“Theatre people from different countries make up a kind of united nation: a theatre of nations. And cultural activities can be a window to the world.”
— Robert Wilson at TCG’s 1984 National Conference

These words were spoken at TCG’s fifth biennial National Conference, when they were still able to fit on small, liberal arts college campuses. The 1984 event was also attended by a handful of prominent international artists, including keynote speaker John Hirsch, a Canadian artistic director, who called for “international understanding, cultural humility, and respect for the strangeness of the other.”

Thirty-two years later, there was little chance that TCG’s 26th National Conference—attended by nearly 1,200 theatre people—could have been contained on a small college campus. On the eve of the DC Conference and our visits to Capitol Hill, it came through our news feeds that members of Congress were staging a sit-in on the House floor to protest inaction on gun control legislation, not two weeks after the Pulse massacre in Orlando, FL. The stage was set for TCG’s largest Conference to date: we were in the midst of the most tumultuous U.S. election year in living memory, still struggling as a populace with our own perceptions of “the other,” and democracy was hard at work just minutes from our Conference venue.

We came together in the nation’s capitol, as citizens of our communities but also of our own ecosystem of art-makers, asking some of the same questions posed 32 years ago: can we imagine a Theatre Nation whose borders are not bound by walls, but opened through affinities of creative practice? Can we create a Theatre Nation that welcomes everyone who shares those affinities, and equitably represents them?

The TCG National Conference is and always has been foremost about connection. It’s a truly a “window to the world,” through which we reunite with old friends, form connections with new collaborators, meet neighbors we never knew we had, and create relationships that will advance our work and enhance our roles as citizens within a broader landscape.

Connect we did, in solidarity as a field, in Washington, DC, for our 26th TCG National Conference: Theatre Nation. The generosity of spirit was palpable throughout the halls and breakout rooms of this historic Conference, as attendees embraced TCG’s introduction of all-gender restrooms, a nursing room for new mothers, and prayer rooms for our Muslim attendees who were observing Ramadan. The sounds of a child or two could be heard running about our exhibit hall at our third family-friendly Conference, which only reminded us why coming together on a global scale is so deeply important. Together—across oceans, through empathy, civic engagement, and collaboration—we can make this a better world for theatre, and a better world because of theatre.

Teresa Eyring
Executive Director

Adrian Budhu
Deputy Director
& Chief Operating Officer

Devon Berkshire
Director of Conferences
& Fieldwide Learning
#TCG16 IN NUMBERS

1178 ATTENDEES
INCLUDING
635 TCG MEMBER THEATRES
REPRESENTED
177 TCG INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS
115 TCG AFFILIATES
175 NON-MEMBER GUESTS
18 EXHIBITORS
AND 532 FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

122 TOTAL SESSIONS
INCLUDING
34 EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION-related SESSIONS
24 BREAKOUTS
23 PROFESSIONAL AFFINITY GROUPS
15 TREND WORKSHOPS
11 SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOPS
11 LUNCH SESSIONS
4 PLENARY SESSIONS

272 SPEAKERS

23 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

#TCG16 WAS TWEETED 1,463 TIMES (UNIQUE TWEETS)
AND WAS POSTED 377 TIMES ON INSTAGRAM

197 SCHOLARSHIPS AND SUBSIDIES WERE AWARDED TO ATTENDEES AND
30 VOLUNTEERS JOINED TCG’S STAFF IN DC
LED BY CO-CHAIRS & TCG BOARD MEMBERS
CHRIS JENNINGS, Executive Director, Shakespeare Theatre Company
MEGHAN PRESSMAN, Managing Director, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

HOST COMMITTEE

48 HOST COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM 20 ORGANIZATIONS

INCLUDING

Arena Stage
DC Commission on Arts & Humanities
dog & pony dc
Folger Theatre
Ford's Theatre
Forum Theatre
GALA Hispanic Theatre
Imagination Stage
Kennedy Center
Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics
Mosaic Theater Company
National New Play Network
Olney Theatre Center
Shakespeare Theatre Company
Signature Theatre
Studio Theatre
Theater J
theatreWashington
Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company
Young Playwrights’ Theater
“Our ground seems to me to be very complex. We all meet here with different histories. Different banners of struggle...We are a map, with some intersecting points and many straying lines, in search of a connection. Most of us want to board the train, toward progress, equity, self-fulfillment, helping fulfill the lives of others, toward protecting all living things, and toward love.”

