

**ARTS UMBRELLA'S THEATRE TROUPES:
A HISTORY OF THEATRE TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

by

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Abstract

Arts Umbrella is a not-for-profit arts education centre for children and youth ages two to nineteen. Its Theatre program has been providing artistic theatre training to young people in the Metro Vancouver area for almost thirty years. This study's objective is to present the history of the Theatre Troupes within a historiographical methodology that takes into account all the contributing factors towards the program's successful development. The material archive resources of Program Guides, Reports to the Board, Newsletters, Show Programs and the original Business Plan are documented in a chronological exposition of the Theatre Troupes' history along with interviews with Arts Umbrella co-founder Carol Henriquez, the influential Troupe directors Sarah Rodgers, Paul Moniz de Sá and Susanne Moniz de Sá, other artist-instructors and a summary of survey questionnaire responses from parents and alumni. The young theatre students at Arts Umbrella have experienced a rich and diverse history of theatre artists in Vancouver, in a safe and nurturing environment that has been consistently funded and stable administratively since inception of the Theatre Arts program in 1984.

Preface

The UBC Research Ethics Board – Human Ethics has approved this research. Certificate of Approval number: H12-01098.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Dedication	vi
Introduction:	1
Chapter 1: “A Dream is Born”	6
1.1 The Business Plan:	6
1.2 The 1980’s:	12
1.3 The 1990’s:	23
Chapter 2: The Development of a Pre-Professional Theatre Program	29
2.1 Sarah Rodgers’ Aesthetic:	29
2.2 More Music:	35
Chapter 3: Arts Umbrella’s Theatre and Music.....	47
Conclusion	55
Works Cited	60
Appendices.....	63
Appendix A Alumni Questionnaire	63
Appendix B Parent Questionnaire	64
Appendix C Staff Questionnaire	65

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You are the creators and practitioners of our rich and diverse Canadian culture.

Dedication

To my family for their steadfast support...

...Kenneth, Georgia and Dixon for being the best inspirations for the arts in the life of a young person.

...and my lifelong partner Mark, who always knew.

Introduction

Our young people are the promise of tomorrow. At Arts Umbrella we teach them to dance, to paint, to sculpt and to perform. But what we are really giving them are the tools to live an inspired life. (Carol Henriquez quoted in *Launching a Legacy* 2004, 15)

Performing and visual artists bring passion to their practice and work, with the expectation that the creative inspiration behind the passion is revealed to their audience. Artists who are able to teach bring passion for both their art and for teaching young people into the mix. Children and youth enter a classroom or studio and embrace the passion of an artist-instructor, both for the art and the skill in creating that art. Arts Umbrella's vision was to combine the expert influences of both artist and teacher in the instructors they employed to not only teach a child how to draw, dance and act, but to foster the inspiration for the same. Since Arts Umbrella's inception in 1979 with forty-five students in Vancouver, B.C., this organization has developed into a nationally recognized centre for visual and performing arts for young people aged two to nineteen. This study's objective is to present the particular development of Arts Umbrella's Theatre program within an historiographical methodology, starting with the visionary business plan of the two impassioned co-founders, Carol Henriquez and Gloria Schwartz, and to document the thirty year history of the theatre troupes with program guides, quarterly newsletters, board reports, interviews and questionnaires.

My own story with Arts Umbrella began when I brought my oldest child to his first Painting and Drawing and Dress-Up Drama classes in the spring of 1993 after exhausting almost every community centre pre-school class in my Metro Vancouver neighbourhood. Twenty years later, after both my older son and daughter have gone through almost all that Arts Umbrella has to offer, including the Theatre Troupes, my youngest son continues to attend the Dance program and take visual art classes. My history with Arts Umbrella comes from an intuitive belief I had early on as a parent about the integral place of arts education in the development of a young person and the firm conviction I have now of the value of arts education, with theatre holding a

particularly evocative position, as I have had the wonderful experience of observing my children and their peers mature into sensitive and engaged Canadian citizens.

As to methodology, I refer to Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait's definition in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* that historiography contains the "epistemological conditions and procedures for historical understanding" within the concepts of *archive, time, space, identity and narrative* (2). This study re-presents the available material archive of Arts Umbrella with the understanding of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* that the "trouble" with the archive is it reproduces the limits it tries to overcome (90) and by Susan Bennett's extension of Derrida's philosophy that the "archives contribute to the formation and maintenance of national identity" so that the historian must be continually aware that the power to control the archive is the power to control memory (Bennett 2010, 67). I have been continually aware that the class descriptions and newsletter articles have been written to benefit the artists-instructors wishing to influence the community in accepting and supporting Arts Umbrella's presence in their midst as well as give parents, caregivers, teachers, donors and potential students the pertinent information needed to make a decision about enrolment.

In Chapter One, I have endeavoured to include all the material documentation necessary to present the rich history of how Arts Umbrella developed its theatre program up to the point that Sarah Rodgers was established as the Teen Theatre Troupe (later known as the Senior Troupe) director. I document Arts Umbrella's development with yearly total enrollment numbers and total number of classes along with funding and scholarship goals to illustrate the organization's steady growth. Arts Umbrella's archive of reports to the board, newsletters and program guides is required as part of non-profit organization public accountability and, I would suggest, these documents act as "central constitutive factor(s)" in that they anticipate future performance by communicating with the public before the event (Balme 39). Also, while I agree with Bial and Magelssen that the chronological order of the archive is a foundational practice that is no longer understood as an impartial recording of facts but a "complex and contested act of cultural memory" (2), I rely on Arts Umbrella's material archive to tell the story of its history along with the interviews of the artist-instructors and questionnaire responses from alumni and

parents to create multiple ways of remembering. The development of the Theatre program was entirely dependent on whoever was the director of the troupes for that year. By documenting the contribution of the variety of artists that came before Sarah Rodgers and Paul Moniz de Sá, a history of the Theatre program makes those artists part of the story. At the first mention of each artist involved in the Arts Umbrella story, I provide a brief biography of their education and/or artistic practice in brackets behind their name. Henriquez and Schwartz made education a priority when hiring instructors and Arts Umbrella's yearly program guides have always contained the biographies of its artist-instructors and its staff.

In Chapter Two, I document the Rodgers' stewardship of the program and continue with her successor and present day artistic director, Paul Moniz de Sá. This chapter includes excerpts of interviews with artist-instructors and the responses of questionnaires of alumni and parents, to contribute to the understanding of how the narrative organizes "both individual and communal identities for human beings, shapes and composes memories and expectations" and in that manner reveals how Arts Umbrella has participated in Vancouver's social and cultural community (Canning and Postlewait 19). The narrative aspect of the historiological process constructs an important part of why Arts Umbrella's Theatre training is considered a transformative experience in the life of a young person. The average time of a Theatre Troupe student in the program is only two to three years (Questionnaires), yet it consumes a large, intense part of their social life outside of school that has a lasting effect on how they mature as individuals.

As part of the larger theatre community, I suggest that theatre for young people (TYP) in general has created a continuum in which the theatrical arts and the educational tools of drama co-exist in complex and productive relationships. These relationships have had a significant impact on how children and youth grow and develop in Canadian society. As a theatrical continuum, I see this research bookended by early 20th century writers and theatre educators such as Alice Minnie Herts Heniger, who states in *The Children's Educational Theatre*, that "every educator knows that children and young people constantly and passionately desire to see the abstract pictures of their imagination realized in concrete form" (2), and Susan Bennett's

assertion in *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, that “cultural assumptions affect performances, and performances rewrite cultural assumptions”(94). From the promise of Aristotelian catharsis to the Boalian desire for social change, theatre for young people encompasses the same engagement with the world as adult theatre. Theatre for young people, both pedagogical and artful, is an integral part of how young people construct themselves and the society they live in.

Although I believe the social and educational value of theatre training to be self-evident and an analysis of that value to be beyond the focus of this thesis, I would briefly define here the various forms in which young people may encounter theatre in Canadian society. The educational and social context of theatre for young people is defined in multiple ways: theatre-in-education (performance oriented), drama-in-education (literary oriented), theatre for young audiences (professional adults performing for children), and theatre for young people (which includes young performers performing for both young and older audiences). While Arts Umbrella’s Pre-Professional Theatre Program is known for training its theatre troupes of young people to perform for diverse public audiences, there are also community or applied theatre projects that began, and continue, with their Stage Coach out-reach drama programs in schools and occasional original theatre pieces on social issues to the present day work of their Act One Youth program.

Theatre-in-education (TIE) has its roots in the British educational system of the 1960’s and was pioneered by educator Dorothy Heathcote. Her work made its way into Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand by the early 70’s and while Heathcote did not advocate theatre training in young people for the sake of its art, she developed the use of drama in the classroom as a way of developing children’s imaginations and awareness, to enable them to see the meanings available in the real world through fantasy scenarios. She was interested in using theatre as a means of “burnishing children through the play” (Wagner 10). I argue that in contemporary education, the art of theatre creation in young people’s development is also a significant factor in their “burnishment.” I also consider the work of Helen Nicholson regarding the contemporary notion that theatre provides “children an aesthetic space that is socially

liberating” (81) and the work of Kathleen Gallagher in her assertion that the transformative effect for youth in theatre is that they operate in a “world where relationship to other and self-spectatorship are in dynamic and unrelenting interaction” (Gallagher 2003, 13). The young people involved in theatre both create and are the repository for the archive of stories that construct their identities in Canadian society.

In Chapter Three, I continue with the work of Paul Moniz de Sá and the theatrical influences he has brought to his students. I also include more excerpts from interviews with the other artist-instructors working in the Theatre program. I list some of the shows that form the recent history of the troupes, including the Musical Theatre Troupe and the recently created Act One Youth applied theatre project. The choices about which plays are used for performance have been the purview of each director’s own curriculum over the history of the program. This history includes a wide range of creative work, from adapted Shakespeare to site-specific work, but the current iteration of the program was designed with Rodgers’ influence in the early 1990’s and expanded under Moniz de Sá’s present stewardship. Although there were directors who devised original works with the Arts Umbrella students in the 1980’s, plays are currently chosen with consideration for the social norms and expectations of Canadian society and the curriculum of the Metro Vancouver school system. Children’s literature for the elementary school productions tends to belong to the western canon, and the high school productions move between western contemporary works and Shakespeare. Act One: Youth devises original work based on the diverse cultural and social issues of its student actors.

I provide a brief summary of the questionnaires in the conclusion to illustrate the effect of Arts Umbrella’s Theatre program on the students and their families.

Chapter 1: “A Dream is Born”

1.1 The Business Plan:

It was a dream of a woman named Carol Henriquez, together with her friend Gloria Schwartz. A dream to instill in all children a love of the arts, inspiring them to become confident, productive, creative and healthy citizens. A dream to build a centre that would awaken the artistic potential of young people in a way that hadn't been done before. It was a dream to make a difference. (Arts Umbrella *Launching a Legacy* 2004, 3)

In 1979, Carol Henriquez and Gloria Schwartz were two artists with young families who came together with a vision to create a school of visual and performing arts that would inspire children to become engaged and creative Canadian citizens. Henriquez, a ceramicist, and Schwartz, a dancer, collaborated to bring classes of visual art, dance and theatre to children and youth in Vancouver, B.C. because they were frustrated with the lack of quality programming in the arts for young people. These two women brought together a coterie of artists to become the first instructors and community board members. They sought the advice of a business professor from Simon Fraser University to help them put together a business plan and envision a pilot project. Jerome Ziskerout of The Law Society of BC was enlisted to help them set up a non-profit organization and apply for charitable status. The business plan they wrote in 1979/1980 envisioned the entire program that is available at Arts Umbrella today, from visual art to dance to theatre. Henriquez remarked that this business plan created a “solid foundation that allowed for the continued growth of Arts Umbrella’s programming within a conservative fiscal outlook” (Henriquez 2013a). Tuition would only cover approximately 50% of program costs so Arts Umbrella begins its fundraising campaign every February and completes the process by July in order to budget how many classes they will be holding in the fall.

The Statement of Purpose from the Business Plan attests to “awakening the artistic potential of our young community,” and outside of the traditional sites of public schools and community centres creating “a structured and established program in the form of a fine and

performing art school for children.” The language in the plan also includes the phrases “unique curriculum,” “broader sense of the art world” and “emphasis on quality materials and teaching makes Arts Umbrella an important adjunct to the educational system from preschool to grade 12”. All classes would have an opportunity for exhibits or performances. Master classes with well-known established artists would become available to provide a unique program in art education that brings together “the creative expression of the individual imagination and the disciplined pursuit of artistic excellence.” These descriptions from the Business Plan, later found in similar wording inside the yearly program guide’s class descriptions, are analogous to Christopher Balme’s analysis of the playbill. Comparable to the wording on a theatre playbill, the descriptions of Arts Umbrella’s purpose and classes “inform, attract, and provide...informational and aesthetic stimuli with the ultimate aim of attracting individual spectators (or in this case, students) who will form a collective audience” (Balme 39). These descriptions also suggest arts education may fulfill a “social role” rather than “a commercial function.” (Nicholson 2011, 24). And while the origins of this belief may be rooted in the Western elitist notions of what it means to be human, Helen Nicholson also argues that “public access to the arts remains an important indicator of social capital and civic participation” (82). By establishing the organization as a non-profit, Henriquez and Schwartz fulfilled their own mandate to provide accessibility for every child and communicated to the wider public sphere (i.e., parents and donors) Arts Umbrella’s moral as well as artistic aesthetic.

The Arts Umbrella approach to staff was to hire artist-instructors part-time, those with an active artistic practice and interest and experience in the growth and development of children. “A student of Arts Umbrella will be inspired by a teacher’s ideas and, at the same time, will be taught the needed skills to be able to bring his/her own ideas into articulate expression” (Arts Umbrella *Business Plan* np). Henriquez and Schwartz stipulated that the artist-instructors needed to have degrees in their fields to be able to teach. Henriquez remarked, “one cannot teach what has not been broken down into components or skills” (2013a). She believed an artist may have the talent to practice their art in a way that is valuable and intuitive for them, but unless they have the ability to impart a foundational skill set to students, they cannot teach.

