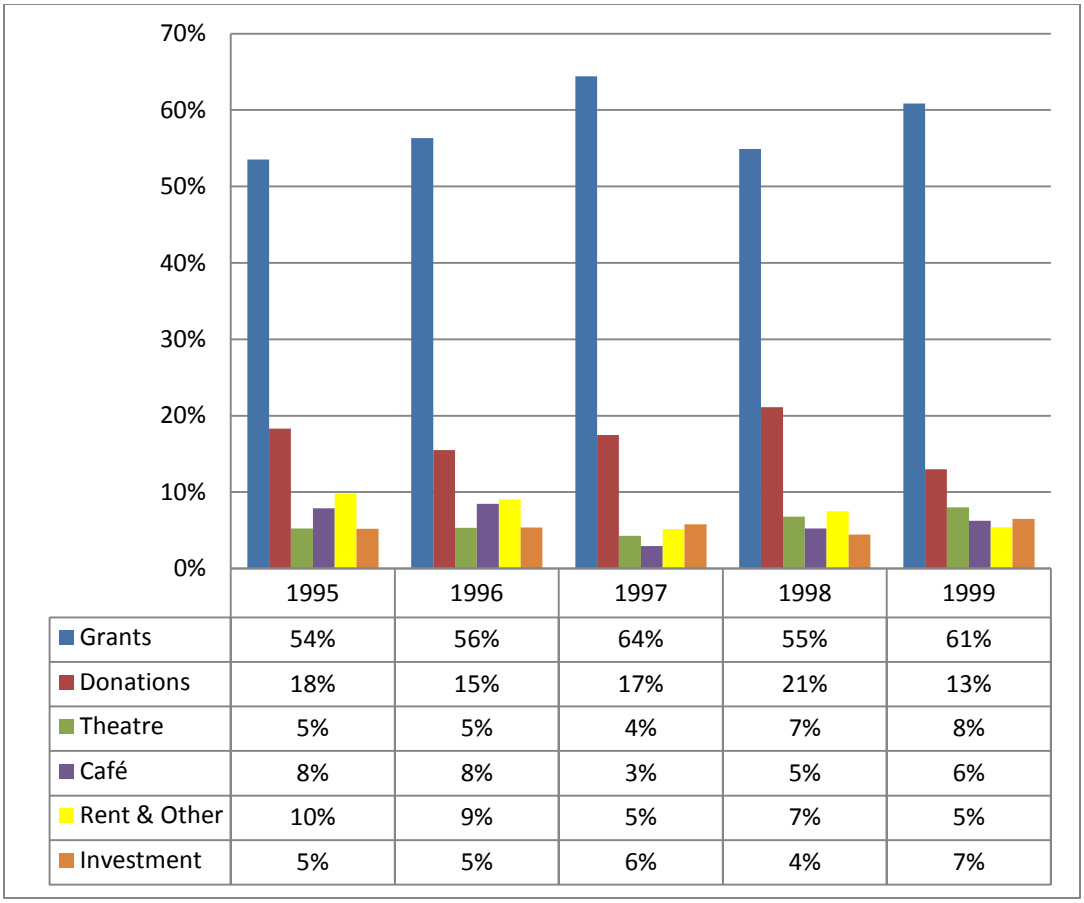
Category	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Grants - General	£229,737	£228,782	£259,177	£264,964	£263,318
TOTAL GRANTS	**£229,737**	**£228,782**	**£259,177**	**£264,964**	**£263,318**
Donations	£78,674	£62,897	£114,846	£122,754	£56,239
Investment Income	£22,379	£21,829	£26,373	£22,733	£28,204
Café Income	£33,884	£34,353	£13,359	£26,693	£26,974
Rent/Other	£42,078	£36,718	£23,557	£38,194	£23,419
Youth Arts	0	0	0	0	0
Theatre	£22,471	£21,645	£19,475	£34,574	£34,699
TOTAL REVENUE	**£429,223**	**£406,224**	**£456,787**	**£509,912**	**£432,853**
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income		£546	£8,322	£11,016	£11,549
Program Expenses	£257,529	£259,063	£349,500	£378,459	£368,473
Governance Expenses	£194,256	£176,788	£79,265	£98,227	£94,938
TOTAL EXPENSES	**£451,785**	**£436,397**	**£437,087**	**£487,702**	**£474,960**
Excess (Deficit)	**-£22,562**	**-£30,173**	**£19,700**	**£22,210**	**-£42,107**
Net Assets or Fund Balances	£195,069	£407,150	£476,785	£521,658	£642,685
Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances	£1,543	£13,637	£25,173	£98,817	-£4,964
NET ASSETS OR FUND BALANCES	**£174,050**	**£390,614**	**£521,658**	**£642,685**	**£595,614**

Table 16. Oval House Theatre Finances 1995-1999

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1995; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1996; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1997; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1998; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1999).

As shown in Table 17, from 1995-1999, the financial records for Oval House Theatre did not provide individual details on grants for the organization,

although the grants category appeared to cover government grants only. This was the case because there was detail provided in the donations category and it included non-government trusts, legacies and some very minor individual giving. Grants covered the bulk of revenue and accounted for anywhere from 54% to 64% of revenue from 1995-1999. During this time, donations made up anywhere from 13% to 21% of the revenue for the same time period. Programmatic income accounted for between 4% and 8% of the revenue for the period. The contributed income for Oval House Theatre, mainly government and private grants in the Grants and Donations categories, accounted for anywhere from 71% to 81% of the total revenue. The earned income through ticket sales increased from 5% of the total revenue to 8% during the period. The income from rent and other areas decreased from 10% to 5% during this same time period.

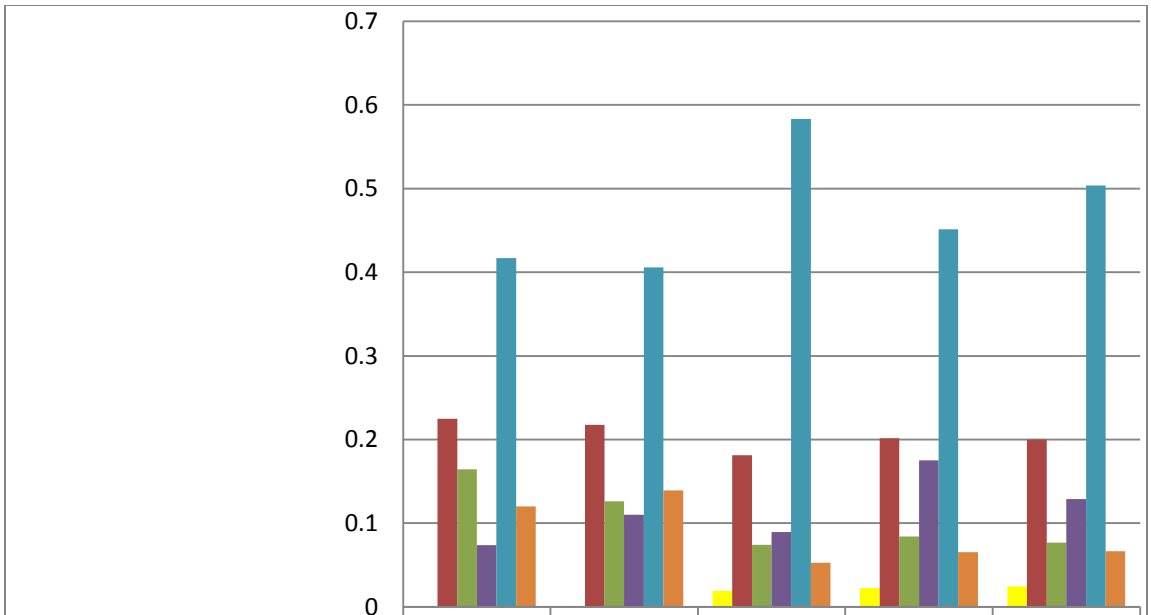


	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Grants	54%	56%	64%	55%	61%
Donations	18%	15%	17%	21%	13%
Theatre	5%	5%	4%	7%	8%
Café	8%	8%	3%	5%	6%
Rent & Other	10%	9%	5%	7%	5%
Investment	5%	5%	6%	4%	7%

