

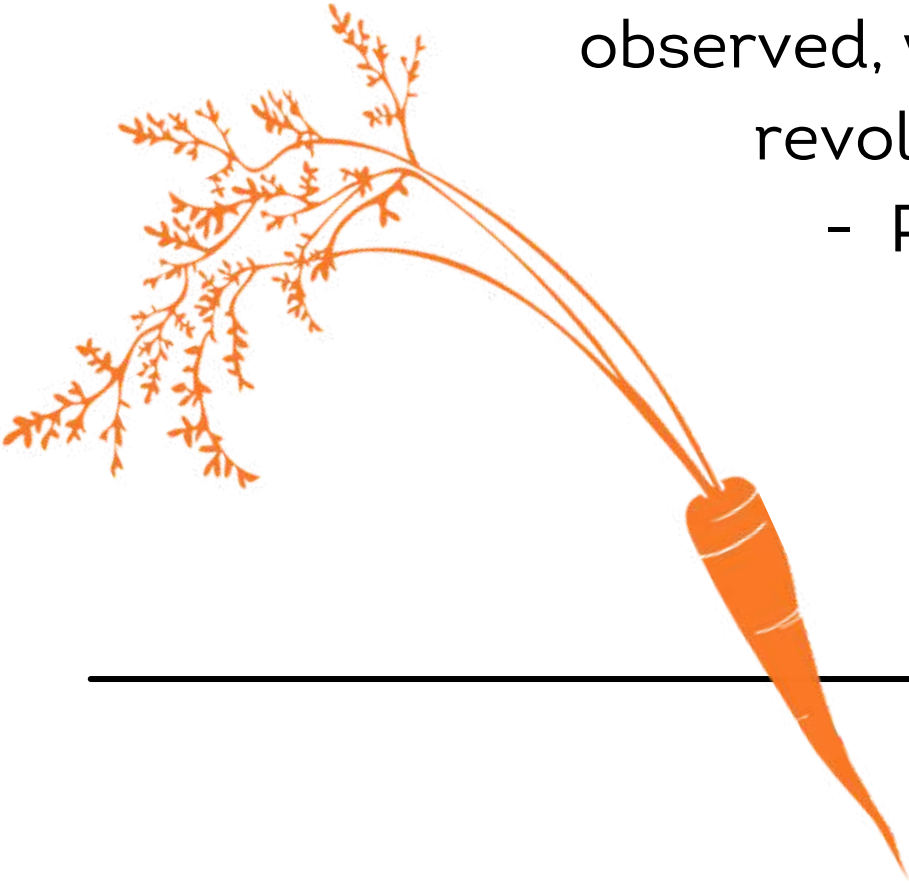
SINGLE CARROT THEATRE



2007 - 2023
BALTIMORE

The day is coming when a
SINGLE CARROT, freshly
observed, will set off a
revolution.

- Paul Cezanne



SINGLE CARROT THEATRE CREATES SOCIALLY RELEVANT
THEATRE AS A FORM OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN BALTIMORE
BY PRODUCING VIBRANT, EXPERIENTIAL PERFORMANCES IN
TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL THEATRE VENUES;
BUILDING CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS; AND
FACILITATING EMPOWERING EDUCATION PROGRAMS.



When making the difficult and rather sudden decision to close, it was really important to me that we captured the history and lessons learned from Single Carrot's 16 year lifespan. This report is an attempt to do that. Single Carrot Theatre surged out of an idealism that only a group of 22 year olds could have, but it was the collective work ethic, drive and determination that followed which positioned SCT to last for sixteen more years. We have produced some amazing shows, developed new plays and playwrights, launched many incredible artists' careers, and built meaningful community relationships- and even created a family or two. In announcing the closing, other small theatres have referred to Single Carrot as a big sister, which signals the significant place Single Carrot has held in the Baltimore theatre community.