Also according to the Business Plan, Arts Umbrella would offer students' visits and study groups to galleries and museums as well as dance and theatre performances. Cross disciplinary exposure would come from encouraging students to attend their peers' performances and exhibits as well as the work done by instructors in the external community. "Artistic expression plays a very important role in cultural heritage" and "artists are not only mirrors of themselves but also reflect their society, time and culture." (Arts Umbrella *Business Plan* np). Family and the public would also be invited to the end of term performances and exhibits to showcase the work of the students. The Business Plan "Statement of Purpose" also reiterated the idea that art "regains the freshness of the senses" or else "intellect replaces intuition." Development of both intellect and intuition are important; otherwise, as Helen Nicholson warns, the "sights and sounds" of humanity's progress can create passive consumers (Nicholson 2011, 200). Arts Umbrella's programming was projected to complement "the education of the child by emphasizing the artistic component of education" (Arts Umbrella *Business Plan* np).

The program structure outlined in the Business Plan included dance, creative writing, painting and drawing, ceramic sculpture, fabric arts, film and animation for preschool children (ages 3-6) and afterschool and Saturday classes for grades 1 through 12. These offerings would evolve even during the pilot program in the spring of 1981 when Arts Umbrella's first calendar of classes included Modern Dance and Painting and Drawing for Teens, Ceramic Sculpture, Drawing and Painting and Creative Drama for 9-12 year olds, Mixed Media Art for 6-9 year olds and Explorations in Movement and Music for 7-10 year olds. These first classes were held in the False Creek Co-op Communal Space and Enclaves on a weekly basis for eight weeks. At the end of the pilot program in June, Arts Umbrella held a public open house to exhibit the students' work, to which they invited members of local government and business. They were already starting to establish their fundraising skills that would serve them successfully as the program grew. Alan Hammond, director of the Granville Island Trust - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), was so impressed with the children's show and exhibit that he offered Henriquez and Schwartz a permanent building in the nascent neighbourhood of Granville Island but they would have to renovate it themselves. Alan Hammond also suggested to Henriquez that

they needed a philanthropist, someone in the community who knew how to raise money (Henriquez 2013a). Henriquez has said many times during our interviews that there was a strength in not knowing how difficult and how much work it would be to get this program up and running in its own space. But a few people from the community came on board to help and Henriquez and Schwartz approached local lawyer and philanthropist Arthur Fouks to help them get started with fundraising. Fouks had government and business contacts and helped them apply for a NEED grant that employed people who had been on government assistance. Fouks would remain involved with Arts Umbrella as an advisor and supporter until his death in 2003. They were able to hire a crew to renovate the former nail factory and military vehicle storage building (#27) starting in 1981. Besides wages, the grant also provided for supplies, and they were able to employ between eighteen and twenty men on the project. Richard Henriquez, Carol's architect husband, was working on a contract to renovate the Sinclair Centre in downtown Vancouver and offered the toilets and sinks to Arts Umbrella for one dollar. Carol borrowed a truck and she and the crew went downtown to collect the toilets and sinks, the same ones that are still in the building today. During the renovation, Arts Umbrella continued classes in the False Creek Community Centre and Marmalade Studio for the film and animation classes. When a general strike closed the community centre, a local church, the Chown Memorial, opened up its school for Saturday Arts Umbrella classes. Henriquez and Schwartz had not yet heard of startup grants but they did know that local charitable societies donated resources so they asked for and received donations of a free typewriter and weekend front desk receptionist to help with administrative work.

Henriquez and Schwartz never hesitated to phone experts when they needed expertise and found that most people were very ready to give "million dollar" advice when asked. Over the years many people have asked Henriquez how to set up a similar school in their own communities; she always answers that you have to research and tailor the programming to your community's needs. Arts Umbrella does not offer instrumental or dedicated vocal music lessons because there were several quality programs readily available at the time. Henriquez always thought that the more quality arts programs available for young people, the stronger all the

programming would become. She used the analogy of retail business or art galleries: one stand-alone business may or may not do well, but when people can visit many similar places in close quarters the crowds will come.

In addition to finding the money for the “bricks and mortar” of creating a permanent space and the fundraising of bursaries and grants to accommodate students in financial need, Arts Umbrella also planned for students that had developmental or physical barriers to attendance. At this time in Vancouver there was little or no accommodation for children and youth with special needs in community arts programming. One student in the early days was recommended to Arts Umbrella from a public school art teacher: the only issue was that he was deaf. Henriquez found out that a sign language interpreter could cost \$2,000 per term so she went calling. A service group called The Lion’s Club donated a signer for this very shy young man. Henriquez describes the sign interpreter as an exuberant and friendly woman who swept the young man under her wing. When Henriquez observed the painting and drawing class later in the term, she was moved by how the interpreter not only facilitated the young artist’s learning in the class but also his relationships with his peers. This young man’s social and emotional growth was just as evident as his artistic growth. He stayed with Arts Umbrella for three years until he graduated high school and then continued his artistic practice at Emily Carr University for Art and Design. It should be noted here that because Arts Umbrella did not qualify for significant operational grants from public funding bodies, the organization based its yearly programming on the total amount of donations raised in the spring of each year. This way Arts Umbrella has always been able to meet its budgets. The organization raised money through raffles, auctions (their Splash art auction becoming the major yearly fundraising event), corporate and charitable foundation donors. The Business Plan outlined the long-term goals of offering free in-reach (children brought to the Arts Umbrella facility) and free out-reach (in schools and community centres) classes on an ongoing basis.

The Business Plan also described a community theatre project in collaboration with Kaleidoscope Theatre in Victoria on the theme of social housing regarding the National Housing Council. Arts Umbrella students would collaborate with Kaleidoscope on a theatre piece and

perform it for schools with a study kit made available for educators. There was also provision for a public performance. This particular project did not happen but the desire to create theatre with and for young people with a socially conscious intent, along with the artistic training, was planned for from the beginning.

The Business Plan detailed the organizational structure of the Board of Directors to include community representatives and advisors of needed expertise. Henriquez and Schwartz were to share the position of executive director until 1987 when Schwartz moved to California. The artist-instructors were expected to detail a ten-week course outline and attend regular staff meetings. The meetings were to keep them in contact with the work of the other disciplines and keep them abreast of the workings of Arts Umbrella. There was minimal staff in the early days, a secretary-bookkeeper (volunteer at first) and a front desk receptionist for evenings and Saturdays. All other work was done by volunteers (usually parents and young emerging artists) and included everything from serving on the volunteer Board to maintaining the art supply cabinets. As a non-profit society, Arts Umbrella could canvas for members with a ten dollar membership fee and offer the benefits of regular newsletters, open house exhibitions and performances and an annual general meeting.

The Business Plan concludes with the exhortation, “By doing art, the child experiences the thrill of his own invention and by learning that his own unique ideas are valid, gains the strength and confidence to help build and contribute as an active member of society.” The language and structure of the business plan, from its Statement of Purpose and its Assessment of arts programming in Vancouver to its financial forecasting, were designed to engage the business community with connections to the arts in order to build support. This process of engagement through identification is analogous to the argument Bruce McConachie makes in *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*. McConachie argues that audiences engage cognitively with theatrical performance in order to “simulate the experiences of the actor/characters” (66). The Business Plan’s phrases, “thrill of his own invention” and “contribute as an active member of society,” may be understood as means to create empathy with business people through McConachie’s theory. Even if the business people approached for

donations had no arts experience, the words “invention” and “contribute” could signal a cognitive response as the potential funders simulated their own experiences of invention and contribution. The combination of understanding how to run an organization from a business standpoint and Henriquez’ performance in delivering this information was very successful for fundraising (Aiken 2013).

1.2 The 1980’s:

The challenges for Arts Umbrella in the early 1980’s were to raise enough money to cover program costs and develop a full visual and performing arts program by attracting qualified artist-instructors. The yearly chronicles in this section highlight language from the Program Guides and Newsletters to illustrate Ann Laura Stoler’s “thick descriptions” (Bennett 2010, 79). The “thick descriptions” of Arts Umbrella’s archive not only document the growth of the institution but also respond to Bennett’s assertion of pressures to maintain the archive as a structure of identity (2010, 67). Arts Umbrella’s identity as a financially successful organization committed to providing children and youth with high quality visual and performing arts was revealed in the class description, artist-instructor biographies and the increasing lists of donors.

In 1980-81, the Arts Umbrella newsletter style program guide offered thirty-one classes in two ten-week terms, winter and spring. Classes at the Granville Island community centre included Creative Drama for 6-8 and 9-12 year olds, described in the curriculum as “developing improvisational techniques, stimulating children to explore their own ideas and use their creative imaginations,” plus Theatre Games for Teenagers where classes “will be divided into teams. Fun Drama Exercises. Improve your improvisational skills. Challenging Risky Fun. Learn how to work with others. Free your imagination. No previous training necessary.” (*Program Guide* 1980-81). Video and television production workshops were offered. The classes in Creative Theatre and Creative Drama were held at William Osler School in Vancouver, encouraging students to “be totally involved with your own portable instrument – your body, your voice, your imagination – leading towards original group skits” (*Program Guide* 1980-81).

The Program Guide included artist biographies. Carol Henriquez was listed as the founding Director of Arts Umbrella (BA from the University of Manitoba, Fine Arts program Langara College, Diploma of Fine Arts in ceramic sculpture from Emily Carr School of Art) and Gloria Schwarz was also listed as the founding Director of Arts Umbrella (University of Chile Conservatory of Music, BA from Simon Fraser University in dance). The drama instructor was Marion Eisman, actress, who had studied at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Artist biographies in the program guide became a staple of the information until recently. They are now found on the Arts Umbrella website.

The 1981-82 and 1982-83 years did not offer creative drama or theatre classes as the school was still operating in three different sites, False Creek Community Centre (formerly called Granville Island Community Centre) for the visual arts and preschool classes, the Chown Memorial Church for the dance classes and Marmalade Studio for the film and animation classes. However, Arts Umbrella was starting to garner support from the local post-secondary educational community in theatre, art and dance along with renowned artists. The Friends of Arts Umbrella section of the 1981-82 brochure is exemplary of Henriquez and Schwartz' ability to enlist the expertise of their community. James A.S. MacDonald (Acting Head of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts in Education at the University of British Columbia), Grant Strate (Director of the Centre for Arts at Simon Fraser University), Tom Hudson (Dean of Instruction Emily Carr College of Art), Christopher Tyrell (Director of Presentation House), C. Lee (Regional Officer of Dance in Canada) along with renowned artists Toni Onley and Jack Shadbolt and then Mayor of Vancouver Mike Harcourt were some of the experts and influential community members willing to be involved with Arts Umbrella's vision. 1982 was also the first year of what would eventually become Arts Umbrella's major fundraiser, Splash. This art raffle included works by Onley and Shadbolt, Bill Reid and forty-one other Vancouver artists. By the end of the 1983, the Board had grown to twelve directors and the school had enrolled 711 students and seventeen part-time instructors in twenty-three classes per week, with twenty-two scholarships offered. Six exhibits were installed in Robson Square, Vancouver Community Arts

Council and the Park Royal Mall. The City of Vancouver gave Arts Umbrella a one thousand dollar grant (*Arts Umbrella Report to the Board* 1983).

In 1983-84, Arts Umbrella welcomed the first classes in its new home at 1286 Cartwright Street, Granville Island, in a three-term structure of fall (Oct–Dec), winter (Jan–Mar) and spring (Apr–Jun). Drama had returned for the preschool ages with Stories Puppets and Drama, a participatory class where the students made simple puppets to perform stories from children’s literature as well as those developed from their own devising along with the promise “to expand and encourage the child’s imagination, interpersonal skills and development of language.” For the three to five year olds there was a Dress-up Drama class, where the students learned stories to perform with costumes provided or their own from home. For the older students aged 10–18 years, Channel 10 television had collaborated with Arts Umbrella to create new classes called Hollywood Here I Come, where students would create and produce four half-hour specials for broadcast on the station with Video Drama, an acting workshop with the main purpose to perform material created by the students and the TV Scriptwriting class. There were also classes in TV Production and Set Design and Makeup. The class descriptions described for the first time participant responsibility: “students are expected to be committed and regular in attendance” (*Program Guide* 1983-84). This was part of Arts Umbrella’s mandate to make its students and parents aware that arts education held an important place in child development and education.

The instructors for 1983-84 included Richard Clark (TV production instructor, studied at Sanford Fleming Audio Visual program, films for CBC and Channel 10), Frances Eger (creative writing and TV script writing instructor, MA Oregon State University, creative writer and professional involved with the promotion of children’s works), Lily Harper (video drama instructor, BEd University of British Columbia, actress, teacher and consulting director), and Marjorie Morris (video drama instructor, playwright in residence at Concordia University, Director of Playwright’s Workshop in Montreal, actress, playwright and director). 1984 was also the first year of Summer Camp programming at Arts Umbrella, which included Video Drama under Hillary Jones (BA Child Psychology, University of London, UK, member of the National Youth Theatre, England, studied at Covent Gardens Dance Centre, studied theatre at the

University of Victoria, playwright, theatre director and Executive Director of the Society for Exploring Television with Children in Nanaimo, British Columbia). By the end of Summer Camp in 1984, Arts Umbrella had welcomed 1,923 students through its doors.