—ANNA DEAVERE SMITH

OPENING PLENARY

SPONSORED BY SHARE Fund

ANNA DEAVERE SMITH
Actress, Playwright, Teacher
“Ringside: Get Real”
In recognition of the 20th Anniversary of August Wilson’s “The Ground on Which I Stand” address given at the 1996 TCG National Conference

WITH THE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AWARD PRESENTED TO JOHN O’NEAL
TCG Author and Founder of Free Southern Theatre and Junebug Productions

“What a gift to hear Anna Deavere Smith speak about what we can do as theater makers to respond to our current cultural crises. I could have gone home right after this and felt I got my money’s worth.”

—Sarah Horton, Managing Director, Artists Repertory Theatre

“Truly inspirational.”

—Ariana Smart Truman, Producing Director, Elevator Repair Service

@shanmusgrave1 23 Jun 2016 “Those of you who were moved, are moved, must move.” Anna Deavere Smith is magnificent. #TCG16
“I honestly feel like the reason why *The Humans* has been the subject of a lot of political think pieces, is because politicians are obsessed with what’s keeping people up at night. They tap into it, sometimes in a very dangerous way...But art just has to tell the truth. And I think that’s a privileged position to be in.”

— STEPHEN KARAM

FRIDAY PLENARIES

MORNING PLENARY

SPONSORED BY THEATREMANIA

JOHN MAEDA

Designer & Technologist, former President of Rhode Island School of Design

“Creative Leadership”

WITH THE 2016 ALAN SCHNEIDER DIRECTOR AWARD PRESENTED TO KIMBERLY SENIOR

“Leadership isn’t walking up the hill, it’s jumping off the hill with everyone watching to see if you survive.”

— JOHN MAEDA

AFTERNOON PLENARY

A Presentation from “BEYOND ORIENTALISM”

A Conversation between Playwrights STEPHEN KARAM and NIKKOLE SALTER

WITH THE PETER ZEISLER MEMORIAL AWARD PRESENTED TO DJ KURS Artistic Director, Deaf West Theatre

“I loved the conversation style of this session—it was exciting to witness it unfold as an actual conversation rather than an interview. Both playwrights are dynamic artists doing vital work in the field, and the intimate style and tone of the conversation... made it accessible and worthwhile.”

— Ouida Maedel, Grants Manager, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company
“When *Eclipsed* was off-Broadway at the Public, we invited the 36 women ambassadors... One of [them] said after the show... ‘This is my life. This is what I’ve lived. I knew it was happening in my country. But because I didn’t experience it myself, I don’t think I’ve ever really understood what my country went through before I saw this play.’ She’s now the current Liberian Foreign Minister. That’s the power of art.”

—*AMBASSADOR SAMANTHA POWER*

Test your reading comprehension with Theatre as Cultural Diplomacy:
A Conversation with **AMBASSADOR SAMANTHA POWER, OSKAR EUSTIS**
and **KWAME KWEI-ARMAH**

**WITH THE THEATRE PRACTITIONER AWARD PRESENTED TO MICHAEL KAHN**
Artistic Director, Shakespeare Theatre Company

Find **AMERICAN THEATRE** articles on ALL the ***TCG16*** plenary sessions by searching for the hashtag on AmericanTheatre.org!

“A fantastic way to end the conference. I left pondering how Dallas could replicate the relationship between theatre and government and how to better serve our city.”

—DR Hanson, Patron Services Manager, Dallas Theater Center

“Still thinking about this weeks later. Completely inspiring to hear Ambassador Power and learn how theatre really does have the power to help change people’s perceptions. Very moving.”