Table 17. Oval House Theatre Revenues 1995-1999

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1995; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1996; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1997; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1998; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1999).

The Expenses for 1995 to 1999 are broken down in Table 18. Oval House Theatre did not begin tracking fundraising expenses until the 1997 fiscal year and these held steady at 2% of total expenses for all three years. The governance expenses also remained fairly steady with 18% to 22% of the total expenses. Although the expenses for the programs for Theatre, Youth and Arts Education seem low, this is because at the time, Oval House Theatre was not breaking out the majority of expenses by program so they are lumped together here as Other Programmatic Expenses since they were program related, but could not be attributed to one particular program. The expenses grew steadily over this period by 5%. Although the cafe expenses are not directly program related, they account for 5% to 14% with the amount decreasing to 7% by the end of the time period. The programmatic expenses accounted for 65% of total expenses, increased to 74% and then declined back to 71% by the end of the period. The most interesting fluctuations occurred in the areas of Youth and Arts Education, which fluctuated between 7% and 16% during the time period and Theatre Expenses, which accounted for 7% to 18% during the period. The expenses for theatre programming fluctuated, but were still almost double from the 1995 to 1999 fiscal years. The percentage of expenses for Youth and Arts Education decreased by 50% during this same time period. It is hard to get an accurate picture of the programmatic expenses as the bulk were in the other programmatic expenses category and were not broken down by program.



	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Fundraising Expenses		0%	2%	2%	2%
Governance Expenses	22%	22%	18%	20%	20%
Youth and Arts Education	16%	13%	7%	8%	8%
Theatre Expenses	7%	11%	9%	18%	13%
Other Programmatic Expenses	42%	41%	58%	45%	50%
Café Expenses	12%	14%	5%	7%	7%

Table 18. Oval House Theatre Expenses 1995-1999

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1995; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1996; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1997; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1998; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 1999).

Table 19 provides an overview of the finances from April 1, 1999 through March 31, 2004 for Oval House Theatre. Organizationally, Oval House Theatre had a deficit for three out of the five years. There was also a loss in the Net Assets or Fund Balances for three out of the five years. The best year financially was the 2004 fiscal year which saw an excess of £35,400 and also a £26,756 increase in the Net Assets or Fund Balances. There was almost at a 155% increase in revenue during the time period with a corresponding increase of around 139% in expenses during the same period.

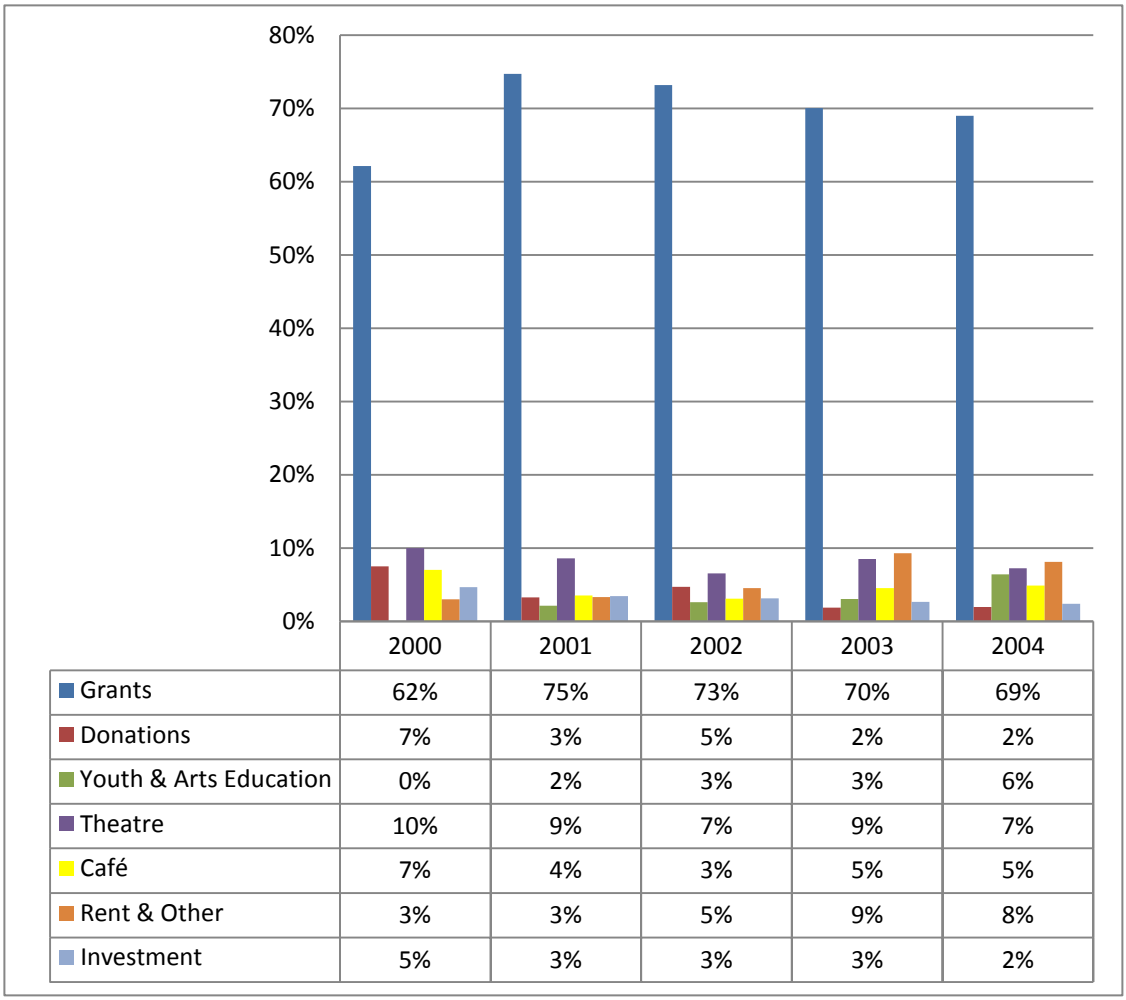
Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Grants - General	£308,269	£432,727	£428,312	£477,892	£531,221
TOTAL GRANTS	**£308,269**	**£432,727**	**£428,312**	**£477,892**	**£531,221**
Donations	£37,985	£19,034	£27,606	£12,830	£15,057
Investment Income	£23,317	£19,975	£18,408	£18,225	£18,464
Café Income	£35,052	£20,593	£18,269	£31,027	£37,756
Rent/Other	£42,887	£24,570	£39,161	£63,592	£62,468
Youth Arts		£12,514	£15,384	£21,008	£49,613
Theatre	£49,793	£49,885	£38,343	£58,055	£55,689
TOTAL REVENUE	**£497,303**	**£579,298**	**£585,483**	**£682,629**	**£770,268**
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income		£66,440	£32,708	£29,418	£66,440
Other Costs	£6,819	£16,020	£130,094	£212,195	£268,018
Program Expenses	£421,628	£455,224	£329,873	£350,410	£339,389
Governance Costs	£99,692	£155,106	£82,844	£75,911	£98,043
TOTAL EXPENSES	**£528,139**	**£626,350**	**£609,251**	**£671,224**	**£734,868**
Excess (Deficit)	**-£30,836**	**-£47,052**	**-£23,768**	**£11,405**	**£35,400**
Net Assets or Fund Balances	£595,614	£577,488	£502,616	£531,451	£426,982
Changes in Net Assets or Fund Balances	£12,710	-£27,820	-£22,055	-£62,326	£26,756
NET ASSETS	**£577,488**	**£502,616**	**£456,793**	**£480,530**	**£489,138**