Max Wyman, writing an arts column for *The Province* newspaper, mentions an important initiative between the City of Vancouver under Mayor Mike Harcourt and the business community called the Vancouver Partnership, in which businesses such as American Express (which donated fifteen thousand dollars to Arts Umbrella) connected with the arts to enhance their public image. “More and better cultural activities in the city will provide a magnet to help attract the skills, management expertise and national and international business headquarters that will, in the next two decades turn Vancouver into a major world centre” (Wyman 56).

Inside the 1984-85 Program Guide, BC Tel (later Telus) is noted as the sponsor for the program guide that includes for the first time a listing for the Theatre Arts Program along with the previously established Visual Arts and Dance Program. The index includes the Scholarship Program (for gifted students) and Special Needs Children Program (in collaboration with Lois Wolff of the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute) for children with learning, physical and neurological disabilities. The guide has an expanded statement of purpose, detailing how “students of all ages and levels of experience are able to discover and reach their artistic potential” and “technical skills are developed, hand-in-hand with the joy of experiencing artistic expression.” There are photographs of children and youth in art and dance activities interspersed with the class descriptions, a contrast to a student’s line drawings in the typewritten, Gestetner-produced brochure of the previous years. 2,265 students attend ninety-seven classes during this year as Arts Umbrella expands with art work sent to Yokohama, Japan for exhibit, the establishment of a scholarship committee to solicit funding from businesses and the first fundraising staff person hired.

Dress-Up Drama continues under instructor Marion Rutter (BA Early Childhood Education Certificate, teacher of drama at Burnaby Arts Centre and performer with Century Park Players) and the Video Drama classes are still operating under Hillary Jones in collaboration with Channel 10. New for 1984-85 under the Theatre Arts program designation was a Theatre

class for “inspiring young actors” aged 6–8 and 9–11 that detailed different skills in each session, allowing for the serious student to enroll for the full year without repeating curriculum. Fall session concentrated on acting technique, winter term focused on musical comedy with vocal coaching and spring session included audition techniques, cold readings, scene study, rehearsal techniques and a tour of the Waterfront Theatre on Granville Island. The students worked towards a showcase performance at the end of the year. Nancy Elliott (graduate in Dramatic Arts York University, Herbert Berghof Studio, New York) was the instructor.

The other new program was Musical Theatre, a joint project with Carole Tarlington (BEd, MEd University of Victoria and Artistic Director of the Vancouver Youth Theatre - est. 1983). Tarlington was a well-known drama workshop leader, teacher and actress who developed many scripts with youth including *Kids’ Rights* and *Immigrant Children Speak*, the forerunner to *New Canadian Kid* by Dennis Foon. This program invited students between the ages of 9–18, interested in acting, singing and dancing, to come together in year-long classes to create a musical based on *Who Am I* written by Chip Fields, concept and music by Erna Maurer and Wise Owl Productions out of Los Angeles, California. Participants under Tarlington’s direction created original material out of workshops in improvisation to explore the experiences and questions that result from growing up and self-discovery. Classes for musical theatre were held twice a week for two hours each in the fall and winter sessions. Starting in April, classes ran for three hours each until performances. Tarlington auditioned fifty-five students and chose sixteen to meet the challenge of “improvisation, talk, theatre games, exercises, thinking and writing” (*Show Program 3*). The students’ exploration into the themes of self-identity, friendship, loneliness, laughter and personal growth and their commitment to the process and production of an original piece of theatre reaffirmed her belief that “young people are capable of creating a unique style of theatre which has its own point of view” (3). The show performed at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre with support from Chevron Canada, Bootlegger and the British Columbia Cultural Services Branch of the Ministry of the Provincial Secretary and Government Services (*Show Program 1*). Arts Umbrella began to receive small government support for

specific projects like this one, but the majority of funding still came from tuition, corporate sponsorships and individual donors.

In 1985-86, Gloria Schwartz moves with her family to California at the end of this program year and Carol Henriquez becomes the sole executive director. Arts Umbrella will welcome 3,173 students within seventy-nine classes this year. Summer Camp for 1985 expands its drama content to Dress-Up Drama, Theatre for 6-8 and 9-12 year olds and Musical Theatre for Teens 13 years and up. Richard Hopkinson (who was the musical director for *Who Am I*, Borough College of Education, London University) instructs the teen musical theatre and Marion Rutter continues with the younger drama classes. In September of 1985, Marilyn Stusiak writes in a "Teen Scene" column for the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper of auditions for a year-long program leading to an original musical theatre production, *Dragons Don't Get Drunk*. Students will learn creation and performance skills using folktales and myths from Vancouver's cultural groups in the fall term, develop a script and start rehearsals during the winter term and finalize technical aspects and expand rehearsal schedules for the spring term, culminating in the May 30 and 31st performances at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. *Dragons Don't Get Drunk* was directed by Claire Brown (no biography available) with twenty students. The play is about two young people who want to join the World Youth Commission but must discover a series of clues presented to them by the World Culture Bank in the form of stories and songs.

The index for 1985-86 also includes Dress-Up Drama and Stories and Puppets Drama under Marion Rutter and Lily Harper. For the older children and teens, besides the Musical Theatre program, there is Mime, Theatre, and a Playwriting workshop.

In 1986-87 over 3,000 students attend Arts Umbrella in seventy-nine classes, 250 of whom attend on scholarship. Robert Garfat of Dark Horse Productions Theatre (MFA University of British Columbia, BFA University of Victoria, Video Studies Emily Carr College of Art and Design) instructs the Teen Theatre troupe (14-18 years) with a "full scale original musical theatre production based on today's young people's thoughts and concerns about peace" (*Program Guide* 1986-87). He is assisted by Sherilyn Fritz (MA Music Composition University of Alberta, BA University of British Columbia, Public School certification) as musical director. The students

audition for the year-long program beginning with four hours a week instruction in musical and theatre skills, exploring themes through structured improvisation towards building scenes and a rough script. The winter session expands to five hours a week, refining and completing the script, characters, choreography and rehearsals. The Arts Umbrella Dance students join to perform the more sophisticated dance numbers. In the spring session, the last details of the production are finalized and rehearsals expand to eight hours weekly until the show. *Sound New World*, a pop-rock musical, was performed at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre on June 12 and 13, 1987. In the director's note of the show program, Garfat explains that the actors explored notions of peace on three levels, "Inner Peace, that which we find within ourselves; Social Peace, that which exists between us and our environment, family, friends, environment, etc; and World Peace, that which has global implications." The show toured fifteen schools in Vancouver, plus four in the Okanagan.

Fay Davis (Diploma Speech and Drama Cape Town University, South Africa) joined the Theatre Arts department to teach theatre and introduction to Shakespeare classes for older students and teens. Skills such as voice, movement and mime are learned through theatre games and stories that come from folktales, fairytales, myths and legends. There are opportunities for informal performances at the end of each session for the theatre students, and the Shakespeare students direct and stage their own production at the Arts Club Revue Theatre on Granville Island. The sets are produced in the 6-12 year old Painting and Drawing class. Another new performance class this year is with Txi Whizz of the Extraordinary Clown Band. Along with musician Haneefa Karim, Whizz instructs students aged 7-10 years and 11-15 years in clowning, juggling, mime and character development with an opportunity to perform with the Extraordinary Clown Band (*Program Guide* 1986-87).

Robert Garfat expanded the Teen Theatre program with a Teen Theatre Performance workshop by audition in the Summer Camp 1987 program. It was a four-week intensive with acting exercises in observation, sense perception, emotional recall, storytelling, vocal and mime technique along with script study and analysis. The intensive program devoted the last two weeks to rehearsing and staging *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters, for an invited

audience of family, friends, Arts Umbrella staff and donors. The Summer Camp program also included a whole page labeled “What is Arts Umbrella?” as this brochure was used as advertising and sent out to all the community centres and schools in Vancouver. From the Summer Camp brochure: “Arts Umbrella, a non profit society and registered charity, is unique as Vancouver’s only visual and performing art centre for children. Founded in 1979, its purpose is to offer young people, ages two to eighteen, the opportunity for exploration, development of skills and enjoyment within a stimulating art education environment.”

The brochure also mentions the “Teen Theatre Performance Group” for the first time along with the Arts Umbrella Youth Dance Company as the organization begins to establish a regular curriculum of theatre training. The language in this expository section continues to echo the original mandate from Henriquez and Schwartz, that Arts Umbrella is an “enthusiastic, encouraging environment for the arts” and that the young people enrolled “provide the seed of creative expression” that Arts Umbrella nurtures “to its fullest flowering”.

In 1987-88, Robert Garfat continues as the director of the Teen Theatre Troupe. There is now an audition page in the calendar reinforcing the emphasis on the year-long commitment these potential actors must make to the program. The description details the work in each session: for Fall (two classes times two hours a week) the students focus on acting techniques, scene work and script analysis with one group working on a one-act play based on New Play Centre’s “Young Playwright Search” and a second group developing monologues from Canadian plays. The term ends with a performance for family and friends at the Arts Club Revue Theatre on Granville Island. The second term (winter) has group one work on lead characters for an adaptation of Bertolt Brecht’s *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and the second group works on one-act plays for end of term performance. The third session (spring) expands to three classes for a total of seven hours of weekly rehearsal. Group one continued their character work on *Chalk Circle* while group two committed to the supporting roles. There were three performances at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in June 1988. At this point in the development of the theatre program, more classes are offered outside of the troupe experience. Teen Theatre for 12 -18 year olds is instructed by Fay Davis and Paula Landberg (Doyle) (BFA UBC Acting and co-founder

and Artistic Director of Theatre at Large). Davis also teaches the 9-12 Theatre class and Creative Drama for 6-8 years which continue to include end of session performances involving original work by students in improvisation and mime. Irene Watts (University of Saskatchewan, Assistant Director at Stratford, Director for Neptune Theatre School in Halifax) takes on a new class, Junior Performance/Story Theatre for 10-12 years that explores the aspects of theatre training and ends the session with a Story Theatre presentation at the Arts Club Revue Theatre. Extra rehearsals and homework are expected. Landberg offers a class in Physical-Mime theatre in which “non-verbal” theatre skills such as “stage-fighting, neutral and character masks and mime-illusion will emphasize body awareness and physical discipline on stage.” There is no dedicated musical theatre this year but Sherilyn Fritz instructs a year-long program called Sing Out!, which focuses on vocal work and dance choreography and works towards a year end performance including a tour and video. Dress-up Drama continues with Marion Rutter.

The May 1988 Arts Umbrella newsletter details expanding media interest in Arts Umbrella performances from BCTV (later Global television) on the dance/theatre production on racism that toured fourteen schools that spring, CKVU television filmed an animation class for a story on Science World (later Telus World of Science), CJOR radio did a fifteen minute interview on upcoming events and *Playboard Magazine* highlighted Arts Umbrella in its summer 1988 issue editorial. The newsletter also states the Arts Umbrella philosophy of “a strong belief in the sharing and pooling of resources” with regard to the Partners in Education program with the Vancouver School Board to bring Arts Umbrella’s specialized art education classes into schools. As well, Carol Henriquez receives the YWCA’s Women of Distinction award for Arts and Culture this month.

In 1988-98, Arts Umbrella reaches its ten-year anniversary by providing 115 classes a week for over 9,400 students. It also provides thirty-five performances of theatre and dance. Alcan funds the “Van Go” outreach workshops with a fifteen passenger van to bring art classes, on a regular basis, to underserved schools, Children’s Hospital and Sunnyhill rehabilitation school for children who cannot attend classes at the Granville Island facility due to financial or physical reasons. Canada Safeway also funds an in-reach, free schools program called “Save Our

Planet” with an environmental focus. A page entitled “Philosophy” in the Program Guide separates theatre from visual arts and dance to highlight the theatre program’s expanded scope in order to reflect “the needs and interests shown by our young people – both in their desire to express themselves and as a vehicle for career orientation.” It describes itself as a “multi-level, age-appropriate approach” where children and youth can access theatre classes. “Performance-minded students can grow from junior performance to senior performance in the Teen Theatre Troupe” as Arts Umbrella recognizes that it is now attracting a segment of students that are looking for more than an extra-curricular, fun place to do some drama. There is also an affiliation with Haynes Talent Management to provide expanded professional experiences for the students.

The Teen Theatre Troupe is now directed by Sam Rathie (BA Theatre SFU, BA Professional Development SFU, Director for Spirit Song Theatre Company, actor, writer and teacher). Dorothy Wolf (MA SFU Fine and Performing Arts, founding member Novus Theatre company, actress, teacher, playwright, her one woman show “Frankenstein” opened the first Vancouver Fringe Festival - est. 1983) has also joined the faculty as a theatre instructor along with Fay Davis and Irene Watts. New for this year is Stage and Set Design for Teens taught by Alison Green (BA Fine Arts UBC, Diploma Design Studies Institute des Arts Appliqués, Montreal, Resident set designer for the Arts Club). The senior Teen Theatre Troupe continued enrolment through a formal audition process where the students come prepared to perform a “short, expressive monologue 1-3 minutes in length” and a “short poem, nursery rhyme or song or dance with gestures”. The Junior Performance troupe only engaged in an interview process but reminded the potential student in the class description of the Program Guide that this course is a full year commitment and will require study in a variety of theatrical styles with in-house and community performances.

The Teen Theatre Troupe promised to “create an original, full-scale theatrical production, reflecting the interests and concerns of teens. From conception to performance, this will be a year of adventure in self-discovery and developing potential.”

Inuk and the Sun, a hero quest story by Henry Beissel, is adapted for the Teen Theatre Troupe and performed at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The Junior Performance class

takes its original show, “Bottom’s Dreams,” to the Arts Club Revue Theatre (*Report to the Board* 1988-89).