—Anonymous

@bryanjosephlee 25 Jun 2016 Re: most urgent issue in theatre — Oscar Eustis just called out the aggressive, ambitious broadening of our reach. Yes. **#TCG16**
These three-hour tightly-focused SKILLS-BUILDING journeys are carefully designed for practitioners of different experience levels, budget sizes, and aesthetic interest.

ON Bespoke Theatre: Building an Adaptive Culture of Creation

“One of the best things I did all conference. This was very well run and I learned a lot about what I already do and what I can do to try new things in the room. I also was inspired and will be trying to put together a local program from this session.”

— Lee Liebeskind, Individual Artist

“This session was SPECTACULAR. So eye-opening and a vital conversation for our field to be having.”

— Anonymous

ON Get Smart, Get Visual: Picture Your Strategic Plan

“[The instructors] are made of magic. As an individual artist, I was able to translate their tools to apply to my own work. Soon to embark on a position leading an arts initiative, I was able to begin planning my first moves.”

— Deena Selenow, Individual Director

ON The Suzuki Method of Actor Training

“The instructor was fantastic. He pushed and encouraged us as well as embarked on some truly physically demanding activities. He prefaced the afternoon perfectly by linking the we would be doing with our bodies to the work we need to be doing with our heads and spirits in regards to [equity, diversity, and inclusion].”

— DR Hanson, Patron Services Manager, Dallas Theater Center

ON Devising Within a Democracy

“Great leader, walked away with real skills and a great conversation about art making and the country.”

— Anonymous
BREAKOUTS are 90-minute small group sessions that can manifest in a range of formats, from panels to round-tables to interactive performances. There were also a selection of LUNCH SESSIONS and TCG Affiliate-led TREND WORKSHOPS.

ON Who Are Today’s Leaders and How Will They Reshape the Future of the Field
BREAKOUT SESSION
“The speaker was brilliant and we all were so engaged. It was a topic impacting everyone in the field…Excellent.”
— Anonymous

ON Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Board
BREAKOUT SESSION
“This was a fantastic breakout session. I walked away with a lot to discuss with my board leadership and some ideas for ways to make real progress in our board (and staff and audience) diversity. [The leader] did an excellent job facilitating and the panelists each brought a different and specific perspective.”
— Amy Wratshford, Managing Director, American Shakespeare Center

ON Practicing Arts Activism
BREAKOUT SESSION
“An excellent discussion. I could have sat in this room all day. A fearless conversation that was much needed and much appreciated.”
— Anonymous

ON Business Perceptions on Skills Deficiencies of Those Entering the Workplace: Can the Arts Fill this Need?
TREND WORKSHOP HOSTED BY Shugoll Research
“Great information and a bit of an eye opener. I enjoyed the perspective of those who are part of the business, but not theatre makers.”
— Lee Mikeska Gardner, Artistic Director, The Nora Theatre Company
AFFINITY SPACES
As in past years, TCG provided an opportunity for theatre people to meet based on their professional role in the theatre field, either as an independent artist or within an organizational structure.

“This was by far the best part of the Conference for me and I wish there could have been another three hours for this affinity group to meet.”

—David Lloyd Olson, Executive Assistant, The Shakespeare Theatre Company

“Loved it….Came away with valuable insight and really valued the chance to be in a room with people who share the unique perspective of our position.”

—Sarah Horton, Managing Director, Artists Repertory Theatre

“One of the best parts of the conference is the ability to network with my managing director colleagues and hear about how they are solving some of the same problems which we face at our theatre.”

—Joshua Borenstein, Managing Director, Long Wharf Theatre

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR SUMMIT
As part of the Professional Affinity work, TCG invited all Artistic Directors on a longer, curated journey of three meeting times in various formats, which took place on each of the three days of the Conference.

“Reminded me of WHY we do this thing we do, how not to feel guilty about doing it (when there is ‘business’ to be done) and making sure you make art a priority in the workplace.”

