TCG FALL FORUM ON GOVERNANCE

NOVEMBER 8–10 | NEW YORK CITY

TCG GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS OF THE 2019 FALL FORUM ON GOVERNANCE:

[Logos and names of sponsors]
Friday, November 8th

3:30pm-5:00pm  |  2019 Fall Forum Special Presentation

Why Not-for-Profit Theatre?
WITH ROCHE SCHULFER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GOODMAN THEATRE
LOCATION: MABOU MINES, 150 1ST AVENUE, 2ND FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY

5:30pm-8:00pm  |  Welcome Reception
LOCATION: THE LIBRARY AT THE PUBLIC THEATER, 425 LAFAYETTE STREET, NEW YORK, NY

Saturday, November 9th

All programming will take place at Convene Park Avenue.

8:00am-5:00pm  |  Fall Forum Registration

8:00am-9:00am  |  Fall Forum First-Timer Breakfast  |  The Hub
All first-time attendees welcome, no pre-registration required!

8:00am-9:00am  |  Board Chair Breakfast  |  The Library
This is an affinity space for attendees who are Board Chairs or Board Presidents at their theatre.

8:00am-9:00am  |  Continental Breakfast

9:00am-10:30am  |  Opening Plenary  |  The Forum

Model Makers:
Innovation in Nonprofit Arts Leadership
SPEAKERS: DEBORAH BORDA, PRESIDENT & CEO, NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC, IN CONVERSATION WITH HENRY TIMMS, PRESIDENT & CEO, LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

When Deborah Borda arrived at the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1999, she encountered critical financial problems, a virtually nonexistent endowment, declining patron base and a disengaged community. Seventeen years later, the LA Phil emerged as one of the foremost, self-sustaining orchestras in the United States. Currently, Ms. Borda is back in New York, leading the storied New York Philharmonic. As leaders in nonprofit arts, how can we most effectively help people to embrace change in order to create reinvigorated programs and meaningful community engagement leading to institutional sustainability? THIS SESSION WILL BE LIVESTREAMED

Please use this QR code to read more about our Fall Forum speakers on the event microsite.
Ford Foundation’s approach involved exploring how to “do more good” with new kinds of socially aware investments, and refocusing 1 billion of their 12 billion endowment toward “mission related investments.” Among other strategies, many not-for-profit boards are considering investment policies that include clear Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) provisions and screening practices. Over lunch, join a discussion with organizations who have experience in this realm to hear about what they’ve learned, the nuts and bolts of revising their investment strategy, and how fiduciary care can align with organizational values and mission.

There’s No Business Like Show Business: The Bridge between Commercial and Nonprofit Theatre

**SPEAKERS:** MARA ISAACS, EXECUTIVE/CREATIVE PRODUCER, OCTOPUS THEATRICALS AND ADAM SIEGEL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, LINCOLN CENTER THEATER; AND ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS INCLUDED IN YOUR INSERT

**LOCATION:** THE INNOVATION SPACE

To most of us in the industry, the distinctions between the commercial and nonprofit theatre models are clear. But to the majority of our audiences, theatre is theatre, and the line is murky, particularly as an increasing number of Broadway shows are incubated in regional houses. To some nonprofit theatre veterans, there is a growing disconnect in our field, highlighting the gap between theatre as a public service and cultural good, and as a source of revenue-generating entertainment. In conversation with practitioners working in both markets, let’s get up to speed on the real differences between making theatre under the umbrella of a charitable organization, and creating a Broadway show with a family of investors—and perhaps learn together about the growing synergy between these cousins of theatre production, and what each model can learn from the other.

2:00pm-3:15pm | Afternoon Breakout Sessions

**ROUND 1: RESOURCES**

Beyond the Black: Building Resiliency by Thinking Radically about Capitalization

**SPEAKERS:** DEAN GLADDEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ALLEY THEATRE AND TONY SIAS, PRESIDENT/CEO, KARAMU HOUSE; MODERATED BY DEB CLAPP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEAGUE OF CHICAGO THEATRES