In 1989-90, renovations are completed and the new 5,000 square foot addition opens in May 1990. Over 11,000 students attend 130 classes per week this year and Stage Coach, the drama partner to Van Go, begins bringing free out-reach drama programming to elementary schools in Vancouver. In this year’s program guide, the theatre programming comes under the heading Performing Arts and the classes are described in age breakdowns of Teen, 9-12 years, Grade 1 to 8 years and Preschool (3-5 years). Sam Rathie returns for the Teen Theatre Troupe with the note that beyond the twice-weekly classes, for a total of five hours a week, the third session (spring) will entail extended rehearsals as needed for an original performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The calendar continues to outline the theatre skill curriculum encountered for each session. This year’s creation is called *Electra: The Way the Greeks Would Have Done It!* (Newsletter May 1990).

Ron Chartier directed the renamed Junior Performance Collective (National Theatre School of Canada graduate, studied at Studio 58 and UBC, taught inner city schools theatre workshops and drama program for the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts in London, England and directed for the Vancouver Fringe Festival). The Junior Performance Collective (11-14 years) had a pre-requisite of previous experience and audition for enrolment. The class description outlined twice-weekly classes for a total of four hours a week with extended rehearsal time in the last session before a performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. Professionalism and discipline was emphasized with the goal of the students collectively constructing a play to be performed at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. This year’s collective show was based on *Little Victories* by Susanne Lebeau (Chalmers Play Award 1985).

A range of theatre classes for the 12-18 year olds continued under Fay Davis and Dorothy Wolf, Alison Green’s Stage Set and Design is now “no cost” for the first year enrolled and How to Audition with Mikal Dughi (BFA, BA Goddard College) is added. Davis and Chartier also teach Creative Drama for the 9-12 and Shelora Fitzgerald (MEd Counseling Psychology UBC, National Theatre School of Canada) instructs Dress-Up Drama.

As Arts Umbrella completed its first decade, the “solid foundation” that Henriquez and Schwartz created with their Business Plan in 1979 had fulfilled its purpose (Henriquez 2013a). Its visual and performing arts centre on Granville Island maintained quality programming and attracted talented artist-instructors. Thousands of students from Metro Vancouver enrolled in Arts Umbrella classes and attended the free workshops and performances at elementary and secondary schools in the area. The Theatre program had established classes for the committed teen student and a variety of classes oriented to the beginner in theatre.

1.3 The 1990’s:

In 1990-91, Stage Coach is firmly ensconced as the theatre component to “Arts Umbrella on wheels,” the free outreach classes funded by Alcan. The program details drama work in costumes, masks, improvisation, mime and theatre games to address “issues of race relations in Vancouver’s east end, inner city and special needs schools” (*Program Guide* 1990-91). Sarah Rodgers (BFA UBC, she would later return to UBC to complete her MFA Directing in 2003, actor and teacher) joins Arts Umbrella for Stage Coach, Creative Drama and the 9-12 year old Theatre classes with Fay Davis. Rodgers and David Vaisbord (Diploma Film and Video Emily Carr College, filmmaker) also introduce Moviemaking (13-18 years) this year, a class where all the elements of the creative process, from camera techniques to script to acting, are learned as the students are both crew and performers and a finished movie the goal of the year-long course. Advanced Moviemaking offers a deeper skill set with instruction in techniques such as pan tilts, montages, sound and lighting, online storyboarding, location shooting and composition training. The acting methods replicate the skills learned in the theatre troupes with added features of film theory, conceptualization and discussions of film genres in contemporary media. Alison Green continues the free scholarship program in Stage Set and Design class (portfolio required) with instruction in 3D forms, construction and painting of basic flats and backdrop projections and adds Lighting and Makeup to the course.

Ron Chartier’s Junior Performance class performs a rap version of *Animal Farm* adapted by Peter Hall, which ends with a June performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The

Teen Theatre Troupe is comprised of sixteen scholarship students from Templeton Secondary School in Vancouver and they perform a collective work called *Brightly Shone the Moon* based on the students' life experiences and concerns. It is directed by Elaine Avila (playwright and teacher, *Jane Austen Action Figure and other Plays*, NoPassport Press, 2012, former endowed Chair and Head of the MFA program in Dramatic Writing at the University of New Mexico, Playwrights Centre Associate, numerous Canada Council awards) and presented at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre (*Report to the Board* 1991). Both the Teen Theatre troupe and the Junior collective tour six schools in the spring sponsored by the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation. Avila arranges with Arts Umbrella to have writer Gordon McLellan come out from Toronto to work with the students to create a cohesive performance piece. She remembers "being moved by the passion and commitment" of the Templeton students, especially some of the First Nations young people in the troupe. Some of the young women ask Avila to help them create theatre pieces based on the discrimination First Nations youth experience in public school for a conference at UBC. She also remembers a "really terrific theatre teacher at Templeton" during this collaboration by the name of Jim Crescenzo. Crescenzo was interested in providing material that would interest his drama students and like Avila, did "plays written by kids for kids" (Zacharias np). Avila went on to design a Shakespeare Intensive class for Arts Umbrella teens that summer of 1992. She recalls how "stunning it was to work with fourteen year old girls" for two weeks, staging performances all over Granville Island during that July (Avila 2013).

On the front cover of the 1991-92 Program Guide, Arts Umbrella's developing mandate into its serious training in the arts is presented with the following text:

"Pre-Professional Programmes for Teens"

"Performance Opportunities"

"Outreach"

And the now always present line: "Canada's Visual and Performing Arts Institute for Young People ages 2-18"

The shift into the pre-professional training designation for theatre is outlined in the September 1991 newsletter under "Peer Outreach":

“The Arts Umbrella Theatre Company through its Junior Performance and Senior Troupe offers an important life opportunity. Audience and performers discover the potential in themselves and the world around them. It is pioneering, as the only teen-aged, pre-professional company functioning in this important outreach capacity, in our province.”

The article’s text describes Arts Umbrella’s theatre program with the same regard that is held for the dance company and the gifted teen visual artists. It emphasizes that this is a company for the serious student considering a career in the performing arts, along with significant focus on excellence, technical skills, personal development and touring to complement this educational opportunity. Young audiences will benefit from the “positive peer modeling” experience of watching young actors perform. I am reminded here of McConachie’s “social cognition” concept defining the imaginative engagement of theatre spectators. The promise of an Arts Umbrella theatre performance is that the young audience will engage with the same creative cognitive process as the young actors, as the spectators “project themselves into the emotional life of an actor/character on stage” (McConachie 66).

The newsletter also details the programming offered through the Stage Coach classes. Irene Watts and Veda Hille (freelance musician and performer, Emily Carr College) bring myth and legend to schools based on Pauline Johnson’s *Legends of Vancouver* and Paul Yee’s *Tales from Gold Mountain*. These stories were offered to reflect ethnic diversity as populations from China, India and Latin America were represented in Vancouver schools. An elementary English-as-a-Second-Language teacher who witnessed a workshop at Nightingale Elementary was very “impressed by the enthusiasm and expertise exhibited by the presenters” and the “excitement generated in the story-telling and acting sessions was palpable” (*Newsletter* September 1991).

Pauline Landberg Doyle returns to Arts Umbrella to direct the Teen Theatre Troupe and the class description continues to list the skills training but also adds the definition of what the collective process will entail: “Actors will weave together scenes from Shakespeare, contemporary poetry, original material, songs and anecdotes to form a cross-cultural, time-travelling piece.” (*Program Guide* 1991-92).

The fall session had the Teen Theatre students perform material from *Spoon River Anthology* for a fundraiser at the Holt Renfrew department store in November 1991. The end of year production in June 1992 is performed in-house at Arts Umbrella, toured to schools and has a public performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The show is called *From Here to Where* and presents the actors in mask. Paul Moniz de Sá, future artistic director of the Theatre program, was a student in this year's troupe. Ron Chartier directs the Junior Performance ensemble in an improvisational piece based on peer pressure, disease and the transition from elementary to high school at a public performance at Arts Umbrella in December 1991 and then in *How to Eat Like a Child and Other Lessons in Not Being a Grown Up* by Delia Ephron for the end of year school tour and performance (*Report to the Board* 1992).

The Program Guide describes a new class, Theatre Bridge taught by Fay Davis, offered to provide a “professional approach to theatre techniques” for the interested actor without the intensity of being in the troupe. While year-long enrolment is not required, it will build on skills from fall to spring sessions. David Vaisbord and Sarah Rodgers continue with Moviemaking and Acting for the Camera while Davis, Landberg and Rodgers continue to teach the weekly Theatre and Creative Drama classes for teens and 6-12 year olds. Deb Pickman (UBC Theatre BA, actress, director and teacher) joins the staff to teach Dress-up Drama and Fairytale Theatre for 3-5 years. Pickman also joins the instructors for Stage Coach and substitutes for Davis and Chartier. She describes the atmosphere at Arts Umbrella as very supportive for the artist-instructors, and notes the respect for the children and youth as emerging artists. Pickman also elaborates on the responsive atmosphere with the children generated by the magic circle and theatre games. The children would be so creative she would write down the stories they created in class and then hand each child a copy at the end of session to take home and perform with their families. She would pick up costumes from Value Village and bring in her own creations for the children to wear as they acted out their characters. Pickman describes her time as an Arts Umbrella drama instructor as special, as she was always amazed by young children's ability to interpret their world and improvise stories (Pickman 2013).

13,000 students attend through in-school and in-house sponsored workshops such as Van Go, Stage Coach and the Canada Safeway Limited Save Our Planet classes and almost 4,500 students come to the Granville Island location during 148 classes a week. 250 children and youth attend on scholarships based on financial need. Arts Umbrella continues to expand its capacity to create access for children and youth that may have financial barriers with new fundraising events such as the Fashion Show and the Sandcastle competition (*Program Guide* 1991-92).

In 1992-93, Teck Corporation sponsored the Teen Theatre Troupe and the Wesik Family sponsored the Junior Performance Collective (*Program Guide* 1992-93). Sarah Rodgers takes over the Teen Theatre Troupe for the year-end performance of *The Dining Room* by A. R. Gurney and Ron Chartier continues as the Junior Performance instructor. In the director's notes for *The Dining Room*, Rodgers states how she was drawn to this play for its "poignant, humorous look at family life in North America" and not only for its tenderness, but also for its "beautiful comedy." The relationships between the adults and young people in the play resonated with her players and Rodgers suggested to the audience "that you might find yourself sitting around that dining room table!" (*Show Program* 1993). Although the past few years had had significant talent in the directors for the Teen Theatre troupe with Garfat, Rathie, Avila and Landberg Doyle taking on those roles and bringing their own artistic influences and expectations for the program, the next decade and a half under Sarah Rodgers would see the stable development of the Theatre program divided by age into Senior (15-18 years) and Junior (11-14 years) Troupes and the establishment of progressive training that the young actors could follow as they matured.

Although Stage Set and Design was unavailable in this year, Theatre Bridge, Moviemaking and Acting for the camera continued under the Arts Umbrella Theatre Company section for the 12-18 years. Creative Drama for 6-12 years continues with Fay Davis and Sarah Rodgers. Rodgers and Mercedes Baines (SFU Theatre, actress and director) teach a theatre class for 8-10 years and Dress-up Drama and Fairytale Theatre continues with Deb Pickman. The Stage Coach multicultural outreach theatre workshops spend a week at a time in schools in Vancouver, New Westminster, Burnaby and North Vancouver. Les Holroyd, then director of Corporate Information for Alcan British Columbia, gave this testimonial for why Alcan

sponsored Arts Umbrella's outreach programming: "Arts Umbrella's Outreach Programming has proven uniquely innovative. I believe its success in developing the arts as a means to promote cultural awareness amongst school children, has provided a valuable social resource for our community" (*Newsletter* February 1992).

Also in the same newsletter was a testimonial to Arts Umbrella's fiscal competence from Michael Goldberg, Dean of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of British Columbia: "A thirteen year history of never having incurred an operating deficit, admirably demonstrates Arts Umbrella's financial planning ability."

As the non-profit fundraising world of arts organizations became increasingly competitive, Henriquez and Schwartz's original financial plan proved to be an integral part of their ability to keep scheduled programs running with talented artist-instructors. At one point in the 1990's, Henriquez remarked that the only Vancouver organization that employed more artists than Arts Umbrella was the CBC (Henriquez 2013a). The financial stability was significant but so was the organization's atmosphere of support for its artist-instructors. The quarterly newsletters regularly announced to the wider community of family and friends of students their artist-instructors' significant professional work. Instructor updates would advertise recent and upcoming art exhibits and performances, as Arts Umbrella took great pride in their "wonderful instructors being both practicing artists and educators" (*Newsletter* September 1992).

Chapter 2: The Development of a Pre-Professional Theatre Program

2.1 Sarah Rodgers' Aesthetic:

During 1993-94, Arts Umbrella delivers 168 classes weekly to over 23,000 students, the majority of whom accessed arts programming through the free outreach, workshops and scholarship opportunities. Alcan continues to sponsor the very successful Stage Coach and Van Go programs to eastside, inner city and special needs schools in Vancouver (programming they continue to sponsor to this day as Rio Tinto Alcan). The March 1994 newsletter reprints a handwritten letter to Rodgers from a Stage Coach student:

“Dear Sarah,

I think Arts Umbrella is fantastic. I like the story you told us and the games you played with us. The best part was when we got to act out the story. I hope Alcan still funding your program. Your Friend.” (reprinted as written).

This response reflects the feedback Arts Umbrella artist-instructors like Rodgers and later Moniz de Sá would receive on a consistent basis. That theatre has the potential to not only affect the students but to create a space where the young student can respond with their own perspective of the experience. In the “best part,” the student was no longer a passive audience member but one with something to give to the experience.