—Kristen Coury, Artistic Director, Gulfshore Playhouse
We kicked off in DC with an all-attendee session called “How We Show Up,” which not only laid the groundwork for the AT THE INTERSECTIONS sessions, but shared best practices for all Conference attendees for making the most of our time together.

**ON THE Intergenerational Leaders of Color MEETING**

“Felt like a home I had never lived in.”

**ON THE Mixed Race AFFINITY GROUP**

“Having an affinity space for people who don’t necessarily have a singular racial or ethnic affinity was incredible... It was wonderful to be able to discuss our identities and experiences with each other, discover how similar our experiences were, how we can support each other, and how we can be allies for others.”

**ON Lean In American Theater Women AFFINITY GROUP**

“It was powerful and inspiring to meet with and share stories from other women. There was a lot of empathy and understanding in that room which I felt the world needed more of so the space was truly a safe and creative one that I felt heard in.”

AT THE INTERSECTIONS culminated in a town hall—“How We Move Forward”—on Saturday that empowered all of us to share what we experienced over our three days together.

This year’s AT THE INTERSECTIONS also included THE GROUND AT 20, an arc of conversations featuring legacy leaders of theatres of color, curated in recognition of the 20th anniversary of August Wilson’s field-changing address “The Ground on Which I Stand.”

AT THE INTERSECTIONS is TCG’s framework for our EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION (EDI)—focused sessions at the Conference, through an intersectional lens. TCG created space for sessions based on how attendees self-identify in four areas of identity: gender, ability, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and, a new area this year: national identity. The National Identity sessions explored themes of citizenship, immigration, refugee status, sovereignty, and more.
This year’s INSTITUTE meeting marked the conclusion of three years of EDI work on behalf of the first group of participants (Cohort One), and the commencement of the journey of the second group of participants (Cohort Two).

The day’s activities focused on three main areas:

- Knowledge exchange of past experiences of Cohort One during the three years they spent at the institute, with a warm welcome to Cohort Two;
- Discussing opportunities and challenges that theatres of color face in the field;
- #WeAreOrlando and theatre as activism, in the wake of the Pulse massacre that had occurred less than two weeks prior to the meeting.

Topics discussed at length included: white fragility and outreach, queer theatres, police brutality and theatre, accessibility, trans communities, the needs of theatres of color and power dynamics with predominantly white theatres, and the need to bring EDI values into the board room as well as staff structures at our theatres.

Participating theatres in Cohort One:

Participating theatres in Cohort Two:
On Wednesday of Conference week, TCG and the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics as our Global Theater Initiative (GTI, a newly-formed partnership between TCG and the Lab) hosted a Global Pre-Conference at Georgetown University: Finding Home: Migration, Exile, and Belonging. Through a dynamic and innovative range of performances, workshops, and discussions, we explored together the value of meaningful cultural exchange in the context of an increasingly polarized world.

Through a dynamic and innovative range of performances, workshops, and discussions, we explored together the value of meaningful cultural exchange in the context of an increasingly polarized world.

Humanizing Exile: Creative Response

GLOBAL PRE-CONFERENCE

23 COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED

Armenia
Belarus
Canada
Catalonia
Chile
China
Colombia
France
Iran
Iraq
Israel
South Korea
Mali
Mexico
Palestine
Russia
Serbia
Spain
Sweden
Syria
the U.K.
Zimbabwe
AND
the United States

“I saw how the themes of the Global Conference were developed and weaved into the TCG Conference itself. It felt like a parallel track to the discussions for larger non-profits, and EDI work, but the intersections of all three truly resonated with the work we make in our company.”
—Kyoung Park, Artistic Director, Kyoung’s Pacific Beat

“Thank you for TCG’s continued commitment to international work. It was meaningful to see this conversation coming to a center (in a world of multiple centers) stage.”
—Emily Mendelsohn, Freelance Director
On Thursday, to start the Conference in DC in an unprecedented display of ADVOCACY and field solidarity, TCG’s COLLECTIVE ACTION team hosted 225 THEATRE DELEGATES from 26 STATES in a total of 31 DELEGATIONS in meetings with 60 REPRESENTATIVES and U.S. SENATORS.