Table 19. Oval House Theatre Finances 2000-2004

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2000; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2001; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2002; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2003; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2004).

Revenue from 2000-2004 is shown in Table 20 and from 2000-2004, revenue obtained through the grant process increased and became anywhere from 62% to 75% of total revenue. During this time period the donations changed from a high of 7% in 2000 to a low of 2% in 2003 and 2004. During this time period, in 2003, Oval House Theatre stopped providing the detailed information on its donations, but began providing detailed information on its grants, which also appeared to include government and non-government grants. Contributed income accounted for between 68% and 78% during this time period, which is still fairly consistent with the prior five year period. Programmatic income through the Youth Program and the Arts Education Program was at zero during the 2000 fiscal year and then grew from 2% in 2001 to 6% in 2004. Oval House Theatre either did not provide for the income from the educational programs separate from other programs, or they did not charge to see the shows presented by these educational programs until the

2001 fiscal season. The Theatre Program provided a high of 10% of the income for the organization in 2000 and the percentage of revenue was between 7% and 10% during the time period.



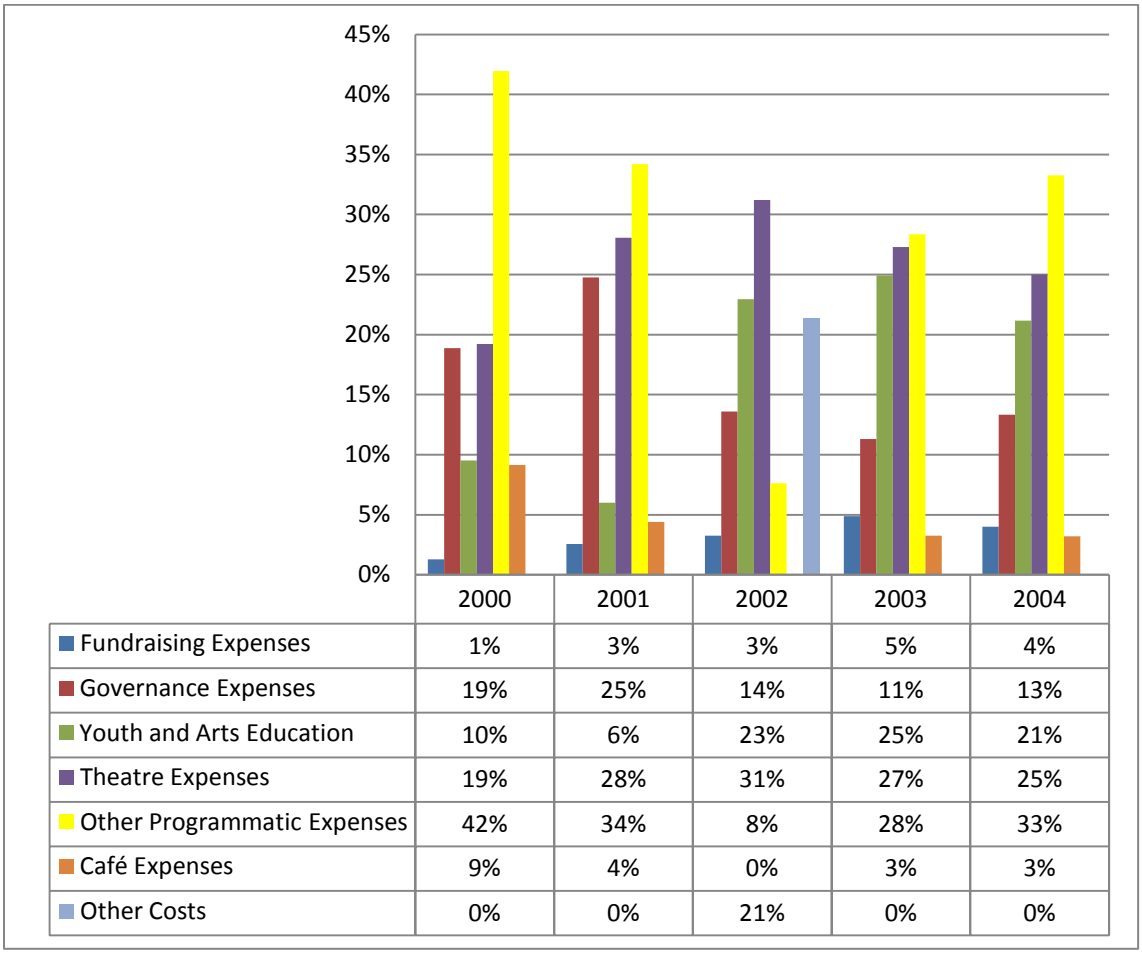
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Grants	62%	75%	73%	70%	69%
Donations	7%	3%	5%	2%	2%
Youth & Arts Education	0%	2%	3%	3%	6%
Theatre	10%	9%	7%	9%	7%
Café	7%	4%	3%	5%	5%
Rent & Other	3%	3%	5%	9%	8%
Investment	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%

Table 20. Oval House Theatre Revenue 2000-2004

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2000; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31

March 2001; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2002; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2003; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2004).