Roger Haskett is the new director of the Junior Performance Collective. This year encompasses tenses expanded performance opportunities for the theatre program beyond the two groups. Arts Umbrella had developed a new program called “Living Art” to make art history “come alive” for young people (*Show Program* 1994). “Living Art” was marketed with the same professional Show Program used for the Troupe performances. The program contained artist biographies, a show synopsis and information for schools wanting to book the shows, creating the “complex text” that creates an intense act of reading to produce an engagement with theatre (Balme 53). This year the second phase of the program brought an original work to schools in Metro Vancouver. John Lazarus (playwright and Studio 58 instructor) wrote *Vincent's Vision*, directed by Robert Metcalfe (associate director for Green Thumb), and performed by Rodgers as

Vincent Van Gogh. Lazarus created a story about Vincent Van Gogh on his last day alive, after the painter shot himself in the head. The play opens with Vincent lying in bed and having a vision. He is astonished with a visit from children “living in faraway Canada over a hundred years in the future” (*Show Program* 1994). With the help of projected images of Van Gogh’s and his contemporaries’ work, plus “gossipy glimpses” of his life and times, he tells his story and tries to determine if he was a great artist with the participatory help of the children in the audience. Pamela Tarlow-Calder developed research and a study guide for the show to aid elementary teachers (BA Art Education Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, teacher). As with the theatre troupe performances, the performance would be approximately one hour with thirty minutes for set up and twenty minutes for strike down. There were ten performances from January to February 1994.

Rodgers directed the Teen Theatre Troupe in an adaptation of Charles Chilton’s *Oh What a Lovely War* for the spring school tour. Rodgers would use this play again for her Directing MFA thesis project at the University of British Columbia and for the troupe; she adapted it to a one hour performance for the school tours and end of year performances at the Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver. For the musical score, she collaborated with Karin Konoval (actress, musician and choreographer located in Vancouver with numerous awards including a Jessie Richardson for Touchstone Theatre’s *When We Were Singing*) for several years with Arts Umbrella as well as in Rodgers’ professional work. Konoval would later instruct the Spring Camp Musical Theatre class as well as become the Senior Troupe Choreography and Musical Coach.

Rodgers brought the same expectations for theatre creation to the teens in Troupe that she had in her professional life and would later expect from her university students once she began to teach in the Theatre department at the University of British Columbia in 1997. There were bayonets, musical instruments and Konoval’s musical score for the troupe performance. This collaboration with Konoval would inform Rodgers’ subsequent work as she discovered the “beauty of live music onstage” (Rodgers 2013). The teen actors were expected to learn the songs, play instruments such as bells, chimes, shakers, maracas and glockenspiels, and handle

the props in choreographed ensemble dances as well as learn their lines. For this production of *Oh What a Lovely War* (Arts Umbrella would produce this play again), Rodgers enlisted the help of former troupe player Paul Moniz de Sá. Moniz de Sá was invited to return as a player, assistant director and props coordinator after being a student for the past two years. This would be his last Arts Umbrella experience for a while as he was off to Langara College's Studio 58 Theatre program in January 1995 and a career as an actor and sound designer. He would occasionally come back during the late 1990's as a consultant for Rodgers during select productions and eventually as the Junior Troupe director in 2002.

In the 1995 Show Program for *Oh What a Lovely War*, Rodgers describes it as “an old favourite of hers,” “a dynamic play with music, dancing, singing and comedy sketches” that would challenge her actors to use the “intense training” in “movement, mask, voice, status and objective, genres and style work, storytelling techniques, monologues, scene work and character analysis”. These descriptions from the program are designed to impress and captivate. Rodgers' director's note is personal, letting her potential audience know that they will love this show as much as she does and her troupe description is professional in extolling the high caliber of training, thus the expectation of a highly professional performance out of all “this hard work and dedication.” Rodgers expressed her pride and admiration for her students several times during our interview and that factor is an important consideration in evaluating how her relationships with her young artists contributed to each play's success. The actors worked hard within a demanding curriculum because they were directed and surrounded with talented professionals who not only worked hard but also were supportive and attentive to these young performers. As a result of this special combination, the schools eagerly looked forward to each year's production because the shows were consistently as good as advertised. For some of the student audience this was as close as they would get to a professional theatrical show and Rodgers instilled that responsibility in her actors for delivering that experience (Rodgers 2013).

Rodgers was at the height of her professional acting career, a career she had been able to integrate with working as a theatre instructor at Arts Umbrella. She expected the same

professional standards at Arts Umbrella that she encountered in both the live theatre industry in Canada and at university.

Since beginning in 1989, she had maintained a stable presence in the Moviemaking and Acting for the Camera classes with Vaisbord, taught Stage Coach with Fay Davis, and as a result, the directing and teaching of these young students informed her live directorial practice and growth as an emerging theatre artist. Her good friend Johnna Wright (Canadian actor, director, producer and dramaturg) encouraged her to return to the University of British Columbia for her Directing MFA based on her Arts Umbrella experiences. Rodgers asserts that her “thrifty and pragmatic style” of theatre creation at Arts Umbrella became her “aesthetic” when she worked in the professional industry (Rodgers 2013). Although Arts Umbrella would eventually be able to fund lighting and set designers, which increased the professional artistic level of the performances and ensured its reputation as a professional organization, she started out with costumes from home and odds and ends to create stage sets, did the lighting herself and then honed her salesmanship skills. Rodgers not only became adept at getting supplies to create sets and costumes (all resources would be tapped including parents, friends, donors with connections, etc.) and to market the school tour shows. Arts Umbrella would mail out show programs to the high schools in either December or January for an April/May tour and then Rodgers would start calling the drama teachers and administrators of the schools personally if the organization did not get enough bookings. This allowed Rodgers to forge a relationship with most of the Vancouver high schools and in time she would call the drama teachers directly to pitch the shows for the next year. During Rodgers’ time the shows cost a school \$250 and her reputation became so entrenched that some schools were known to book the shows before they knew which play was being performed.

Rodgers measured success by how the quality of her players’ work created an increased ease of bookings (ten schools per tour, two on one day, five weeks in a row) and how well the end of year performances sold. The acting was not the only skill her troupe had to learn, though. Just as Rodgers wore many hats in her position of director, she taught her students the basics of set design, lighting and sound for the shows, plus how to plan the packing for the van so that

everything fit easily. Her troupers would arrive at Arts Umbrella at 7am on show tour day to pack the van and board the bus or carpool for the tours. Then they were off to one school in the morning and one in the afternoon, two performances, two set ups and two strikes, then back to Arts Umbrella to unpack the van, usually between 4 and 5pm. Her students would do this once a week for five weeks, then set up at a local theatre at the end of May or early June to do public performances. That was a significant amount of school missed, but, according to all alumni and parents who responded to the questionnaires, schoolwork did not seem to suffer. Although some respondents admitted to finding it hard to balance school studies and tour, troupe students continued to be successful academically (Alumni and Parent Questionnaires). Rodgers maintains that the “pre-professional” designation for the theatre troupes was a given, considering the level of professionals the actors were learning from in this program. Her students began to have access to all aspects of theatre creation as Arts Umbrella was able to pay set and lighting designers, producers, musicians, and other theatre artists to collaborate with the students and give them the opportunity to perform in a real theatre. Rodgers described a remarkable shift in the students’ attitude when they would go from performing in the Arts Umbrella studio or the auditorium of a school to a real theatre. They would enter the darkened space of the Firehall Arts Centre in east Vancouver, the Waterfront Theatre on Granville Island or the Frederic Wood Theatre at the University of British Columbia and would start to whisper and walk carefully in the new space. This was unlike the chatty, relaxed behaviour in the schools when she would have to remind them to keep track of their costumes and props and not wander off. The theatres were places for professionals and the troupers definitely felt the pressure to behave as such (Rodgers 2013).

In 1994-95, Gray Line of Vancouver sponsored free transport for the Theatre Company and the Dance Company students to bring them and their shows to Metro Vancouver schools and other performance venues. Henriquez’ opening remarks inside the first page of the Program Guide of that year details Arts Umbrella’s commitment to providing “progressive, developmental, interdisciplinary arts education through high quality instruction, facilities, materials and performance and exhibition opportunities” along with their sponsor partners, Alcan, Canada Safeway Limited and the Thomas Foundation. She reveals that Arts Umbrella has

established The Children's Arts Umbrella Foundation to provide income in perpetuity for the organization. This is another charitable funding model that allows donors more specialized giving in particular financial and estate planning options and ensures the long-term future of the institution (*Program Guide* 1994-95). In sixteen years Henriquez and Schwartz' dream grew out of their basements and into a complex institute of art education and art creation.

The Arts Umbrella Theatre Company has now grown to accommodate those students who either cannot do the Troupes or did not get in past the audition. Class size is restricted to approximately twelve students in each of the Senior and Junior troupes although those numbers fluctuate based on the shows planned for the year, the mix of boys and girls that audition, and the number of students returning from the previous year. Two new classes, Senior Acting Workshop and Junior Acting Workshop, are designed to be "supportive" and "non-competitive" for everyone who wants to act, an introductory class that gives the students the same progressive training over the year's two sessions with an in-house show at the end of each session (*Program Guide* 1994-95). Roger Haskett teaches the Senior Acting Workshop along with his Junior Troupe. Susan Snowdon (actress, theatre teacher, BFA University of Calgary, trained with David Smuckler, Neil Freeman and Carol Rosenfeld) instructs the Junior Acting Workshop and joins the Stage Coach team of Davis and Rodgers. Tracy Olson (Studio 58) has joined to teach Creative Drama for 6-8 years, Rodgers instructs Theatre classes for 8-12 years, Haskett and Snowdon and the Moviemaking classes continue with Vaisbord and Bob MacNevin (filmmaker). There is a steady increase this year in the teaching staff and the professional theatre artists who take on specialized classes such as Stagecraft.

The Junior Troupe devised an original show this year called *Growing Up...Everyone Has To!*, funded by James A. Burton's "Kids with a Conscience" Project, American Express Foundation, Vancouver Foundation and the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation. The eleven young actors spent the first session in theatre training (every year there would be students new to the training, but the aesthetic of constant learning also informed the practice of returning students, so new and experienced students trained together) and introductory scene and monologue work. The second session would involve creating the play. Reed Hortie (playwright,

writer-performer, high-school teacher) was the playwright for the Junior Troupe show (Program Guide 1994-95).

The Senior troupe produced a collaborative show as well this year called *Broadcast Days* for which Rodgers and her young players compiled Canadian Broadcast Corporation material from radio shows such as *The County Fair*, *The Fashion Show*, *The Happy Gang*, *Wayne & Shuster*, *Kate Aiken – Good Luck Margarine*, *Lux Commercial*, *The Children’s Hour: Princess Elizabeth*, *King Edward VIII and Fireside Fun* (Show Program 1995). A new course for Arts Umbrella was Stagecraft for 15 – 18 years that began in January 1995, with instructor Gerald Vanderwoude (director, administrator, University of British Columbia Theatre). Vanderwoude and his stagecraft students constructed the sets for both shows. These shows were held May 26 through 28 at the Firehall Arts Centre (*Newsletter* November 1994).

2.2 More Music:

In 1995-96, the “exciting, challenging pre-professional programme” of theatre expands again to include visiting guest voice and movement teachers for the troupes as well as a new choir ensemble class that is required of all the Senior Troupe members (Program Guide). Avi Gross (MFA UBC Music, BEd. Classical and jazz pianist, composer and playwright) taught the new musical classes, Choral Ensemble for 8–18 years, Singing for Musical Theatre (by audition) and Musical Theatre as a non-audition year long program for those wishing to perform in the end of year production. Students are recommended to enroll in the Choral Ensemble, Singing for Musical Theatre and there is also an option to enroll in a Theatre Dance class with the Dance Company. Gross taught the Musical Theatre class with Reed Hortie.

The shows at the Firehall Arts Centre in May of 1996 were *Alice in Wonderland*, an adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s novel, for the Junior Troupe, and *Ten Lost Years*, an adaptation of Barry Broadfoot’s book by Jack Winter and Cedric Smith about the reality of Canadian life during the Great Depression (*Newsletter* May 1996). Scenes with names of movies from the 1930’s such as *Possessed* and *It Happened One Night* were played against songs from the ensemble such as *Brother*, *Can You Spare a Dime*, *Paper Moon* and *Happy Days are Here*

Again. Five of the Senior actors played guitar, cello, flute and guitars as part of the performance. Rodgers states that this “play was particularly difficult and challenging” given the adult themes of the movies and songs, but that she was “very proud of all the actors’ dedication and hard work” (*Show Program* 1996).

In 1996-97, the “Kids with Conscience Project” returns with *Girls!: A Fifty Minute One Act Play*. This was a special theatre project written and directed by Lynna Goldhar-Smith (actress, director, playwright, musician and founding director of the Jewish Young People’s Theatre, Studio 58 and California Institute of the Arts) to engage young women from diverse backgrounds in the Vancouver area. Smith auditioned young women performers and musicians aged 13–18 years to enroll in an eighteen week, twice-weekly session ending with performances at the Norman Rothstein Theatre in March of 1997. Smith conducted extensive interviews with young women and identified issues that created challenges for “growing up female in today’s youth culture” (*Program Guide*). She composed the songs with musical arrangements by Laurie Lesk (composer, lyricist, performer and playwright) to create a performance that reflected how the young women identified themselves and their perceptions of what it meant to be female. Character roles from the Show Program illustrate the identities that may still resonate with today’s young women, names such as Miss Smart, Tough Girl, Pop Girl, Barbie Doll, Beauty Expert, Dream Girl and Queen Malicious. This was definitely theatre with a social purpose beyond an artistic aesthetic but Arts Umbrella produced a theatrical work with the same high caliber of artistic production values and success as its theatre troupes. The production was originally going to tour Metro Vancouver schools, but the Norman Rothstein opened its doors for three matinee performances for schools and two public evening shows that were all sold out. Arts Umbrella thanks the show’s sponsors, A&E Network, Vancouver Foundation, Rogers Cablesystems, Gray Line of Vancouver, James Burton and the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation for making “this wonderful production available to students from inner city schools from whom theatre is a rare experience” (*Newsletter* May 1997).