The day began with a kick-off and orientation at the Folger Shakespeare Library, with remarks from theatre leaders and elected officials: Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D–1–OR), Betty McCollum (D–4–MN), and Louise Slaughter (D–25–NY).

States whose representatives received a visit from TCG attendees that day include CA, CT, GA, HI, IL, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MN, MO, MS, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, TX, VA, VT, WA and WI.

“I thought today was going to be interesting but I didn’t think it was going to be so much fun! What an amazing experience we had...the conversations we were having were so interesting that the time flew by...So grateful for this experience!”
— Sophie Cripe, Trustee, South Coast Repertory

“I can’t stop talking about the Hill visit. It was remarkable in so many ways—[TCG] orchestrated it so beautifully. We all felt like we were really effecting change and being heard, and we had something to say, thanks to all of you...I am able to keep a positive attitude and believe in our system of government, and feel positive, despite the obstacles facing all of us...Thank you!”
— Florie Seery, General Manager, Manhattan Theatre Club

See AMERICAN THEATRE’s wrap-up of the TCG Hill visits in the August 1st online story, “The Day TCG Stormed Capitol Hill” at AmericanTheatre.org.
TCG-published authors ANNA DEAVERE SMITH, Tony Award-winner STEPHEN KARAM (The Humans) and JOHN O’NEAL hosted signings of their works and performance events at the pop-up TCG BOOKSTORE.

AMERICAN THEATRE’s OffScript podcast hosted a live recording event, at which they welcomed theatre journalist PETER MARKS, playwright KAREN ZACARIAS, and members of THE WELDERS.

Plenary speaker JOHN MAEDA signed copies of his book, as did SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOP leaders, and TCG screened two theatre-related documentaries: Culture is the Body and The Penelope Project.

ON SCREENING OF Culture is the Body, a documentary on Tadashi Suzuki, hosted by Kameron Steele, translator of the TCG-published Suzuki-authored book by the same name

“Wonderful video. Great to meet Kameron Steele and have him sign this fascinating book.”
—Linda Healey, Editorial Director, theaterhound.org

ON SCREENING OF Sojourn Theatre’s The Penelope Project, a documentary about a two-year, art-making collaboration between Sojourn, The University of Wisconsin, and elderly residents of a long-term care facility

“One of my favorite aspects of the TCG Conference.”
—Bruce Allardice, Managing Director, Ping Chong & Company
OPENING NIGHT PARTY
SPONSORED BY ridgewells CATERING

On Thursday evening, after an awe-inspiring opening plenary, Conference attendees were transported to Arena Stage's Mead Center for American Theater for mingling, light fare and open bar, and a powerful piece of entertainment. Six-time Grammy Winner BEBE WINANS showcased excerpts from his new musical Born For This: The Bebe Winans Story alongside cast members who were in rehearsal for the show's debut at Arena Stage.

PERFORMANCES

TCG hosted two performances on Friday night exclusively for Conference attendees, including Downrange: Voices from the Homefront, a new play by MIKE WILEY presented by Cape Fear Regional Theatre, TCG's Audience (R)Evolution program, and Blue Star Theatres at Shakespeare Theatre Company; and The Trump Card, created and performed by MIKE DAISEY, presented at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company.

@petermarksdrama 23 Jun 2016 Bebe Winans leading cast of BORN FOR THIS @arenastage. The man has pipes. Put him in the show! #TCG16
Many TCG GRANT RECIPIENTS were able to participate in DC as part of their grant program. The grantees in attendance included:

**ALAN SCHNEIDER DIRECTOR AWARD**
Kimberly Senior NEW YORK, NY 2016 RECIPIENT

**RISING LEADERS OF COLOR PROGRAM**
Annalisa Dias WASHINGTON, DC
Paige Hernandez CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD
Sadiqua Iman COLLEGE PARK, MD
Kristen Jackson WASHINGTON, DC
Bryan Joseph Lee BETHESDA, MD
Ouida Maedel WASHINGTON, DC
Ronee Penoi WASHINGTON, DC
Amelia Powell WASHINGTON, DC
Shayla Roland ARLINGTON, VA
Stephanie Rolland BALTIMORE, MD