**LOCATION:** THE FORUM

TCG has made “capitalization” the focus of countless convenings and sessions in years past, as the undercapitalization of our organizations is one of the nonprofit theatre field’s perpetual and pervasive challenges. This has been documented endlessly, explained succinctly in Roche Schuller’s Why Not for Profit Theatre?, and approached from a variety of perspectives by our field’s greatest financial minds. If your theatre company operates as a nonprofit, there is no way around the need to properly capitalize in order to weather times of challenge and to foster a thriving (not just surviving) theatre field. But we continue to see so many theatres unable to build up reserves to reach this level of stabilization and resiliency. It’s time to radicalize this conversation and get serious about tackling our structural deficits. Join two of the field’s outside-the-box thinkers who have developed unique capitalization strategies that have stabilized their theatres through times of adversity, launched intensive campaigns to demonstrate their value to their communities, and lifted their historic organizations to great new heights. After telling their stories and engaging in dialogue, these leaders will spark a full-room discussion about what we need to be talking about when we talk about capitalization in today’s theatre landscape. **THIS SESSION WILL BE LIVESTREAMED**
Creative Automation: Rethinking Human & Non-Human Resources for Stronger Patron Relationships and Healthier Bottom Lines

**SPEAKERS:** KATIE LIBERMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL; LIV NILSSON, STRATEGY LEAD, SPEKTRIX; BRIAN ISAAC PHILLIPS, PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CINCINNATI SHAKESPEARE COMPANY; AND GABRIELLE TOKACH, PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER

**LOCATION:** CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THEATER FESTIVAL

One of the most disruptive economic forces of the last 30 years — automation in the information age — is now within reach throughout the nonprofit theatre space. It has the potential to help stabilize the nonprofit theatre business model, but only if industry leaders get creative about how they approach the relationship between people and technology.

The contemporary theatre field understands the value of its people for creativity and connection, but is it doing all it can to deploy its people where they bring the most value and leave the rest to technology? This session will explore how organizations are navigating the balance between investing in human resources and streamlining non-human ones to build sustainable revenue and engagement.

Drawing from Spektrix’s 2018 analysis of 343 performing arts organizations, session leaders will discuss the trends emerging and their implications for arts leaders, such as: the value of face-to-face or phone ticketing transactions, even as the majority of patron purchasing is done online; the return on intentional segmenting and messaging to patrons via email, which shows significant positive results when well-trained people are at the helm of automation tools; and the innovative ways that organizations have used data to determine the best way to allot staff time towards donor cultivation efforts. The session will include case studies from a number of Spektrix clients, whose success stories are evidence that a balance of human and non-human strategies can help our theatres thrive.

New Rules of Engagement: Fundraising in a Multi-Generational Context

**SPEAKERS:** MELISSA COWLEY WOLF, FOUNDER, MCW PROJECTS

**LOCATION:** THE LIBRARY

We’re hearing more and more about the waves of Baby Boomers entering retirement, and about the unprecedented trillions of dollars in wealth that their heirs are expected to inherit in the coming years. We’re also seeing fundraisers turn their attention to millennials and younger; the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation calls millennials “the most studied generation in history” and the generation that is set to make up 75% of the nation’s workforce by 2030. Even with five generations active in U.S. philanthropy today, and a booming tech sector producing huge returns for young entrepreneurs—fewer individuals are giving to nonprofits regularly, and the economic inequality gap is growing. Given the data and trends, and the nature of the current donor ecosystem, how do organizations shape advancement strategies? What is the appropriate staffing? And what is the role of the trustee in this new funding landscape? Melissa Cowley Wolf, an arts consultant dedicated to expanding the next generation of philanthropists and audiences, will lead this revelatory session on the evolution of our field’s philanthropic landscape.

True Resilience: NFF’s Case to Cover Full Costs of Nonprofits

**SPEAKER:** TRELLA WALKER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADVISORY SERVICES, NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND

**LOCATION:** THE INNOVATION SPACE

Nonprofits are endlessly resourceful when it comes to fulfilling their missions with limited resources—but what would happen if they could work from abundance, rather than scarcity? There is sector-wide agreement that overhead costs are necessary for nonprofits to deliver quality programs; yet only 7% of nonprofits report that their foundation funders always cover the full cost of delivering programs (NFF State of the Nonprofit Sector 2015 Survey). While a great deal of attention has been paid to the negative impact of underfunded overhead, organizations have full cost needs well beyond overhead, so identifying and supporting those full cost needs is critical for a nonprofit’s stability. Nonprofit Finance Fund advocates that by changing the way we fund nonprofits right now, we can fundamentally improve their ability to do the work and achieve our shared goals. This session will provide insight into emerging trends around full costs in nonprofit finance.