In Table 21, the expenses for Oval House Theatre from 2000-2004 are broken down. Programs accounted for 62% to 80% of total expenses during the time period, but there are some problems with these numbers. In 2002, the person handling the person handling finances for Oval House Theatre combined the expenses for the cafe and the centre as a whole. In Table 14, these expenses were included as Other Costs for the period and lowered the percentage of programmatic expenses for the year to the low of 62%. The overall figures also combined fundraising expenses with the marketing and press expenses although detailed numbers allowed these to be broken down further. Unfortunately, the marketing and press expenses could not be divided between the programs so the percentage is included as other programmatic expenses. The governance expenses continued to fluctuate with a high of 25% in 2001 and a low of 11% in 2003. The changes in governance expenses probably had more to do with the reclassification of expenses to programmatic areas where applicable.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Fundraising Expenses	1%	3%	3%	5%	4%
Governance Expenses	19%	25%	14%	11%	13%
Youth and Arts Education	10%	6%	23%	25%	21%
Theatre Expenses	19%	28%	31%	27%	25%
Other Programmatic Expenses	42%	34%	8%	28%	33%
Café Expenses	9%	4%	0%	3%	3%
Other Costs	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%

Table 21. Oval House Theatre Expenses 2000-2004

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2000; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2001; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2002; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2003; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2004).

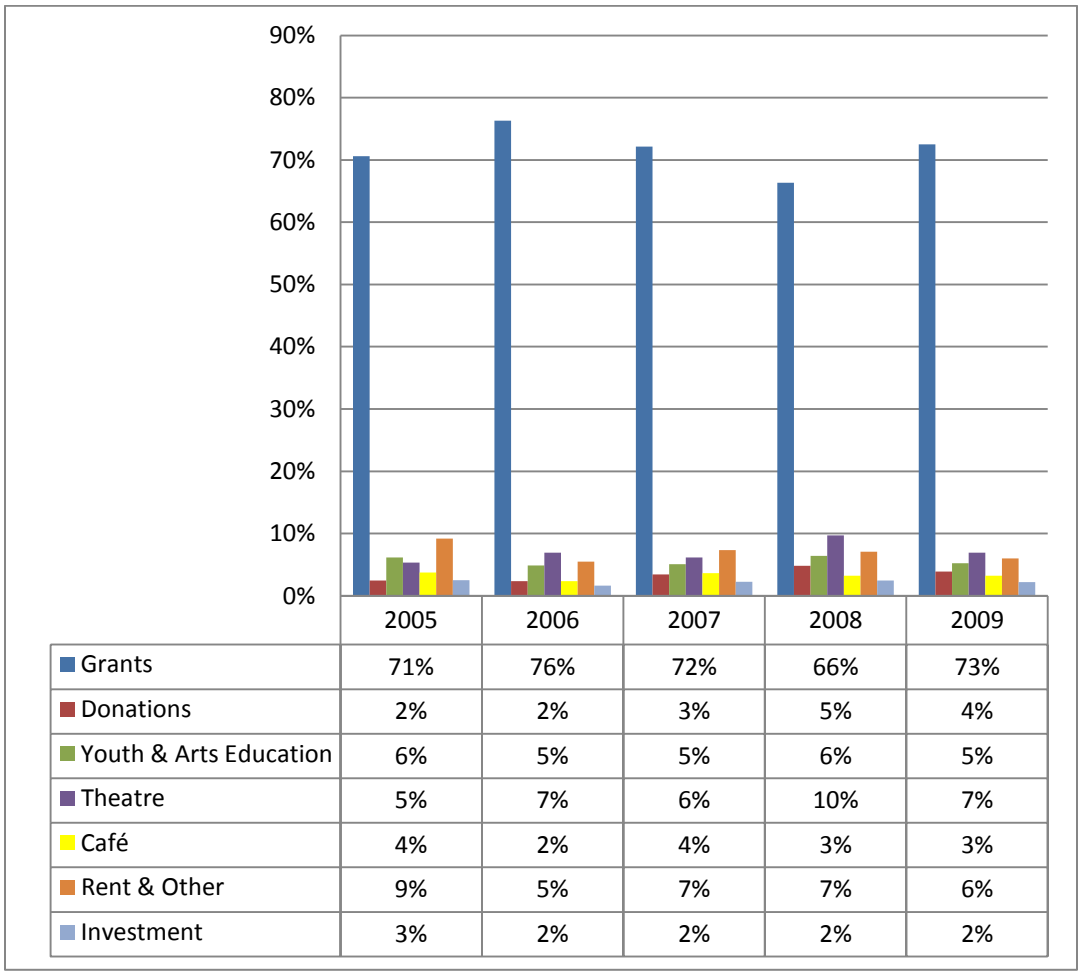
Table 22 consists of financial data for Oval House Theatre for the period of April 1, 2004 through March 31, 2009. During the 2005 and 2006 fiscal years, Oval House Theatre continued to operate with an excess, but then operated with a deficit for the next three years. The largest deficit occurred in the 2009 fiscal year and corresponds with a significant decline in the Net Assets or Fund Balances that was most likely caused by the problems in the financial markets from 2008 to 2009. Revenue for the time period increased by almost 135%, while expenses increased by almost 154% during the same period. Income in the 2006 fiscal year was much higher because it included a grant of £325,371 to meet the licensing requirements for the physical facilities.

Category	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Grants - General	£549,634	£749,313	£438,165	£447,169	£481,036
Grants - Youth & Arts Education		£35,750	£190,675	£209,815	£211,354
Grants - Theatre		£70,359	£38,385	£7,000	£67,550
TOTAL GRANTS	**£549,634**	**£855,422**	**£667,225**	**£663,984**	**£759,940**
Donations	£19,043	£26,486	£31,744	£48,012	£40,948
Investment Income	£19,581	£18,571	£20,818	£24,477	£22,929
Café Income	£29,107	£26,576	£33,482	£32,269	£33,862
Rent/Other	£71,720	£61,309	£67,890	£70,860	£62,896
Youth Arts	£47,797	£54,840	£46,976	£64,065	£54,924
Theatre	£41,503	£77,799	£56,980	£96,943	£72,398
TOTAL REVENUE	**£778,385**	**£1,121,003**	**£925,115**	**£1,000,610**	**£1,047,897**
Costs of Generating Voluntary Income	£48,324	£34,548	£38,237	£94,164	£108,176
Other Costs	£258,660	£85,799	£99,855	£39,797	£24,670
Program Expenses	£404,928	£678,765	£811,459	£854,898	£1,000,749
Governance Costs	£54,613	£37,036	£29,736	£28,993	£43,734
TOTAL EXPENSES	**£766,525**	**£836,148**	**£979,287**	**£1,017,852**	**£1,177,329**
Excess (Deficit)	**£11,860**	**£284,855**	**-£54,172**	**-£17,242**	**-£129,432**
Net Assets	£489,138	£522,038	£861,413	£817,303	£774,487
Changes in Net Assets	£21,040	£54,520	£10,062	-£25,574	-£72,760
NET ASSETS	**£522,038**	**£861,413**	**£817,303**	**£774,487**	**£572,295**

Table 22. Oval House Finances 2005-2009

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2005; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2006; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2007; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2008; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2009).

The revenue for Oval House Theatre for the period 2005-2009 is broken down in Table 23. Contributed income still makes up the bulk of revenue for Oval House Theatre and accounts for 71% to 78% of total revenue. Programmatic income accounted for a low of 11% of revenue and a high of 16% of revenue for the time period. Although the revenue for Oval House Theatre has continued grow, the percentage of income from contributed and earned sources has remained fairly consistent. Since Oval House Theatre has begun tracking or charging for Youth and Arts Education programs, the programs have grown to make up about 5%-6% of the total revenue for each year. The Theatre programming revenue has still fluctuated between 5% to 10% of total revenue. The cafe income has remained between 2% to 4% of total revenue since 2005, with a high of 8% of total revenue in 1995 and 1996 (Table 17). The income from rent, other income and investment income have been consistent, but much lower than their highs in the 1995-1999 fiscal years (Table 17).

