

@TCG #CultureMakers

# Impact Report

# Culture Makers

2018 TCG FALL FORUM  
ON GOVERNANCE



NOVEMBER 9-11  
NEW YORK CITY



The Fall Forum on Governance is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



# Introduction

At the 2018 TCG Fall Forum on Governance: *CultureMakers*, we took a look behind the curtain, discussing and articulating best practices for one of our field's most elusive and least-examined challenges: **organizational culture**. Fall Forum attendees engaged with their peers and experts from beyond our field to uncover the business imperatives for creating a vibrant and supportive workplace, and to determine the best way to align their organization's culture with its mission and strategy. TCG thanks our 2018 Fall Forum participants and sponsors for joining us as we work toward making all of our theatres happier, healthier, and more enriching places to work.

**265 Attendees** joined TCG, including participants from **161 TCG Member Theatres** and **Affiliates**, and including over **60** theatre **Trustees** from around the country. **65 Speakers** led **22 Sessions** over just 2 days of programming.

Fall Forum attendees were welcomed at an opening reception at The Library at The Public Theater, which featured a short performance from the Kilbanes' **EDDIE THE MARVELOUS WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD**, recently developed at the 2018 O'Neill National Music Theater Conference.



# Plenary Sessions



## Opening Plenary “Change Your Culture, Change the World”

featured keynote speaker **Laura Freebairn-Smith**, Partner, Organizational Performance Group

**Wonderful presentation that really helped everyone understand what organizational culture is all about...she is an excellent, engaging presenter. –Anonymous**

## Morning Plenary “Invest in People, Invest in Outcomes”

featured brief presentations from **Joshua Borenstein**, Former Managing Director, Long Wharf Theatre; **Tim Cynova**, Chief Operating Officer, Fractured Atlas; **Karena Fiorenza**, General Manager, Steppenwolf Theatre Company; and **Laura Zabel**, Executive Director, Springboard for the Arts, and a conversation moderated by **Stephanie Ybarra**, Artistic Director, Baltimore Center Stage

**This was a very powerful panel discussion! Stephanie did a wonderful job in facilitating the conversation and brought crucial points and questions to the panel.**

**–Johamy Morales, Director of Education, Seattle Children’s Theatre**

## Closing Plenary “Making our Culture, Making our Future”

included vision statements offered by **Oskar Eustis**, Artistic Director, The Public Theater; **Linette Hwu**, Board President, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company; **Madeline Sayet**, Director; and **Teresa Coleman Wash**, Executive Artistic Director, Bishop Arts Theatre Center, and a discussion facilitated by **Lisa Mount**, Director, Artistic Logistics

**This was a great way to close out, and a nice balance of perspectives and experiences.**

**–Patrick McDonnell, Special Projects Associate, New York Theatre Workshop**



# Breakouts & Other Sessions

## Saturday

on *Cultivating a Values-based Work Culture* with **Harold Steward**, Managing Director, The Theater Offensive, and **Ashley Walden Davis**, Managing Director, Alternate ROOTS

**Amazing facilitators and packed with interactive work and generous, thoughtful, practical takeaways.**

—**Anna Kull**, Director of Communications and People, Lark Theatre

on *The Room Where it Happens: Practicing Forum Theatre to Explore Board Culture and Inclusion* with **Sulu LeoNimm** and **Katy Rubin**, Theatre of the Oppressed NYC

**Katy and Sulu led one of the most engaging and relevant sessions I've ever attended in my conference-going life. Allowing for role play and analysis is such a valuable exercise for theatre professionals.**

—**Jamie Clements**, Director of Development, Alliance Theatre

## Sunday

on *Creating a Growth Culture: Unleashing the Potential of Your People to Catalyze Organizational Development*

with **Jason Najjoun**, Managing Director, Synetic Theater, and **Gretchen Wright**, Director of Development, Westport Country Playhouse

**I really liked this session and found it very helpful...There was a lot of frank talk from organizational leaders about what they are facing.**

—**Karen Chamblee Paisley**, Artistic Director, Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre

on *For Better or Worse: Painting the Picture of our Organizational (and Fieldwide) Culture through Our Fiscal Data* moderated by

**Teresa Eyring**, Executive Director and CEO, TCG, with **David Schmitz**, Executive Director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, **Meghan Pressman**, Managing Director and CEO, Center Theatre Group, and **Martin Miller**, Executive Director, TheatreSquared

**I found it very concrete and reassuring to have conversations about the fiscal realities of being a non-profit theatre in the national landscape right now.**

—**Anonymous**



# What We Learned

**We're in the midst of some intensive EDI and strategic planning work. Having our trustees present to hear success stories, challenges in moving the needle...it was a very positive experience for our whole team.**

—Steve Martin, Managing Director, Childsplay

**Personally, it was...very empowering to see and hear from a diverse range of leaders. It made me feel like there's no one "right" model of what a leader is.**

—Zena Hinds, Director of Development, Tectonic Theatre Project

**I was able to learn a great deal from fellow Board Chairs/Presidents on governance issues and board composition.**

—William Wyman, Board President, Merrimack Repertory Theatre

**Great conversation and great thought are FREE. They are the most important aspect of our social capital. We can have them in our theatres every day!**

—Courtney Sale, Artistic Director, Seattle Children's Theatre

Read AMERICAN THEATRE's entire report-out piece from the 2018 Fall Forum on Governance here:  
<https://www.americantheatre.org/2018/11/20/tcg-fall-forum-2018-culture-strategy-breakfast/>