3:15pm-3:45pm  |  Coffee Break
3:45pm-5:00pm  |  Afternoon Breakout Sessions

ROUND 2: PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

All Aboard: Reimagining Contemporary Governance

**SPEAKERS:** YASMIN FALK, FOUNDER AND PARTNER, ADVANCE NYC; TRELLA WALKER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADVISORY SERVICES, NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND; AND LISA YANCEY, PRESIDENT, YANCEY CONSULTING. MODERATED BY NATAKI GARRETT, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

**LOCATION:** THE HUB

Engaged, dedicated, mission-oriented boards are essential to a theatre’s success. Our business model traditionally relies on financial support and oversight from our boards in order to attend to our productions and programs, and as such, their contributions are a part of the organization’s life blood. But have we become overly reliant on this support, and on outdated notions of how to cultivate it? How might we organize our boards to reflect our community, our values, and support us in managing our bottom line? Are traditional board structures, term limits, and engagement strategies still relevant to ensuring our success, or could new models of trusteeship bring positive change? This session will present ideas and stories of board recruitment, development, and engagement that turn trustees into ambassadors for their chosen organizations, and will explore how those efforts bring about increased financial stability and opportunities for growth.
Getting Real About Your People: How to Invest in Teams that Get Results

**SPEAKERS:** JILL ROBINSON, PRESIDENT & CEO AND CAITLIN GREEN, CLIENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, TRG ARTS

**LOCATION:** THE FORUM

You can’t afford to lose great talent or keep low performers. Attracting and retaining team members requires incentivizing and investing in their professional development, and that requires time, resources, and commitment to cultivate the people who breathe life into an organization. We’ll talk about optimizing teams for generating revenue and describe how silos can zap efficiency and stunt patron loyalty growth. Through client case studies, we’ll provide practical insights from peers for leaders to better understand the relationship between staff and the bottom line. THIS SESSION WILL BE LIVESTREAMED

With a Little Help From Our Friends: Opportunities for Collaboration and Adaptation in our Model

**SPEAKERS:** MICHAEL J. BOBBITT, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, NEW REPERTORY THEATRE; CATHERINE CARR KELLY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL SQUARE THEATER; OWAIS LIGHTWALA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WHY NOT THEATRE; THADEUS SQUIRE, CHIEF COMMONS OFFICER, SOCIAL IMPACT COMMONS; AND ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS INCLUDED IN YOUR INSERT

**LOCATION:** THE LIBRARY

In a time of economic instability, when the competition theatres face in the form of other cultural activities is fierce, coming together around a shared mission might be the most strategic option. Collaborative and adaptive models that once may have seemed too daunting or complex to be mainstream are rising in visibility, as are funding opportunities for such experiments between arts organizations. This session will investigate how arts organizations can set up programmatic or structural alliances and that maximize their impact in the face of such uncertainty. What resources are necessary to build sustainability and plan for a merging of spaces, staff, and/or audiences? How can theatres shed aspects of our infrastructure that might be weighing us down, and develop more adaptable, and affordable, ways of producing? And how should organizations decide when and how to make these major strategic shifts in the first place? We will examine both full scale mergers of nonprofit theatres as well as smaller scale artistic alliances and partnerships beyond just co-productions, and hear from companies who’ve successfully let old producing models go, to help us think creatively about collectively strengthening the ecosystem of our field.

If You Build It, Will They Come? Evolving How We Work Through Integrated Audience-Building

**SPEAKER:** CORINNA SCHULENBURG, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

**LOCATION:** THE INNOVATION SPACE

The shifting relationship between theatres and their communities lies at the heart of our business model conversations. Yet too often, promising audience-building efforts aren’t fully integrated within the organization as a whole and fail to reach their full potential. In this session, we’ll share three case studies from arts organizations that evolved their business model alongside their audience-building efforts, strengthening both. The case studies will be drawn from the Wallace Foundation’s research into their grantees’ audience-building efforts, with a special focus on the pivotal role market research can play. Facilitated by TCG’s Corinna Schulenburg, these case studies will spark a generative conversation on how participants might innovate their own business models through their audience-building efforts.

Sunday, November 10th

All programming will take place at Convene Park Avenue.

8:00am-11:00am | Fall Forum Registration

8:00am-9:00am | Continental Breakfast

8:00am-9:00am | One-on-One Consultations with Institute of Financial Wellness for the Arts

See online agenda for complete details and visit the Registration desk to sign up.

8:00am-9:00am | Special Topics Breakfast | The Hub

Focusing on the Fundamentals: Unpacking the Inaugural Single Ticket Collective

**SPEAKERS:** CAITLIN GREEN, CLIENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, TRG ARTS; AND JOJO RUF, MANAGING DIRECTOR, THEATER J.