This was community theatre as defined by Prendergast and Saxton in their book *Applied Theatre*, theatre by, with and for young people with the addition of an integral public audience

made up of the families and friends of the actors along with staff and sponsors from Arts Umbrella. It was also a significant production that highlighted Arts Umbrella's theatre program as one that not only served as a training ground for future theatre professionals, but created work by young people that reflected their responsibility to, and included members of, their cultural community. It was a powerful thing for these students to be regarded as emerging cultural artists and eventual peers to the professionals they were working with. Kathleen Gallagher writes of bringing playwright and actor Ann-Marie MacDonald into her high school drama class to work with the students on creating their own plays and how the work of that collaboration, where the professionals and the students "were riveted by each others' tales," informed a long rewarding relationship with MacDonald to illustrate the significance of professional theatrical talent in a young person's education (Gallagher 2003, 6). In Gallagher's conversation with MacDonald, MacDonald reveals her reasons for working with young people in theatre:

Still, it's very important for people to learn how to create narrative because we're surrounded by it. It's called history...the way our society is organized...(and) it must be very, very empowering for students to create their own narratives and thereby see through a different pair of eyes... (Gallagher 2003, 267).

Smith also directed the Junior Troupe this year, writing and directing the students in *The World According to B.J. Silverman*, the story of a young artist whose cartoons come to life, "illuminating a wide range of inter-personal issues that are meaningful both to kids and adults" (*Show Program* 1997). It was a "rock musical" production with singing and dancing composed and choreographed by Smith as well.

For the Senior Troupe, Rodgers directed *The Museum* by Tina Howe, "a fun, urbane comedy filled to the brim with eccentric, hilarious characters who all come together in a ...museum!" (*Show program* 1997). Rather than a school tour, this year the Senior Troupe performed only five shows at the Firehall Arts Centre with a ticket price of three dollars each. They would sell booklets of ten to the schools for the three school matinees, and the two public evening performances were priced at ten dollars for adults and six dollars for students.

In the summer of 1997, a new theatre out-reach program was funded through a grant from Partners in Organizational Development in Vancouver (*Newsletter* November 1997). Four theatre workshops were held at the Trout Lake Community Centre for teens from various ethnic backgrounds in Vancouver's east side in order to provide accessibility to theatre study and performance. Youth workers from three different communities helped to identify the barriers to theatre for this group of youth and develop the program, which allowed over thirty students to attend. Many of the participants spoke English as their second language and found theatre an interesting way to practice their language skills and gain self-confidence. Carmen Aguirre (actress, playwright, author) and Marcus Youssef (National Theatre School, Queens University Film and Drama, MA Creative Writing University of British Columbia, playwright, author, currently Artistic Director for Newworld Theatre in Vancouver) directed these workshops. Although Arts Umbrella hoped funding would continue for this important project, there is no mention of this type of workshop programming (for young people in low-income, multicultural communities) again until the *National Arts Youth Demonstration Project* (NAYDP) would begin a three-year study in 2001.

In the 1997-98 Program Guide, several new instructors are added to the Theatre Arts Faculty. Chris McGregor (BA Bishop's University Drama, a Jessie Richardson award for his work in *Pintauro Café*) directs the Junior Troupe, Susanne Coutts (BFA University of Calgary, BA University of Manitoba, Theatre Calgary, Manitoba Theatre Centre and The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton) instructs with the Stage Coach program, Creative Drama for 6–8, 9–11 and 8–10 years, plus the Junior and Senior Acting Workshops, Tami Harker (BA Music University of British Columbia, music teacher and director of musicals and choirs) instructs Musical Theatre and Jey Thibedeau Silver (University of Winnipeg, École de Mime Paris and studied with R.H. Thompson, Mort Ranson and Cecily O'Neill, actor, director, writer and teacher) who teaches Theatre for 8–12 years in Spring Fling Camp, and the out-reach programs. Randall Plitt (BFA Design and Technical Theatre University of British Columbia) takes over the Stagecraft and Design class and Renee Iaci (BFA Theatre University of British Columbia, actress, director, shameless hussy productions) enters her third year as the Dress-Up Drama teacher after taking

over from Deb Pickman. She continues the tradition of providing the stories at the end of the session by compiling a bibliography of multicultural myths and fairytales (*Stage Coach Stories*).

The newsletter for February 1998 highlights the Theatre program with announcements of the Senior Troupe's show of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Moniz de Sá appeared as Oberon at Rodgers' request) and the Junior Troupe's show of *The Hobbit*. Rodgers, who adapted the play into the required one hour format, was quoted in the February 1998 newsletter on why the troupe players were using the First Folio of the Shakespearean play, "a stage manager's copy from the 16th century, complete with long spelling". This type of research into theatre history became a staple for the Senior Troupe, a process that would continue under Moniz de Sá. This newsletter provided two pages of space to the Theatre program including sponsors, faculty biographies and instructor statements. Silver, in particular, notes that "drama education is a process, not a product," emphasizing to readers that theatre is unlike the other arts. Sometimes what is happening with the students is not as easy to measure as a completed visual art project or a perfectly executed dance piece.

This year the May public performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Hobbit* were at the Frederic Wood Theatre at the University of British Columbia, ticketed at ten dollars for adults and six dollars for students and seniors. Karin Konoval and Derek Metz (National Theatre School, extensive acting work in Toronto with Young People's Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto Fringe and Tarragon Extra Space) collaborated with the Senior Troupe and Metz would return the next year as director for the Junior Troupe.

In 1998-99, Arts Umbrella began its twentieth year of programming and the Troupes would return to the Firehall Arts Centre for their year-end performances of *The Maenads*, a one-act play by Bill Roxborough based on the Greek tragedy, for the Seniors and an adaptation of the C.S. Lewis novel *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* for the Juniors.

A new renovation project started and classes were spread around Granville Island in portables east of the building, False Creek Community Centre, Carousel Theatre and Emily Carr University of Art and Design. The organization had raised 80% of its \$1.5 million goal for the renovation and the building would expand to 7,000 square feet. Arts Umbrella at this time was in

talks with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to negotiate a further expansion to include “a 150 seat theatre, a multimedia lab, six new visual arts studios, one large theatre studio, a dark room and photography studio and a library” (*Newsletter* August 1999). This expansion did not come to fruition but one development was that the Waterfront Theatre on Granville Island, newly under CMHC management, would become the Theatre Troupe’s theatre for their end of year performances. Although Rodgers had used her relationships in Vancouver’s theatre industry to ensure performance spaces at the Firehall Arts Centre, the Frederic Wood Theatre and the Norman Rothstein, now the theatre troupes had a permanent place to perform. They would take over the theatre after the Victoria Day holiday each May which gave them two days for technical rehearsals and then perform three matinee days for schools unable to make the tour schedule and three evening shows for a public audience. The Senior, Junior and Musical Theatre troupes would perform in a morning and afternoon matinee each day over three days and three evenings of a double bill show. That meant each troupe performed four times over three days.

As the 1999-2000 year began, Carol Henriquez was awarded the Order of Canada, the country’s highest distinction for lifetime achievement, for her work in introducing hundreds of thousands of children and youth in Metro Vancouver to innovative arts education. During this year over 25,000 students attended over 200 weekly classes both in-house and through out-reach workshops. As well, 70% of the students accessed programs by bursaries, scholarships and the free in-reach and out-reach classes. Tuition still only covered approximately 45% of the cost of the program and government assistance was less than 2% (Program Guide). In the March 2000 newsletter, Paul Moniz de Sá was featured as he was part of the cast of *The Overcoat* by Morris Panych that embarked on a national tour after a successful two-week run with the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company. The article also reported on his successes since graduating from Arts Umbrella and Langara’s Studio 58, as Orson Welles in Touchstone Theatre’s production of *It’s All True*, a tour with the Green Thumb Theatre Company and the last episode of *The X-Files* television show shot in Vancouver.

The Senior Troupe experienced a special project with Rodgers this year. Rodgers adapted *Under Milk Wood: A Play for Voices* by Dylan Thomas, an extremely ambitious endeavour with frequent collaborator Karin Konoval. The original radio drama invites the audience to listen to the dreams of the inhabitants of a fictional Welsh fishing village and Rodgers adapted the lyrical poetry so that each of her players had multiple voices. She designed a stage set of fishing crates that the young actors would pop out of to perform, sing and dance. Rodgers admitted that this production solidified her reputation as a director in the community and she could not have been prouder of her students' work, inhabiting the different accents and voices, responding to both the poetry in the lines and Konoval's music onstage and the reward of being able to reprise the show in the Vancouver Fringe Festival that September. A review by Alexander Varty of *The Georgia Straight* (14 Sept 2000) newspaper was reprinted in the Arts Umbrella October 2000 newsletter:

If you need a shot of youthful cortisone, this is the Fringe show to see. Under the direction of Sarah Rodgers and Dorothy Dietrich – and with a wonderfully low-tech score from Karin Konoval – these Arts Umbrella students get it almost perfect. They bring all their teenage juice and joy to Thomas' vibrant rhythms, yet convincingly portray its more adult passions; only a couple of wandering accents and broad gestures betray their amateur status.

Rodgers would expand and direct this adaptation for The University of British Columbia's Theatre season in the fall of 2004. She remarked more than once in our interview that she had witnessed first hand the transformative effects of the theatrical process on her young performers, an effect that is not readily evident in performance but comes from knowing the students personally. She was enlisted by Arts Umbrella to speak to donors about her experiences and relayed this story:

One day I had this mom of a teenage boy in my two-week summer theatre workshop come up to me and ask me what I had done to her son! She explained that her boy had constantly struggled in school and getting him to do homework was torture, but here he was spending hours in his room learning lines from Shakespeare. He was tall and athletic so I had given him a particularly physical scene as Petruchio in *Taming of the Shrew*. I

didn't know about his academic problems, I just gave him the lines and direction and he came through. (Rodgers 2013)

In 2000-01, the newly completed renovation included a 600 square foot studio for the Theatre program. It was made possible by a very generous \$250,000 donation from the CMHC Granville Island Trust and was named the Ron Basford Theatre in honour of the founder of Granville Island. Ron Basford had been a cabinet minister under the federal Liberal government in the 1970's and a proponent of developing Granville Island into a commercial and recreational centre for artisans and the public. He was affectionately known as "Mr. Granville Island" (Granville Island Works np). There was also a new pilot program for homeschooled children that included Visual Art and Digital Animation classes and Creative Drama with Susanne Coutts, and Variety: The Children's Charity sponsored a new program called The Variety Club HeARTreach Program to bring young people faced with significant social, economic and physical challenges into Arts Umbrella on Granville Island to take part in, among the diverse visual art classes, Musical Theatre. The program started with ten students from Britannia Elementary School and would serve up to forty students over the next year. As well, the distinctive vehicles of The Vancouver Trolley Company become the new transport for the touring theatre and dance companies. The companies travelled to thirty elementary and high schools in Metro Vancouver in 2002 (*Newsletter* March 2002).

Miriam Aiken, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Arts Umbrella, stated that the funding model is skewed heavily towards private corporate donors especially, since all the outreach and inreach classes are free, and when a pilot program like the Strathcona outreach (which resulted from the NAYDP study) or the Act One: Youth (a Canada Heritage grant) becomes successful, Arts Umbrella looks for ways to keep the programs running without charging tuition. The Vancouver Trolley for example, still continues to donate all of its services, the vehicle, the driver, the gas and insurance to the Theatre Troupes and Dance companies for tours (Aiken 2013).

The Senior Troupe reprises Rodgers' compilation of *Broadcast Days*, the Junior Troupe performs Roald Dahl's *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, the Musical Theatre Troupe

performs Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* and the Musical Theatre classes for the 6-8 years and 9-12 years produce *Clowns* by Craig Cassils. James A. Burton, longtime supporter of Arts Umbrella, sponsors the entire Theatre program this year. Kayla Doerksen (actress, clown, Studio 58, National Theatre School) remembers that when she played Willa Wonka in that year's performance of *Charlie*, local actor Bob Frazer (Bard on the Beach, numerous Jessie Richardson awards) came to the Junior Troupe rehearsal and built her iconic cane. It's a memory of kindness and generosity and an adolescent being treated with respect as a fellow theatre artist. (Doerksen 2013).

Paul Moniz de Sá directs the Junior Troupe for the 2001-02 year after many years working with Sarah as a mentor and assistant for the troupes and Summer Camp theatre instructor. As well as detailing the audition process and year-long commitment, the program guide and June 2002 newsletter outline the four components of the program the students are required to participate in, the fall, winter and spring theatre classes, the Sunday Performance Series, school tours and the end of year performances to emphasize the serious expectations of the program. The Senior Troupe performed *Blue Window*, a play about a group of "quirky New Yorkers who gather for a dinner party" by Craig Lucas, award winning playwright of *Prelude to a Kiss*, and the Junior Troupe performed Joseph Robinette's adaptation of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (Newsletter March 2002).

The May 2003 Newsletter held many announcements for the 2002-03 year. Alcan had been supporting the Van Go and Stage Coach out-reach programs for fourteen years and its Director of Corporate Affairs for British Columbia, Richard Prokopanko, had served for several years as the Annual Fundraising Campaign Co-Chair. To this date these programs had "touched the lives of more than 185,000 children" in Metro Vancouver. Every September, teachers book the 360 available workshops in one hour. In an article on Stage Coach, Rodgers describes how the theatre games that she plays with the students "[allow] for each child to share his or her unique family background and culture with the group".

The Junior Troupe is now under the direction of Susanne Coutts for this year's production of *James and the Giant Peach*, adapted from the Roald Dahl novel by Richard R.

