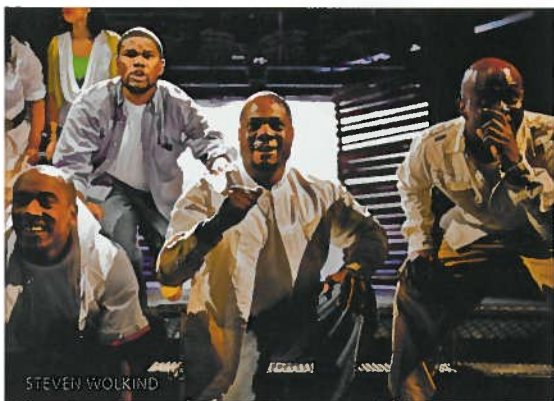


Leading the Way

Interdisciplinary arts alumna receives fellowship to produce theater connecting social justice and the arts to the community.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR Scenes from plays directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian. From left: the Boston premiere of *In the Red and Brown Water* at Company One; Danny Bryck in *No Room For Wishing*, a "docu-play" about Occupy Boston, at Central Square Theater and the Boston Center for the Arts; Kami Smith and Maurice Parent in *The Mountaintop*, about the last night of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at Underground Railway Theater in Cambridge, Mass.

BY MEGAN SANDBERG-ZAKIAN (MFAIA '11)

I always knew I wanted to make a consistent living as an artist with a serious, professional career in mainstream American theater. A lot of people in my field advised me to seek assistantships on Broadway, but I was not interested in moving to New York, traveling constantly, getting an agent, or working with famous people.

When I graduated from Goddard in 2011, I was struggling as a freelance director, and I wondered if I should take that advice. However, my Goddard education taught me to tolerate uncertainty, to find

community in unexpected ways, and to value process. I was also infinitely blessed to work with faculty advisors Kira Obolensky, Jackie Hayes, Ju-Pong Lin, and Anne de Marken, who helped me work more lightly and nimbly, stepping away from some of the ponderousness I had previously associated with making theater.

My time at Goddard reinforced that it's possible to find joy not only in my own art practice, but also in being a sensitive and passionate audience member, critic, colleague, administrator, mentor, subscriber, donor, co-conspirator, advocate, agitator, or dinner party hostess.

The summer after graduation, I received the Theater Communications Group (TCG) Future Leaders Fellowship – a two-year grant (with salary and

benefits!) to work with the Underground Railway Theater in Cambridge, Mass.

One of the best parts of the award has been the opportunity to connect with other grant recipients around the country through TCG, the national organization for the American theater. It is inspiring to witness the many unique ways that other young artistic leaders are forging their paths. I am proud that together we are leading the charge toward a more diverse

and inclusive theater field. We are also organizing ourselves through Google docs and conference calls, another great skill I learned at Goddard!

As I come to the close of my grant period this spring, I'm not even tempted to consider moving to New York. I'm very grateful for the consistently vivid and meaningful reverberations of the MFAIA program in my life, and I look forward to continuing my connection with Goddard for years to come. CW



Megan Sandberg-Zakian (MFAIA '11), at left, is a theater-maker and current recipient of a Theater Communications Group Future Leaders grant to spend two seasons at Central Square Theater in Cambridge, Mass., collaborating on a constellation of development and production projects engaging artists and audiences. "I am interested in how stories that are frequently told and re-told may shape civic and community life," says Megan. "In moments when our community experiences intractability, viciousness or despair, how can our narratives be re-framed or expanded to support movement, dialogue and vitality?" Learn more about Megan at megansz.com.