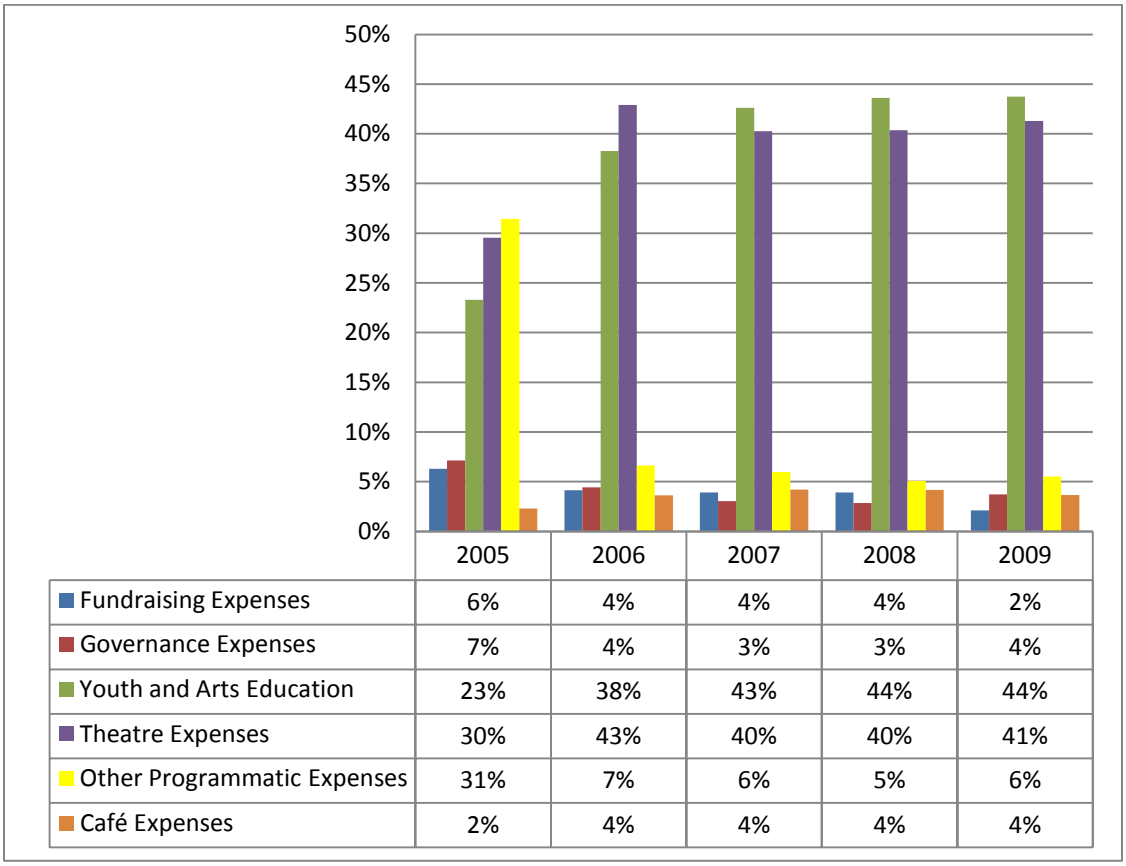


	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Grants	71%	76%	72%	66%	73%
Donations	2%	2%	3%	5%	4%
Youth & Arts Education	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Theatre	5%	7%	6%	10%	7%
Café	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Rent & Other	9%	5%	7%	7%	6%
Investment	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Table 23. Oval House Theatre Revenue 2005-2009

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2005; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2006; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2007; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2008; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2009).

Table 24 highlights the expenses from 2005-2009 for Oval House Theatre. Programmatic expenses account for anywhere from 84% of total expenses in 2005 to 91% of total expenses in 2009. Other programmatic expenses decreased dramatically from 2006 forward because Oval House Theatre began breaking down the expenses in ways that allowed the expenses to be directly attributed to one of the programs. The governance expenses also decreased from a high of 25% of total expenses in 2001 to 4% in 2009 while averaging between 3% and 4% since 2006. It is unlikely that these expenses were decreased, but were finally broken down in ways that the programmatic related expenses could be applied directly to the programs rather than lumped together in governance. Fundraising expenses have held between 2% to 6% of total expenses. This means that during the last four years, governance and fundraising expenses have held steady between 6% to 8% of total expenses. This leaves a lot of flexibility to work out additional ways to raise funds in a market that has seen enormous cuts in government and private grants.



	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fundraising Expenses	6%	4%	4%	4%	2%
Governance Expenses	7%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Youth and Arts Education	23%	38%	43%	44%	44%
Theatre Expenses	30%	43%	40%	40%	41%
Other Programmatic Expenses	31%	7%	6%	5%	6%
Café Expenses	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Table 24. Oval House Theatre Expenses 2005-2009

(Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2005; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2006; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2007; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2008; Christ Church Oxford United Clubs, Trustees Report and Financial Statements, For the Year Ended 31 March 2009).

The Productions

Oval House Theatre is a presenting, not a producing, house. This means people come to Oval House Theatre with their own ideas about what they would like to produce in one of the Oval House Theatre spaces. Although Oval House Theatre is a presenting space, this does not mean they just rent the space to anyone who wants it. Oval House Theatre works with the development, both artistic and professional, of emerging artists who are producing work that is generally outside of the mainstream.

Since Oval House Theatre is a presenting organization, they operate on a split of the box office where the producing company receives 60% of box office receipts and Oval House Theatre receives the additional 40% of the box office (Oval House). Oval House is very dedicated to their audiences and therefore keeps the ticket prices set at £12 for regular admission and discounted tickets at £6. This means the shows are accessible to most people, but there is no way a company can cover the costs of the production from ticket sales and Oval House Theatre cannot run on its share of those same ticket sales.

Oval House Theatre has two performance spaces, referred to as the Upstairs Theatre and the Downstairs Theatre. The Upstairs Theatre has a seating capacity for up to 50 people and the Downstairs Theatre has a capacity of up to 100 seats. The seating capacity for each space may be less depending on the set design for the show. Shows typically run from either Tuesday or Wednesday through Saturday of each week, allowing for four or five

performances a week with the typical run at three weeks. This means that full productions have a possibility of having twelve to fifteen performances and each show may also add matinee performances, typically one or two during the run of the production. If the house sells out for all performances in the Downstairs Theatre, there will be anywhere from 1,200 (four nights per week) to 1,500 (five nights per week) audience members. This translates into £14,400 to £18,000 total ticket sale revenue if all tickets also sold at full price. When the box receipts are divided the production company would receive £8,640 to £10,800 and Oval House Theatre would receive £5,760 to £7,200. The numbers would be even lower for the Upstairs Theatre with sell out shows allowing for 600 to 750 audience members during the three week run of a production. This would bring in £7,200 to £9,000 with the division of box office receipts providing £4,320 to £5,400 to the producing company and £2,880 to £3,600 Oval House Theatre. In both cases, this would not be enough money to cover the expenses for the productions and these figures estimate that everybody would pay the full ticket price with no discounted tickets. The earned income also does not provide for enough income to run Theatre Programming for Oval House Theatre.