George. Rodgers, recently graduated with her MFA in Directing from the University of British Columbia, continued to impress her audiences with *The Compleat Wks of Wllm Skspr (Abridged)*, “a hilarious romp through all thirty-seven of Shakespeare’s plays in just one hour” by Adam Long, Daniel Singer and Jess Winfield (*Show Program* 2003).

In 2003, Henriquez announced that she would retire after twenty-five years with Arts Umbrella. In order to “celebrate the spirit of Canadian culture that Arts Umbrella helped to inspire” a Tribute Performance Gala would be held on February 1, 2004 and a new endowment campaign, The Carol Henriquez Legacy Fund, was established in her honour. By the time of the gala event, the new fund had confirmed gifts that exceeded \$2.75 million, including a one million dollar endowment of The Literacy Chair from the Government of Canada and two gifts from the Province of British Columbia, a \$250,000 endowment of a Core Discipline Chair and another \$250,000 for Arts Umbrella to develop a province-wide out-reach program. Lucille Pacey becomes the new Executive Director. (*Newsletter* March 2004).

In the 2003-04 programming year, the Senior Troupe performed *Cocktails at Pam’s* by Stewart Lemoine and the Junior Troupe reprised an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* by William Glennon. In the Program Guide, the Theatre Arts section now lists Glynis Leyshon, Artistic Director of The Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company, as its theatre advisor. The opening description for theatre in the program guide describes the developmental benefits of enrolling in theatre courses as well as those for the aspiring actor: “Theatre Arts instruction at Arts Umbrella not only develops technical skills, but also strengthens abilities in analytical thinking and communication and promotes an understanding of human thought and behaviour.”

These are concepts similar to those illustrated in Kathleen Gallagher and David Booth’s collection of essays in *How Theatre Educates* and published as the results of the three-year study by McGill University called the *National Youth Arts Demonstration Project* (NAYDP). The NAYDP project covered five sites across Canada (including a local Vancouver school with Arts Umbrella theatre instructors) to assess how communities can recruit and sustain youth between the ages of 10-15 years in artistic endeavours. David Booth declares that he needs “students to be shocked and surprised by ideas that can only be shared in the safety of the theatre frame” so that

his students learn to listen to each other as they interact (21). This concept of the “safety” of an arts learning environment was echoed by the NAYDP project’s findings as the results showed improved confidence, interpersonal and conflict resolution skills for the young participants (Wright 16). The Program Guide text, “understanding human thought and behaviour,” clearly illustrated this research on how theatre, in particular, was beginning to validate the belief held by many in the organization of the arts’ ability to develop empathy in young people. After this project ended, Arts Umbrella kept funding going and it became the Strathcona Theatre Outreach, as instructors like Susanne Coutts, Anna Cummer (BA Drama and Theatre Studies, Royal Holloway London, actress) and Naomi Wright (BFA Theatre University of British Columbia, actress and voice over) had established relationships with the students, parents and caregivers, teachers and school administrators, and no one wanted the programs to end. Susanne stated that Arts Umbrella also found the funds to follow the students to Britannia Secondary as well, which contributed towards a stable and safe environment for these students to mature (Susanne Moniz de Sá 2013a).

The 2004-05 year would be Sarah Rodgers’ last as the Senior Troupe Director. She would direct the players in an adaptation of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, reflecting the reading curriculum of the Metro Vancouver Secondary Schools. Coutts would direct the Junior Troupe in Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* and Musical Theatre returned as a Pre-Professional intensive program for teens under the direction of Andy Toth (American Musical and Dramatic Academy New York, extensive performing and directing credits including a Jessie nomination for Best Performance for Theatre for Young Audiences). The musical for this year was *Bugsy Malone* and Toth modeled the year-long program after the American musical theatre conservatory programs. Students were to be immersed in advanced choreography, scene study, and vocal training for both ensemble and solo performances.

Sarah Rodgers had been with Arts Umbrella for sixteen years as an instructor and friend to her students and as a collaborator and fellow artist to many of her graduates. She told me in interview that every year in her acting classes at the University of British Columbia, she invariably meets a student that she had years ago at Arts Umbrella. “Remember me, Sarah, you

taught me when I was six, we did the *Lobster Quadrille!*” (Arts Umbrella Alumnus and UBC Theatre student Doug Enneberg).

Chapter 3: Arts Umbrella's Theatre and Music

In 2005-06, Paul Moniz de Sà and Susanne Moniz de Sà (néé Coutts) are now personal as well as professional collaborators. They have created their own family within the Arts Umbrella family. For clarity, I will refer to them by their first names for the rest of this study.

Paul's vision for the future of the theatre program was informed by his own education at Studio 58 and his work with Sarah Rodgers among many professionals in Vancouver's theatre community. His praxis at Studio 58 was conservatory oriented and although there was one theatre history class, he did not learn the names of the different theatre techniques until after he left and did his own research for his students. Jane Heyman, Kathryn Shaw and Wendy Gorling were some of his most influential teachers. Kathryn Shaw expected an extremely high caliber of work and compliments were not thrown around. He remembers getting a bravo from her one day and nearly cried. Jane Heyman had the same expectations but was more nurturing in her teaching. The students at Studio 58 would be in the basement of Langara from 8am until 11pm every day and she would always be sensitive to when her students needed to get outside for some light. Paul said Heyman would give him the time to work through his practice and make discoveries. For his actors at Arts Umbrella who are still so young, Heyman's guidance informed Paul's understanding that he needs to be there to provide a safe place for whatever his young performers may be coping with emotionally and psychologically. Wendy Gorling was another influence he credits with developing his process. Her focus on physicality, breath and movement let him know that what worked for him did not always work for someone else. He describes this learning as a "buffet of acting skills" he needs to teach in order for his students to find their own process (Paul 2013a). This concept reflects back to Carol Henriquez' requirement that Arts Umbrella's artist-instructors had the demonstrable skills of breaking down the artistic process into teachable components.

He remarked in our interview that he was interested in how Joan Littlewood produced *Oh What a Lovely War* in London's Theatre Workshop in the early 1960's. Her techniques reminded him of working with voice teacher Dale Genge. Paul said his students will laugh sometimes as he

keeps at them with the line, “and then what, and then what,” a technique he learned from Genge to get his students to go through every permutation of their line until what is authentic for their character is revealed. Littlewood expected her actors to trust her directions and “let go” of their preconceived notions while experimenting and devising in rehearsal (Hodge 136), and Paul’s students, being young and trusting, were already there with their energy (Paul 2013a).

To keep himself fresh as an actor and as an artist-instructor, Paul has audited classes at Studio 58 in speech, mask, choir, writing and movement. He teaches a process-based theatre curriculum where he encourages his students to understand that theatre can happen anywhere at any time and one does not need to be seated in a darkened room staring at a proscenium stage. He also brings in professionals from the Vancouver theatre industry so his students can expand their theatre relationships along with their theatre repertoire. Master workshops in mask, clowning, monologues and audition are just some of the classes offered.

Both Paul and Susanne take their players to a wide range of genres and styles of theatre offered during the year. They are restricted in the shows that they produce for tour and end of year performances by the school curriculum and general societal expectations.

Junior Troupe plays focus on themes of the quest and good over evil involving animals and fantasy that appeal to young imaginations with a flexible sense of the external world. Susanne remarked that when she does a play that was turned into a movie, she has no problems booking. She did *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* for the 2006 tour after the *Chronicles of Narnia* movie had been released and the play was very well received in the elementary schools. Her players were even asked for autographs by some of the young audience members during the talkbacks. These young players could be described, in Marvin Carlson’s concept, as being “haunted” with the cultural memory of the movie version of the story and the audiences’ “creative interpellation” of the young actors’ identities, integrating the character in the play with the character from the movie which elevated their spectating pleasure in the troupe’s performance (Carlson 133). Susanne remarked that her actor who played Aslan, the lion, kept his long robe and crown on for the talkbacks, staying in character as it was obvious that the very young children enjoyed his performance.

However, Susanne suggests that there has been a shift in literary knowledge at the elementary level since she first started with Arts Umbrella in 1997 and she is encountering audiences that may have little or no knowledge of the western canon of children's literature, unless it was developed into a movie or television show. In response to this, Susanne must create more teacher study guides for plays that would have needed no introduction a few years ago and she tries to coordinate with what the teachers are reading in class if possible.

Paul is in a slightly different situation with the Senior Troupe. *Animal Farm, 1984* or any works of Shakespeare are easy to book because of their presence in the school curriculum, but if he wants to direct a contemporary show that will challenge his actors, *Unity (1918)* by Kevin Kerr for example, *It's All True* by Jason Sherman, or this year's reprise of *Oh What a Lovely War*, it will be more difficult to sign up schools for tour. His Senior Troupe actors are more inclined towards stories that focus on their internal worlds, so the opportunity to be comically transgressive is usually a hit with both his actors and audience. For the 2012 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the actors wore masks they created themselves. The mask seemed to offer a license for their teenage energy to take the scenes over the top physically but still keep them appropriate for an all-ages audience. My favourite scene was when the character of Bottom used the entire performance space at the Waterfront Theatre (and a good fifteen minutes) to die. I immediately thought of Carlson's "haunted" performance concept as I remembered how long it took Bottom to die in the Bard on the Beach 2006 production with Vancouver actor Scott Bellis playing Bottom. Bellis, too, used most of the stage and audience space and took several minutes to die.

Paul is determined to keep his students challenged in their development as theatre artists. He also remarked in interview that his dramatic approach to teaching Shakespeare is more interesting than the usual literary style used in high school English classes. Susanne agreed as she was lucky to have an English teacher in high school that was also the drama teacher so they learned the plays "on their feet." The class would stand up and read lines and act out the scenes to understand the meanings. Paul also requires his students to research the original meanings of words that are taken from First Folio editions, so that the scenes and passages make sense to

them and they can create characters that audiences without a firm grasp of this language can understand.

This combination of learning through the literacy of Shakespeare as well as “by doing” Shakespeare was explored by George Belliveau of the University of British Columbia in a study with a Montessori classroom of 6-9 year olds. He remarks on the “shifting, transient and ephemeral nature of learning that occurs in primary classrooms” (Belliveau 171) which could be an apt description for learning in any theatre studio. The literacy activities to learn the text prepared the students to engage in drama-based activities such as “hot-seating” where a child sits on a chair in front of the group and answers questions as if he or she were a character from the play. Two years after the study the students still had the literacy projects they created and could recall the story (Belliveau 175).

The largest recent change in the Theatre program came about in 2009 when Paul and Susanne put forward a proposal to have Arts Umbrella hire them full-time, similar to the position of Artistic Director of the Arts Umbrella Dance Company. Paul and Susanne would be able to provide a stable curriculum of instruction as well as administer not only the Senior, Junior and Musical Theatre Troupes but also the Stage Coach, Strathcona/Britannia Outreach Program, Surrey Arts Outreach at Lena Shaw Elementary, and Theatre Arts Outreach at Kiwassa Neighbourhood House along with the ever-expanding variety of theatre classes, from Dress-Up Drama to Scene Study. There were also the new Young Directors and Act One: Youth programs.

Paul defined Theatre Arts as “both an art form and an invitation to learn about self and others” (*Theatre Arts Curriculum 2*). The different skill sets between primary, intermediate and pre-professional are labeled Life Skills, Theatrical Tools and Techniques and Creative Expression and Exploration. Theatrical Tools and Techniques are the core of the curriculum and the pre-professional troupe student is expected to arrive at class prepared and willing to explore the work, using Laban physical strategies, an expressive and flexible form of structuring dramatic movement (Hodge 133). The students are required to become adept in their own work while being able to identify Laban characteristics in others.

Arts Umbrella accepted the proposal and Paul became Artistic Director for the Theatre and Music Program and continues with the Seniors and the Young Directors, while Susanne is the administrator for the program as well as continuing to direct the Junior Troupe. Andy Toth continues as the Musical Theatre director and Darcey Johnson (Studio 58, actor, director, Assaulted Fish sketch comedy, teacher) continues with the Act One: Youth theatre project that began in 2009 with a grant from Canadian Heritage. Although Act One: Youth began and continues as an applied theatre project concerned with the social and cultural issues of its young players, the program comes under the Pre-Professional umbrella as the artistic training is of the same high caliber as the other troupes. Like his predecessor, Paul has high expectations of all the theatre students, and in the demanding but supportive atmosphere he creates for them, he states, “I am continuously surprised and never let down by them” (Paul 2013b).

The Senior Troupe shows from 2006 onwards were *Twelfth Night*, *Unity (1918)*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* with extra material by Reed Martin, 1984, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hecuba*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and for 2013, *Oh What a Lovely War*, complete with clowns. It is significant to note the creative energy that goes into adapting these shows into one hour performances that still challenge the actors and provide pleasure for the audiences. Paul and Susanne have good relationships with The Dramatic Publishing Company and Samuel French for scripts that are not in the public domain. They will buy a script for each actor once, photocopy the scripts to be pasted into working notebooks and then pay royalties if they use the scripts again. Arts Umbrella cannot afford to go back and forth with script adaptation approval fees so these publishers are flexible as they understand the scripts are being used for non-profit children’s art organizations to provide theatre for other young people. Musical Theatre International has a more detailed contract and they do not allow photocopying so the Musical Theatre students must make careful notes in pencil on the script and then the notes need to be erased, as the scripts must be returned to the publisher after the shows (Paul 2013b).