Launched at the beginning of 2019, TCG and TRG Arts partnered to form a unique 5-month consultancy with a laser focus on single ticket marketing for ten select Budget Group 3 theatres. Cohort members from coast-to-coast engaged in one-on-one consulting and classroom-style shared learning with the goal of creating a personalized campaign plan designed to maximize single ticket revenue. Central Square Theater (Boston, MA); Cygnet Theatre (San Diego, CA); Theatreworks (Colorado Springs, CO); Virginia Stage Company (Norfolk, VA); American Stage Theatre Company (St. Petersburg, FL); TheaterWorks (Hartford, CT); Dad’s Garage (Austin, TX); Theater J (Washington, DC); Timeline Theatre Company (Chicago, IL); and New Repertory Theatre (Watertown, MA) were all participating theatres for the inaugural cohort. Join Jojo Ruf, who will share the impact that this work has had at Theatre J., and Cohort lead, Caitlin Green (TRG Arts), who will dig into broad observations of the work that cohort members did and share key takeaways on what best set organizations up for success.

ROUND 3: IMPACT

9:00am-10:45am | Morning Workshops

Measuring What Matters: Determining Our Impact on Our Own Terms

**SPEAKER:** DAVID GRANT, AUTHOR, THE SOCIAL PROFIT HANDBOOK, AND BOARD CHAIR, NORTHERN STAGE

**LOCATION:** THE FORUM

What makes our theatre institutions excellent? What does optimal impact look like to our audiences and communities? And can everyone at your organization answer those questions in the same way? In his book, The Social Profit Handbook, educator, philanthropic leader, and theatre board chair David Grant explores a different way of looking at nonprofit entities and how we might determine our own metrics for excellence—and its simplicity and efficiency may surprise you. In the book, Grant walks through how “social profit” organizations—those with the primary purpose of enhancing our social fabric and strengthening
our communities—might improve our approach to assessing impact by separating it from funder-driven outcomes, and stresses that we can learn to measure what we value by aligning around what we value in the first place. Can theatre practitioners, constantly tasked with quantifying the unquantifiable, give ourselves permission and space to create qualitative metrics for success? Grant’s strategy of formative assessment is adapted from educational systems and connects our processes of internal measurement to our values. Spend this session discussing the tenets of “backward planning,” letting go of external guidelines, and learning how to introduce this methodology at your organization and utilize it for years to come.

Public Narrative: An Introduction of the Stories of Self, Us, and Now

**FACILITATOR:** TANVI GIROTZA, PUBLIC NARRATIVE TEACHER AND COACH

**LOCATION:** THE LIBRARY

This session has a cap of 40 participants, and requires an RSVP. Please visit the Registration desk to sign up onsite.

Public Narrative is “a leadership craft through which we translate values into action.” The Public Narrative model, originally developed by renowned community organizer and Harvard Kennedy School lecturer Dr. Marshall Ganz, is rooted in decades of organizing experience and informed by insights from social science and teaching in diverse contexts. It has been widely applied in the U.S. and globally in support of change efforts on issues such as healthcare, arts education, climate change, and immigration reform. For those ready to explore an organizational model that is responsive to your community, this powerful relational tool supports the development of authentic community relationships. By engaging the “head” and the “heart,” each participant will learn to tell their own story (a story of self), and will learn the theory behind how to also tell stories of us and now. Through narrative, we learn how to respond to the urgent challenges of an uncertain world adaptively—as individuals, as communities, and as charitable organizations. This session will be led by Tanvi Girotra, a nonprofit leader and Public Narrative teacher and coach, who has been doing and developing this work alongside Marshall since 2015.

9:30am-10:45am | Morning Breakout Sessions

Power from the People: Rethinking Theater Marketing for the 21st Century

**SPEAKER:** ERIK GENSLER, PRESIDENT, CAPACITY INTERACTIVE

**LOCATION:** THE INNOVATION SPACE

We are 20+ years into the 21st Century, yet many theaters are still relying primarily on 20th Century marketing practices, thinking that the tactics of yesteryear will still work to connect with contemporary audiences. But they do not, and theaters are falling behind. Capacity Interactive’s latest study of thousands of arts buyers shows that for the majority of age cohorts, recommendations of friends and family, and content created by arts organizations themselves, are more influential factors than advertising and the opinions professional critics when deciding to see a performance. Organizations and experts are no longer in control of the message. Your patrons are now your marketing department and your job is to fuel their potential for evangelism, not interrupt them with ads. This session will explore the Flywheel model of engagement, which illustrates that effective marketing is about creating delight and reducing friction. It is about consistently generating engaging, human-centered content for those that care about your work, and investing in ways to encourage sharing. It is about building frictionless digital infrastructure. This requires a complete rethink about how we define “marketing” and how your organization can budget for success in a new paradigm. Using case studies and research, this session will invite you to reimagine your organization’s marketing and fundraising practices, and head home inspired to make change.