Although Oval House Theatre was not presenting Theatre Programming in the summer of 2008, I was able to see some of this in action as production had begun for the fall show, *Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe* by Gillian Plowman. The show was being co-directed by a famous British director, Annie Castledine and Ben Evans, Head of Theatre Programming at Oval House Theatre who had

experience in working with shows involving African issues in the United Kingdom. The production of this show was a great example of how work can be presented at Oval House Theatre. Many people who want to produce a particular play will create their own production company and apply for government funding for the show. This is not allowed for most government funding of the arts in the United States. Here, the show was produced by Plowman Productions and was the only play produced by the company. Although in the United States, many might think a production put together in this way would be amateur, at Oval House Theatre, they still engaged, professional actors, designers and directors in this production.

Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe, fit into the artistic vision of the Oval House Theatre by reaching out to members of the immigrant community in London as well as addressing the volatile political issues that were going on in Zimbabwe. The show was a resounding success and received rave reviews including being selected as a Critics Choice for theatre in London (About Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe). Sheridan (2008) found that the show "does not preach and it does not fill you with guilt, but it does remind you of what is happening right now, in a place that we are all too ready to forget" (p. 1). Ritchie (2008) with the British Theatre Guide found the play "is a powerful piece of contemporary theatre, giving voice to a little heard minority but at the same time challenging the sometimes misplaced generosity of Western charity" (p. 1). The only down side was that the production was limited to the three week run and was not seen by enough people.

As the production of *Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe* was beginning, the Oval House Theatre space was filled with the South Connections carnival band for the Notting Hill Carnival at the end of August. This occurs every summer. I was able to see how some of the theatres in London were able to work together instead of viewing one another solely as competitors. During the month of August, there was no real working space available for people with disabilities. Evans and the show producer were able to arrange for some of the auditions to occur at the Young Vic theatre. The Oval House Theatre provided office space for the producer during the pre-production period as well as during rehearsals. I was a bit surprised by the lack of experience that the producer had. For example, the budget was significantly short on income and the producer wanted a large part of this shortage to be made up through advertisement sales in the program. This was certainly a fine way to raise additional funds, but the producer had no real grasp on what was an appropriate pricing plan for the advertisements. When I tried to raise these pricing issues with the producer, she could not see any problem. I confirmed my suspicions with the Head of Press and Marketing, who agreed that the pricing plan was too high for what the purchasers were receiving, but we could not convince the producer to change her mind. This meant by the time I left London, four weeks before the opening, there were still no advertisement sales. I was also surprised the budget for the show did not include income from the sale of tickets. My interactions with this producer also showed

how relying solely on email did not provide for effective communication between the producer, directors, designers and actors in the production.

My interactions with the producer for *Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe* seemed to highlight what could be a frustrating time for the Oval House Theatre staff, although at no point did the staff ever show such frustration. They viewed the education of the producer as an important part of their work as well. They were also able to provide help in ways that the producer had not considered. Debbie Vannozzi, Head of Press and Marketing, was able to arrange a show of Zimbabwean art to occur in the cafe/gallery outside of the main theatre space. This potentially expanded the number of people that might see the show in ways the producer had not thought about. When the advertising for the show was mistakenly put up in the wrong underground station, Debbie was able to get the same advertising put up in the correct station thereby expanding the advertising at no cost to the producer.

According to Ben Evans, another interesting and controversial show presented by Oval House Theatre, was *Twisted* by David Dandridge in the Spring of 2007. The play looked at issues of masculinity, male sexuality and class in ways that caused one reviewer to write, "Sine the end of theatre censorship no gay-themed drama apart from Martin Sherman's *Bent* has more shocked or disturbed me than David Dandridge's Twisted" (de Jongh 2007, p. 1). Even with the large number of theatres in the United States producing gay theatre, the London producers have not been able to get the show produced in

the United States. In the Autumn 2007 season, *The Lightning Field* by David Ozanich received four out of five stars from Time Out and the reviewer's only frustration was that the play "doesn't go far enough into the host of sexual and social issues it expertly throws up" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 1). Evans discussed how one of the performances was a benefit for equal marriage rights, but many were surprised that the play does not take a necessarily positive view of marriage for gay or straight people.

Ben Evans receives an enormous amount of material from playwrights, directors, producers and even actors looking to have their work presented at or to perform in a play at Oval House Theatre. Although Ben Evans makes all of the decisions regarding what is presented on the stages at Oval House Theatre, he had me and another intern read through all of the unsolicited scripts that had been received in the prior six months. These were divided into a number of categories, including rejection, referral to Michael Atavar as the Artist Advisor, and to be read by Ben Evans. As the initial readers, we would provide our feedback to Mr. Evans, but if we rejected a play, it was unlikely that he would have the time to read the play again. Even after Mr. Evans read the recommended scripts as well, there were numerous reasons why the show would or would not be presented at Oval House Theatre. One of the plays that I read ended up as a *First Bites* production in the Spring 2009 season.

The best way for a person to get to present their work at Oval House Theatre is to see shows at Oval House Theatre and develop a relationship with

the organization. This does not mean that Oval House Theatre only produces work from people that they know, but a number of the shows presented have already been seen as staged readings or in the *First Bites* series. *First Bites* provides playwrights with the opportunity to develop their work and have it presented for audience feedback during its developmental phase. Some of these works then go on to be fully staged at Oval House Theatre and others will get staged elsewhere. The work should fit within the artistic scope of the organization and provide a comprehensive plan for the production, including how the production will be funded, but Oval House Theatre also has an Artist Advisor who will help the playwright or producer put that together as well. One of the wonderful things about the Oval House Theatre artistic vision is that it is adaptable and just because they have never done it, does not mean they never will.

Ben Evans also meets with various producers who then pitch potential shows to him. In one such meeting, a producer pitched three different shows by three different playwrights. Ben requested that the producer send over copies of the scripts with the plans for production. In the case of one of the plays, the show was not written yet, but the producer was still looking for a specific date for production in the upcoming year. Ben was honest and told the producer the chances were slim for a full production, but the work might fit into the *First Bites* season while it was being written. Ben was adept at making the producer feel good, but he still was unwilling to commit Oval House Theatre to present work

based solely on the idea presented by a producer. He balanced these two aspects of the job well.

In addition to the full productions presented, the Theatre Programming department at Oval House Theatre has a program mentioned above entitled *First Bites*. This is a program for works-in-progress that allows playwrights to present their work in various stages and allow the audience to provide feedback on the work. Although Oval House Theatre at various points has had a group involved in playwriting, they have not had such a group for at least the last few years. The First Bites series each year allows for some of the same support that artists would receive through a more formal group specifically focused on writing new plays.