For *Unity (1918)*, Paul was in touch with playwright Kevin Kerr directly so he could get adaptation approval as he edited the play to the one hour format. For *Hecuba*, Paul used the

Timberlake Wertenbaker adaptation as he loved how she composed the language of the play, but he still had to finesse the script to fit the time. Both *Hecuba* and *Midsummer* used masks that the students created in workshop. Paul had done mask with *Animal Farm* as well, ensuring that his long time students stayed fresh and challenged as actors. Paul asserts that there is a lack of quality one-act plays with many characters that meet his students' needs and the schools' expectations, so he returns to previous shows and reworks them. For example in 2010, he switched genders with the roles for *Much Ado About Nothing*. "Play the Male characters as women and the Females as men. Explore what it would be like if we lived in a society where men stayed home and women went off to war." (*Show Program* 2010). Paul stated that the Senior Troupe had a lot of fun with this switch. While the female actors wore military uniforms, the male actors playing Beatrice and Hero wore 1970's style leisure suits in pastel colours.

Paul tries to avoid social "message" plays for the Senior Troupe because those forms of drama usually happen in school theatre and drama classes in which many of his Arts Umbrella students are already enrolled (Paul 2013b). On the continuum of theatre for young people, Paul's training is firmly situated on the artful side.

The Junior Troupe had performed *Dorothy Meets Alice*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Adventures of Stuart Little*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *The Wind in the Willows* and for 2013, will produce *Peter Pan*.

The Musical Theatre Troupe had performed *Dear Edwina*, *Lucky Stiff* and for 2013, will present *Pippin*. Andy Toth approaches his students with technical (voice and theatre), relational, intellectual/emotional, and practical training to create honest and grounded experiences for both his actors and audiences. He finds the teens tend to "have a better grasp of gross muscle movements, gross senses of right and wrong and cultural identity" than the adults he works with (Toth 2013).

The newest program, the Act One: Youth Theatre program, was established in 2009 by a Canadian Heritage Youth Take Charge grant. This grant is for "youth serving organizations ... (with) an ability to strengthen youth attachment in the following thematic areas: History and Heritage, Civic engagement and youth service, Arts and Culture and Economic activities."

(Canadian Heritage). Darcey Johnson implemented the program in September 2010 with weekly three hour classes that included guest workshops and presentations from Vancouver's professional theatre community. The goals of this theatre troupe are Boalian in nature as the troupe addresses social and cultural issues with the hope of affecting their audiences (Johnson *Interview*). As an example, their 2011 show *#ThisismyVancouver* was a direct response to the Stanley Cup riots of June 2011. These six students, working with Vancouver playwright Amiel Gladstone, created a piece of theatre that incorporated broadcast news video, Facebook status updates and weblog entries, plus a replica Vancouver Police Department sedan. This theatre troupe had professional workshops with Jane Heyman for theatre history, Brad Gibson for voice and speech. From Arts Umbrella, Kay Huang Barnes taught creative movement and Jed Duifhuis (Arts Umbrella dance graduate and Ballet BC apprentice) choreographed and blocked their work with music. There were three performances at the Waterfront Theatre in July of 2011 and a Canadian Heritage survey of the participants revealed that all had grown "unbelievably close" to each other and "became immensely connected to Vancouver" (Youth Take Charge 7).

Under the new department of Arts Umbrella Theatre and Music, Paul is directly responsible for the curriculum of fifty students and the management of the artist-instructors. Susanne performs most of the administrative tasks, the rest handled by the larger administrative staff of Arts Umbrella. The relationships between the programs have strengthened as the directors for all the programs bring the four troupes together twice a year to rehearse a showcase evening for friends and family. This provides a space for the entire complement of student actors to see the work of the other troupes and allow for larger audiences. In the situation of the Act One: Youth students, it may be the first and only time these students get to see and perform in a professional theatre space (Johnson 2012). For February of 2013, Paul included the work of past alumni in the showcase as well as himself and other theatre instructors. Previous showcases had been held in the large Arts Umbrella studio and admission was by donation, but the audience was getting too large to fit so this year the show was at Performance Works on Granville Island and ticketed at ten dollars. By expanding the show with professional work by the troupes, alumni

and instructors, Performance Works was easily filled for both nights. As Paul states in his Artistic Director's note for the February 2013 *Come Together* show program:

We are now a Pre-Professional Theatre Program with alumni who are gracing the stages of theatres all over the country...and where our students...of the past, present and future can come together to celebrate our accomplishments and our rich history within the Canadian Theatre and Music Community.

Conclusion

As childhood became constructed as a particular stage in our development as a people, so too did it become a stage associated with and identified by education and learning.

(Reason 3)

The 2012 Annual Report to the Board stated that over 13,000 elementary and secondary students attended free performances from Arts Umbrella's Pre-Professional Theatre and Dance Companies that year. The Theatre Troupe shows have become an integral part of arts performance programming for young people in the Metro Vancouver area and I was interested in the social effects on the alumni and their families.

Susanne Moniz de Sá sent out over fifty alumni and parent questionnaires through her database of students and parents in January 2013 and then again in March. In return I received seven completed questionnaires and one interview with alumni and seven completed questionnaires from parents. From the alumni, the answers to question four about describing any social or scholastic benefits were without exception the most effusive and positive. In fact, not one person answered negatively about their experience in Troupe. For example:

“Theatre...has been great at giving me an ability to harness my nerves and never let them get the better of me.”

“I think the type of confidence you develop from studying theatre is extremely transferable to social situations.”

“It taught me how to keep focus when talking to people, how to remain calm while talking to someone about something personal and keeping eye contact, most of all Paul and Susanne taught me more life lessons in two years than most of my friends still in university have yet to learn.”

“I would also bet that because I had a creative outlet outside of school, I was more able to focus on school when the time came.”

“The instructors were wonderful role models. Some were also figures of support for me during times of personal crisis.”

“My troupe became like family to me.”

The parents’ responses were almost identical to the questions of benefits and everyone responded that they had no problems or frustrations with the program. They knew the requirements at the outset and remarked that their children “rose to the challenge” of balancing school and Troupe. For example:

“(my child) has a physical handicap and struggled with numerous learning and social disabilities as a child. Arts Umbrella gave her a ready-made social circle – especially once she joined Junior Troupe. I cannot praise Arts Umbrella enough.”

“The teachers at AU are terrific. I think the physical involvement in play and materials...the movement of the body in space and within the narrative of a story – teaches metaphor and critical analysis...and a more complex appreciation of meaning.”

“Positive social interaction with like-minded teens.”

“The program was exceptional – my son had an amazing three years with Troupe and it made a huge impact on his life (he chose a university with a strong theatre club). Schools are expanding what they consider in a candidate’s application – it is far more than just the academics.” (this student will be entering Oxford University for his Masters degree in Financial Economics this fall – and still plans on keeping up with his extracurricular theatre).

This was the general tone for all fifteen of the questionnaires that I received; both alumni and parents were consistent in their appreciation for the Theatre Troupe program and its effect on their own/their child’s development. The ability to engage and maintain healthy adult relationships in their post-secondary and adult work life was directly attributed to their artistic experiences in Troupe.

Jonathan Neelands addresses this concept in the Editorial for a special issue of *English in Education*. He illustrates the importance of the arts, especially drama, to develop a healthy society. “Through taking on and participating in roles, young people are encouraged to look at the world from other perspectives and to consider new alternatives and interpretive choices” (1). The young people of the Theatre Troupes have developed the “empathetic imagination” that allows them to flourish as “confident, public, assertive and important individuals” (2). The young

people, their parents and caregivers, their teachers and artist-instructors all understand how the artistic theatre training has not only taught these students how to engage theatrically, but how to engage with every aspect of their lives.

I like to picture the successful development of Arts Umbrella's Theatre Troupes as a three-legged stool. The seat is the creative art of theatre where the young person is placed comfortably and securely. Each leg of the stool is equally important: the artist-instructors are one leg, the parents and caregivers are another and the financial support of the external community (both private and public funders) is the third, each leg also braced with its partners for support in the relationship. The design is both relational and foundational; each leg must be in a healthy relationship with each other to create a secure base for our young people to flourish within the arts.

As I document the successful history of Arts Umbrella's Theatre Troupe, I am reminded by Helen Nicholson that "the kinaesthetic imagination works with other forms of cultural memory as a way of recognizing the ephemerality of theatre and performance" (Nicholson 2010, 149). The imaginations of the artist-instructors, the students and the audiences are engaged in Carlson's idea of cultural memory or "haunting"; thus all these participants are implicated in the history of this program. My inclusion of the interview responses and the expository language of the Program Guides and Newsletters has become part of re-presenting what occurred in the Troupe theatre classes, rehearsals and performances, a history that illustrates Balme's concept of "complex texts" historiographically producing an engagement with Arts Umbrella's theatre program. Arts Umbrella's aesthetic decisions regarding the creation of theatrical art, whether couched in the social and political issues of the Act One: Youth performers or in the determination of a Senior Troupe member to stretch his talents as far as possible, are interdependent in the theatrical space of these young performers' imaginations. And as Matthew Reason urges in *Young Audiences*, we should not "rely on children's passively developed cultural competencies but should look for ways of pro-actively extending their abilities" (98).

Through artistic theatre training, young people are critically and consciously reflecting upon their experiences. The archival and narrative material presented in this study suggests that young people, their parents and caregivers, philanthropic community members and artist-instructors are continuing to support theatre.

As McConachie suggests how cognitively we, as human beings, can put ourselves in the “place of the other” and see the world from that unique point of view (2010, 392), Elin Diamond approaches this from a slightly different angle. Her “utopian performatives” of theatre affect us precisely because they are local products of something occurring here and now and then passing over to “there and then even as we experience them” (Diamond 169). For young people, this is their life, there only is the here and now, there and then continually present, simply because they haven’t lived long enough to create any distance with their memories. As Carlson would suggest, they are haunted by their present as much as their past, and theatre allows them the multitude of meanings to layer on their present existence, creating different characters that may only exist in imagination, but in that theatrical space produce cultural memory and empathy.

Diamond’s *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre* also illustrates the experiences of Arts Umbrella students, instructors, staff, family and friends. There is an entire community that comes together for theatre, to be immersed in its creation as a performer or as a spectator. Those young performers are brimming with possibility, and hopefully every young person gets to experience in their life the camaraderie, the bonding these actors have for each other and their external community. Diamond speaks of fleeting moments of “communitas,” the ephemeral work of theatre that brings us all a little closer together before we go our separate ways. It would not be unusual for me to come pick up my children after rehearsal to find them all tangled in each other’s arms and legs on the chairs in the Arts Umbrella lobby, boisterous and happily eating from each other’s dinners. It is a special time in their lives when they belong to each other, before they graduate high school and hopefully take some of that spirit away to share with the new people they are to meet in their adult lives. It is utopian, and that ephemeral experience should be the birthright of every child.

Theatre also holds an evocative place compared to the other arts. A painting or sculpture can be admired and understood for its artistry, one can appreciate the obvious training required to become a virtuoso musician or dancer, but theatre is different because it resembles who we are the most closely of all the arts. For young people the shared experience of theatre can be the most appealing because of Diamond's "communitas." Even when the experience seems fleeting, the emotional and psychological connections young people create in performance have lasting effects.

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Appendices

Appendix A Alumni Questionnaire

1. How long were you involved with the Theatre Troupes? Junior or Senior?
2. Have you taken theatre classes at school other than Arts Umbrella?
3. Where did the interest for theatre classes come from? Was it yourself or did someone else, say a parent or teacher, suggest it to you?
4. Arts Education is generally considered to be a positive experience for children and youth, could you describe any of the social or scholastic benefits you feel were impacted by your involvement with the Theatre Troupes?
5. The Theatre Troupes program is very intensive, how did you handle both school and the theatre program expectations?
6. Have you continued your theatre training in your post-secondary years? Or any other arts related activities? If not, could you explain why?
7. Do you have a story to tell or maybe wish to add any further comments on the Theatre Troupe program or any of your experiences at Arts Umbrella?
8. Did you have any problems or frustrations with the Arts Umbrella program?

Do you wish a summary of this study?

If so please add your name and email or phone number.

Thank you for your participation and please note that it is entirely voluntary and you may refuse and/or withdraw at any time.

Appendix B Parent Questionnaire

1. How did you come to be involved with Arts Umbrella?
2. Has your child taken any other Arts Umbrella classes?
3. Was it you or your child that indicated interest in Arts Umbrella theatre classes?
4. If you, why? Please elaborate on all the reasons you brought your child to Arts Umbrella.
5. Arts Education is generally considered to be a positive experience for children and youth, could you describe any social or scholastic benefits of your child's involvement with the program?
6. The Theatre Troupes program is considered intensive with twice a week rehearsal training, performances each term and the touring shows in April and May. How did your child handle both school and the theatre program?
7. Did you have any problems or frustrations with the Arts Umbrella program?
8. Do you attend live performances out side of the Arts Umbrella performances? If so, what types?
9. Do you have a story to tell or maybe wish to add any further comments on the Theatre Troupe program or your child's experience at Arts Umbrella?

Do you wish to view a summary of this study?

If so, please add your name and email or phone number.

Thank you for your participation and please note that it is entirely voluntary and you may refuse and/or withdraw at any time.

Appendix C Staff Questionnaire

Your name and position with Arts Umbrella.

Could you give me a brief history of your experience and training that led to your work at Arts Umbrella? Work history?

How long have you been a _____ at Arts Umbrella?

Could you tell me your theatrical role models and influences?

Which practices influence the way in which you teach the art of performance?

Could you give me a description of the curriculum plan for your students? Is it always twice a week or do you fit in extra rehearsals when needed?

Arts Umbrella has studios but no purpose built theatre. Do your students learn to perform in both traditional theatre spaces and contemporary alternative spaces?

Could you describe the professional workshops that your students engage in during the program term?

How do you arrange which schools the Theatre Troupes will travel to for performances?

What is the general audience for the ticketed performances at the Waterfront Theatre? Do you see members of the public other than family and friends of the students?

How do you view the place of arts education within the K-12 education system?

What do you think of the future of live performance in Vancouver?

Do have a story to tell or maybe wish to add any further comments on the Theatre Troupe program or your experiences at Arts Umbrella?

Thank you again for your time.