**FOX FOUNDATION RESIDENT ACTOR FELLOWSHIPS**
Sha Cage ST. PAUL, MN ROUND 9
Miriam Laube ASHLAND, OR ROUND 9
Gavin Lawrence MINNEAPOLIS, MN ROUND 9
Heather Litteer NEW YORK, NY ROUND 9
Sonja Parks SAN ANTONIO, TX ROUND 9
Keith Randolph Smith NEW YORK, NY ROUND 9
Joe Wilson, Jr. PROVIDENCE, RI ROUND 9

**LEADERSHIP U[iversity] One-on-One**
John M. Baker NEW YORK, NY ROUND 3
Ryan Conarro BROOKLYN, NY ROUND 3
Shana Cooper WASHINGTON, DC ROUND 2
Benjamin Hanna MINNEAPOLIS, MN ROUND 3
Jamil Jude ST. PAUL, MN ROUND 3
Lauren Keating MINNEAPOLIS, MN ROUND 3
SK Kerastas OAKLAND, CA ROUND 2
Emily Sophia Knapp COLD SPRING, NY ROUND 3
Erik Schroeder NEW YORK, NY ROUND 3
Joanie Schultz CHICAGO, IL ROUND 2
Jerry Tischler PORTLAND, OR ROUND 2
Dawn Monique Williams ASHLAND, OR ROUND 2
SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

And a special THANK YOU to our EXHIBITORS who filled the main thoroughfare of the conference with educational information and led our TREND WORKSHOPS!

TCG is grateful to the following individual supporters of the 2016 National Conference:
Andrew R. Ammerman, Anita Antenucci, Lynn Deering, John R. Hauge, Abbe Lowell, Craig Pascal and Victor Shargai, Scott Schreiber
“There is a vision of the beloved community, and this is it.”
— Carmen Morgan, director, artEquity, in the “How We Move Forward” session

“[The] TCG conference was one of the best experiences I ever had at a professional conference. I am usually turned off by conferences but this experience was exceptional and exceeded all expectations. I am grateful for...the new family I feel I now have. I cannot wait for next year.”
— Simona deFeo, first-time attendee

“I had an emotionally inspirational time at [my] Affinity Group session. All I can say is that I had never felt more comfortable in my life than on that day! Sitting in a room with people who experience the same feelings...allowed me to come to the realization that I am not alone...After this experience I realized that I shouldn’t keep pushing my culture away, it is a precious thing that I possess, that not many other people have. I should be proud, embrace my culture, share it with other people when asked and not act as if it is a bad thing that is a part of me.”
— From a high school student at #TCG16 attending with a theatre’s teen council

“Given the location, the current events, and the incredible size of the gathering featuring arts practitioners of every kind from around the country and around the world, there could not have been a better theme for the conference [than Theatre Nation]...I felt so connected to other conference attendees and to the themes, and I will treasure that sense of connection going forward, especially because the work feels so isolating at times. It was perfect.”
— Ouida Maedel, Grants Manager, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company

“As any theatremaker could tell you, the space and location where a play is performed can be as much a part of the show as any other element. That was certainly the case when theatre folks from around the globe converged on Washington, DC...the city itself was a very present attendee. While in this remarkably political year, the state of the world and currents affairs would have dominated conversations no matter where the conference was held, the intersection of the performing arts and civic life in our nation's capital during an election year was front and center throughout. Inside the Renaissance Hotel in DC—less than a mile down the road from the White House and two miles from Capitol Hill—discussions of past achievements, present challenges, and future hopes, both for the theatre and for the nation, took on a greater significance.”
— Allison Considine
American Theatre magazine
FULL CIRCLE

2017 TCG NATIONAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 8-10
PORTLAND OREGON

SEE YOU IN PORTLAND FOR #TCG17

A better world for theatre.
A better world because of theatre.