During my internship Ben Evans had me attend different staged readings for shows that were interested in having full productions at Oval House Theatre and two staged readings for shows where Oval House Theatre was interested in the playwrights. Mr. Evans does not have the time to attend all of the staged readings where people are interested in having the work presented at Oval House Theatre. The first two shows dealt with issues surrounding Asian culture, *Wolf in the House* by Simon Wu also dealt with issues surrounding homosexuality and *Journeys* by Rosaline Ting with both plays directed by Jonathan Man at TARA Studio. Although the subject matter did not appear particularly provocative to my western sensibilities, both pieces provided voices to the Asian immigrant community in the United Kingdom in ways not necessarily

supported by other establishments. *Wolf in the House* had previously had two presentations in Oval House Theatre's First Bites series. Both shows allowed for a discussion after the performances for those involved to receive feedback from the audience. I was impressed that all of the staging and lighting for *Journeys* had been changed the day before the staged reading, but this was not obvious from the production.

During this part of my internship, I was most impressed with the production of *All For Honour* by Filiz Ozcan. Although the show needed some work, Ms. Ozcan's play addressed provocative issues surrounding families and the honor killings of women in Turkey and had a potential audience with Turkish immigrants in the United Kingdom and the population at large. I was able to refer Ms. Ozcan to Michael Avatar, Artist Advisor at Oval House Theatre. Mr. Avatar works with young artists and provides them with access to resources so they are able to help themselves get their work produced, including help with applying for Arts Council funding and dramaturgy if the play itself needs that kind of help. *All For Honour* has not yet appeared at Oval House Theatre, but the organization still provided assistance to Ms. Ozcan.

A fourth staged reading was definitely provocative and possibly controversial as it dealt with issues surrounding terrorism and Islam. *The Wrong Sleep* by Mary Mazzilli was a staged reading that I attended on behalf of Ben Evans who was out of town viewing work at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This staged reading was shown at a pub theatre and dealt with an explosion in a

British town where a number of men were killed. The only two characters were a Muslim woman and a Catholic priest. As the show progressed, it seemed more like a piece designed to attack all Muslims than as a piece meant to question issues surrounding terrorism and religion. By the end of the show, the woman had admitted to the priest that she had committed the terrorist act, had killed her own husband and had also killed her own children. Before the show ends, she also kills the priest. It is possible a different message could have been obtained from the show, but the message to me was a demonization of Islamic people that did not address any issue in an original or provocative way. I did not recommend that Oval House Theatre pursue the more formal presentation of this work.

When reviewing the current work produced by Oval House Theatre, it is easy to see how some of the work would be controversial and provocative just by looking at the titles of some of the shows such as *Memoirs of a Hermaphrodite* and *Confessions of a Dancewhore*, which got its start as a *First Bites* production. Most of the controversial and provocative work can be hiding behind a title such as those described above, *Twisted*, *The Lightning Field* and even *Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe*. Oval House Theatre is giving voice to a number of playwrights and artists who have a variety of messages about how different life can be for large segments of the population even when those differences are uncomfortable, messy and even controversial.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

> [M]oney concerns truly have begun to overwhelm artistic decisions in too many arts organizations. The fear that the organization will not survive has driven many arts organizations to produce safer, more accessible, and, unfortunately, more boring art, especially in this current economic downturn. This is a deeply scary phenomenon. If arts organizations do not take risk, they cannot create great work. (Kaiser, 2009)

Both Studio Theatre in Washington, DC and Oval House Theatre in London, England put their work at the center of their organizations and this is evident from the artistic successes of both organizations. Although Studio Theatre is a producing house and Oval House Theatre is a presenting house, they are both doing work that challenges their audiences and is definitely not boring. Neither organization does work specifically because it is controversial, but both find themselves with that type of work, because it is work that tends to challenge both the artists involved and the audience who comes to see the shows.

In both of the cases studied here, artistic vision played the paramount role in each company being able to successfully produce or present controversial work. Marketing, development and fundraising were necessary components to the success of both the companies and the controversial productions, but the artistic vision was the driving force behind that success. Many companies that

discontinued producing or presenting controversial work did so because of guidance or requirements from funders who wanted control over the artistic product and marketing departments that saw numbers in the audience as the only sign of success. As noted above by Michael Kaiser, President of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, great work cannot be created without risk. Controversial work provides theatre companies with that acceptable risk if the work is produced for artistic reasons and not solely to shock the audience, although that form of theatre has its place as well.

Comparisons

On the artistic front, Studio Theatre and Oval House Theatre could not be more different. Studio Theatre produces the work of great playwrights, but it does so after that work has already been proven at other companies in different cities. Oval House Theatre presents work that nobody has ever heard of because they work with emerging playwrights who are generally in the process of creating their work or adapting the classics in ways that appeal to their audience base. Since both theatres are working in different ways, it is interesting that both are successful at doing work that many in society would call controversial. The success of both organizations in this area is probably linked directly to their desire to do quality work.

Sarah Wallace stated in her interview that she thinks the lack of controversy at Studio Theatre today has less to do with the work they do than with the fact that Studio Theatre is producing work that has already been

produced elsewhere. In one year, Studio Theatre produced work including shows dealing with incest/child molestation, abortion and religion. The only show to receive formal protest was *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, not because they are not doing controversial work, but because those who protest these types of work are choosing their battles to make the biggest impact. America Needs Fatima is protesting all productions of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* even though there are other shows they could focus on. The audience at Studio Theatre is also loyal and the increase in subscription sales in a time when most organizations are seeing a decline in this area speaks to that.

Oval House Theatre has not had to deal with formal protests of their work in recent years. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that Oval House Theatre is presenting, not producing the work. They are also presenting work nobody has seen before and even in this age of communication, it takes time for word to get out and for people to organize a protest. Oval House Theatre also has a loyal audience base that includes people in the African immigrant community, the lesbian, gay and transgendered communities and the community of people with disabilities. They have reached and bridged a cross-section of the British population in ways that other organizations cannot seem to duplicate. One of the major strengths in the Oval House Theatre vision is that they do not shy away from work that challenges their audience base as much as the general public at large. They want to challenge their audience and their audience seems to want that kind of challenge also.

Financially, the organizations are also in different worlds. Studio Theatre is working with a state-of-the-art space designed specifically for their work. To create this space, Studio Theatre had to raise an enormous amount of money from various sources, but heavily relied on individual donors who believed in the work the Studio Theatre does. Studio Theatre has operated with a profit each of the last eleven years. It is possible that the multiple capital campaigns have skewed the figures, but Studio Theatre has net assets of more than twenty million dollars.

The financial health of Studio Theatre is linked to and helped by the two-theatre model that Studio Theatre has worked with through the years. Since Studio Theatre does not open shows simultaneously and has four separate theatre spaces, they are able to keep shows with continuing box office interest open longer than initially posted. For example, the Studio Theatre's production of Neil Labute's *Reasons to be Pretty* was extended twice after great reviews in the *Washington Post* and increased interest by audience members. This means that the shows will continue to generate income above the amount in the organizational budget.