What We Keep and What We Leave Behind: A Facilitated Conversation about The Future of The Field

**FACILITATORS:** BRYAN JOSEPH LEE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC FORUM, THE PUBLIC THEATER; AND MADELINE SAYET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YALE INDIGENOUS PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM

**LOCATION:** THE HUB

As this year’s Fall Forum on Governance comes to a close, much of the conversation has focused on ways to refine the traditional nonprofit business model of the American Theatre. But as we experience a wave of change in leadership, how do we reconcile the tension between tradition and revolution? In this facilitated conversation, two emerging leaders will guide a fractal-based exercise to imagine the kind of business model—and the kind of field—we would like to hand off to the next generation of leaders. What do we choose to dismantle, transform, and evolve, given the real-world contexts of funding, audiences, and economic risk? And what do we hope to safeguard, preserve, and refine, with the knowledge that much of our current practices are rooted in structures of inequity and oppression? What will we fight to keep, and what are we excited to transform in ten years’ time?

10:45am-11:00am | Coffee Break

11:00am-12:30pm | Closing Plenary Session | The Forum

Model Behavior: Building the Plane While Flying It

**SPEAKERS:** EDGAR DOBIE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, ARENA STAGE; CHANDRA STEPHENS-ALBRIGHT MANAGING DIRECTOR, KENNY LEON’S TRUE COLORS THEATRE COMPANY; ERIC TING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATRE; AND BLANKA ZIZKA FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, WILMA THEATER; MODERATED BY MARK VALDEZ, DIRECTOR

In our final plenary session of the weekend, we will hear from four theatre leaders who are finding ways to sustain the nonprofit theatre model through innovation, iteration, and deep relationships with their communities. From an award-winning founder; to an ex Coca-Cola executive turned managing leader; to a new leader of color redefining community engagement; to the executive leader of one of the first resident theatres to adopt a 501(c)3 designation leader; to a new leader of color redefining community engagement; to the executive leader of one of the first resident theatres to adopt a 501(c)3 designation—each brings a unique perspective and set of influences, and a knack for thinking deeply about our model’s challenges and opportunities. In this session, each leader will briefly speak to how the models in their organizations and their careers have been created and adapted within larger systemic constructs, and have inevitably responded to changing societal paradigms. Their presentations will be followed by a moderated discussion with director and cultural provocateur, Mark Valdez, and a full-room discussion around the questions and ideas raised by our speakers. THIS SESSION WILL BE LIVESTREAMED.
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE AMERICAN THEATRE

Composed of leading trustees from member theatres across the country, the National Council for the American Theatre guides TCG’s programs on governance and board development, and serves as a “brain trust” for the organization. For information on joining the National Council, please contact ADRIAN BUDHU, Deputy Director and COO: abudhu@tcg.org.

*Please note: this event is available free-of-charge to Fall Forum attendees who identify as Trustees of TCG Member Theatres, and should have been added to your cart as a part of the registration process, to guarantee your RSVP. Please see a TCG staff member at the Registration desk if you have questions.

A BETTER WORLD FOR THEATRE.
A BETTER WORLD BECAUSE OF THEATRE.
“We need what we always needed and what every artistic leader needs in a country that doesn’t provide sufficient subsidy or have a genuine respect for culture: stamina to persist; capacity for a deep interiority on one hand and a practical manipulativeness on the other; concentration to hear one’s own voice and courage to listen to it in the midst of a cacophony of other voices; toughness in the service of something that is tender, while you try to remain tender yourself; imagination, taste, risk tolerance, a nose for the audience’s subconscious hopes and fears; colleagues who can share your despair and also lift you out of it—again and again and again, because it’s a long and winding road—and reassure you, as you do them, that what you are trying to do is good and life-affirming and the one who gives up last wins.”

—Zelda Fichandler, 2001
See you in Phoenix, Arizona for the 2020 TCG National Conference June 4-6, 2020