Oval House Theatre also has had positive finances for the last fifteen years, but they have had to utilize their reserves in most years to make this happen. Due to the nature of the Oval House Theatre's vision of keeping ticket prices low combined with the policy of splitting the box office proceeds with the producing company, they are not able to generate significant income from the

sale of tickets the way Studio Theatre does. Although Oval House Theatre also has two performing spaces, these spaces are not equivalent and it is generally not possible to extend the run of a show for very long, which could possibly increase the revenue from ticket sales for both Oval House Theatre and the producing company. The bulk of operating revenue for Oval House Theatre is contributed by governmental agencies.

Issues for Concern

Studio Theatre is obviously successful on both the artistic and financial fronts. The main area for concern is that Studio Theatre has not delved into the world of new media. Although it is often times better not to work with new media than to do it poorly, Studio Theatre has not really done anything in this area. The Studio Theatre facebook page actually refers to the theatre program at Wayne State University in Michigan. As time goes by, this absence in the world of new media will become more glaring.

Studio Theatre is also not required to be involved in the production of new work, but they bill themselves as an artists' theatre and the connection to new work seems logical. The new Artistic Director starting on September 1, 2010 has indicated that he is interested in expanding the mission of the Studio Theatre to include the production of new work and international work, although he emphasized that he is not interested in turning Studio Theatre into a new play company.

Even with rave reviews, there were still issues on the production side of *Yours Abundantly, From Zimbabwe*. Oval House Theatre staff help out with production in a number of areas including marketing and promotions, but it seems to be like starting anew with each production as the Oval House Theatre staff are expected to bring the individual producers up to speed. For example, the person running the show for Plowman Productions did not seem to have a good grasp of advertising and marketing in general or within the London theatre scene specifically. This became apparent when she insisted on charging very high prices for program advertising even though the prices were significantly higher than that for traditional advertising that would reach a far greater number of people. Debbie Vannozzi, Head of Press and Marketing, did a great job promoting and marketing the show, but even when she was brought into the process concerning advertising, she could not convince the production person with Plowman that the set goals and pricing were unrealistic.

The biggest problem facing Oval House Theatre is the small size of the staff and the enormous size of the jobs that each person is responsible for. In particular, Debbie Vannozzi, Head of Press and Marketing, is responsible not only for the press and marketing with the Theatre Program, but also for the Youth Arts and Art Education programs. Oval House Theatre has begun to make forays into the world of new media and has created pages on facebook and myspace to reach audiences in these non-traditional formats. This is positive, but Oval House Theatre should look at utilizing online media in ways that emphasize the ideas of

thought leadership as described by David Scott Meerman, rather than using new media as another way of presenting more traditional advertising. More than promoting individual shows, new media can be instrumental in helping Oval House Theatre with an institutional marketing campaign. It is also difficult to begin an institutional marketing campaign when everything falls onto the shoulders of one person.

Funding of nonprofit arts organizations is different between the United States and the United Kingdom. The bulk of funding for Oval House Theatre is from the government through the Arts Council of England as well as the equivalent of county funding. Although this level of funding is the envy of numerous arts organizations in the United States, it also placed Oval House Theatre in a very difficult place when they were looking at developing new space, but could not receive the necessary funding through the government. Thankfully, the Arts Council of England came through with enough money to renovate their current space so they could remain open and in compliance with laws concerning access for people with disabilities, a more varied funding stream might be useful as they look to create and develop new space.

Recommendations

It is easy to point at an organization from the outside and tell them how they should run, but that is not what is going to happen here. First, both organizations have been around for more than thirty years for Studio Theatre and more than forty years for Oval House Theatre. They have been able to connect

with their audiences and present work that challenges their audiences and the status quo. These accomplishments should not be looked at lightly and these suggestions are areas I feel would help them move forward with their missions.

First, Studio Theatre is strong both artistically and financially and it would be good to see them take a more proactive role in the production of new work as indicated by the interest of the new artistic director David Muse. The work they produce is exciting and the material might not otherwise be seen in Washington, DC, but the work itself is not innovative. Not all theatres have to be involved in the production of new work, but Studio Theatre is large enough and varied enough to offer this type of diversity within their season. It would be interesting to see what Studio Theatre could do with a playwriting competition where the winner's show gets produced, possibly with their Second Stage program, and additional runners' up could receive staged readings with the possibility for production elsewhere. Studio Theatre could also utilize these new works to help their actors develop within their Acting Conservatory. It would also be interesting to link these new plays with innovative work in the areas of design and see Studio Theatre take a more national position in the production of new work. Without providing something in their productions that other people want to do, it does not seem possible for the Studio Theatre to make the leap from well-respected regional theatre company to a more national reputation.

Studio Theatre also needs to begin moving forward into the world of new media. They have been extremely successful moving in more traditional circles

when it comes to communications, marketing and promotion, but they need to begin reaching people through the newer forms of communication. It would be interesting to see how they could adapt Meerman's ideas about thought leadership in new media to the nonprofit arts sector. Studio Theatre has the clout, artistic vision and solid financial background to make it a leader in both the fields of new play production and the communication world of new media. They took the lead in developing a run-down neighborhood in Washington, DC and when they adopted their two-theatre model, they showed the strength of their vision.

Since the beginning in the 1960's, Oval House Theatre has been in the business of producing risky, new work. They have given voice to those that society in general has tried to silence and they should be applauded for sticking with these challenging and risky works. They are able to engage audiences from various backgrounds that today's audience building theorists could never think about bringing together. They not only bring these people together and give them voice, they also present work that challenges them as well.

The world of fundraising is a difficult one in both the United States and in the United Kingdom. Even though funding from individuals has not worked well in the British nonprofit environment, Oval House Theatre has the connections with big named people from their past that might make this area more readily accessible for them. I would suggest that they find somebody who can go through all of their archived material and write a complete history of the

organization, the groups they deal with and have dealt with in the past and a full production history. This could be the starting point for an individual campaign that could hopefully secure additionally funding for the new space they need to move forward with their long-term vision.

Oval House Theatre has made a good beginning into the world of new media, but they need to take it further. Currently, the facebook and myspace pages are really acting as traditional marketing tools for individual productions. This is useful, but it could also be used for institutional marketing in ways that might also lead to increased capabilities in the area of individual fundraising. It would also be interesting to see what they can do with Meerman's ideas about thought leadership in the new media context and how this will help with institutional as well as programmatic promotions and marketing.

One of Oval House Theatre's biggest problems is the lack of staff to complete all of the work and make the necessary changes moving forward. The last thing the staff needs is another list of things to do, with no additional help. Although there is probably no money for additional staff in these precarious economic times, Oval House Theatre may be able to develop a more formalized internship program with the Cultural Policy and Management program at the City University of London or the Arts Administration and Cultural Policy program at Goldsmiths College University of London. Both of these schools offer graduate degrees in fields within arts management that would be enormously helpful to Oval House Theatre. They may also be able to develop specific apprentice type

programs that alleviate the work load for current staff, but also provide the necessary resources for Oval House Theatre and the companies having their work produced there.

Michael Kaiser, President of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, stated, "that without risk there cannot be art and the organizations that do the most innovative and exciting work will also have the biggest financial rewards, and thus, ultimately, the most stability" (2009). Both organizations should take these words into account as they move forward in this new century producing and presenting challenging work that sets the live theatre apart from other artistic endeavors.

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