Running a theater company for 16 years is no small feat (as anyone who has run a small theater company knows intimately). While live storytelling has been around for thousands of years and will be for millennia to come,

the American theatre is in an existential crisis. It has been struggling for relevancy for decades, and most recently has been confronted with how it has perpetuated and upheld racism, abuses, and exclusionary and privileged practices while simultaneously singing the false song of inclusion. Additionally, the arts as a whole in America are undervalued as a component of a thriving society and is instead structured with a capitalistic approach, which strangles innovation and creativity as theatres try to squeeze the maximum product with the leanest of resources. As a result, theatre takes advantage of human capital, which props up the industry at all levels.

Working to resolve these problems will require substantial resources of both financial and intellectual capacity. Hopefully this report and lessons from Single Carrot can serve as an imperfect example to inform new ways to advocate for theater, its artists, and its people in Baltimore and beyond. In the coming decades, I am curious to see how theatres can become entrenched in local communities to build relevance. How can theatre dismantle the systems of oppression it upholds? How can it put art first and invest in developing artists? How can it achieve these lofty ambitions while supporting a healthy balance of its humans? I can only hope that Single Carrot's time has paved a path to address the challenges the industry faces and that this report can illuminate that journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Genevieve de Mahy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Genevieve de Mahy
Artistic Director
Founding Ensemble Member

WELCOME



Single Carrot Theatre (SCT) has long been an artistic and cultural mainstay of Baltimore's theatre community. The ensemble's thoughtfully crafted performances were deeply rooted in culturally relevant topics, and they often challenged my worldview. I am certainly a better person for having experienced these performances, and I am profoundly grateful to all the actors, staff, board members, grantors, and other donors that enabled SCT to create such beautiful art.

Brian Long
Board President

Being part of the theater revolution that Single Carrot brought to Baltimore will always be a source of pride for me. Indeed, it was an honor to have served on the board both as president and an at-large member for most of SCT's 16 years and 15 seasons. Like our city, Carrot productions were authentic, edgy, unsettling, and often startlingly beautiful. Even if you didn't like the play, you frequently thought about it for days. The Carrots and Baltimore were made for each other!

As you read through this Carrot retrospective, I invite you to recall the countless moments you experienced in the audience - of vulnerability and passion, surprise and delight, astonishment and awe. Thank you Single Carrot for an incredible run!

Ann Koch
Past Board President





IN TOTAL

IN TOTAL



- 100+ PRODUCTIONS, SHOWS & EVENTS
- 65,000 AUDIENCE MEMBERS REACHED
- 10,000+ CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH EMPOWERING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 33 WORLD PREMIERES
- 31 LOCAL/REGIONAL PREMIERES
- 24 NEW COMMISSIONED WORKS

- \$1,500,000 GRANT SUPPORT RECEIVED
- \$537,000 PUBLIC SUPPORT RECEIVED
- \$66,000 CORPORATE SUPPORT RECEIVED



TOP GROSSING PRODUCTIONS

**Promenade: Baltimore
with Stereo Akt,
Hungary
2017**

**Putin on Ice
[that isn't the real title
of this show]
with Acme Corporation
2018**

**The Memo
by Vaclav Havel
translated by
Paul Wilson
2014**

2007 - 2008

Red Light Winter by Adam Rapp
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

The Baltimore Waltz by Paula Vogel
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

La Muñeca by Aldo Pantoja
Directed by Brendan Ragan

Sects and Violins by Single Carrot Theatre
Directed by Jessica Garrett

Richard III by William Shakespeare
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

2008 - 2009

Food For Fish by Adam Szymkowitz
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

Crave by Sarah Kane
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

Killer Joe by Tracy Letts
Directed by Meg (Giti) Jabaily

The Wild Duck by Henrik Ibsen
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

Slamponed! by Single Carrot Theatre
Directed by Aldo Pantoja

2009 - 2010

Eurydice by Sarah Ruhl
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

Illuminocem by Single Carrot Theatre
Directed by Brendan Ragan

Playing Dead by The Presynakov Brothers
Directed by Yury Urnov

Crumble (Lay Me Down, Justin Timberlake)
by Sheila Callaghan
Directed by Aldo Pantoja

Tragedy: A Tragedy by Will Eno
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

2010 - 2011

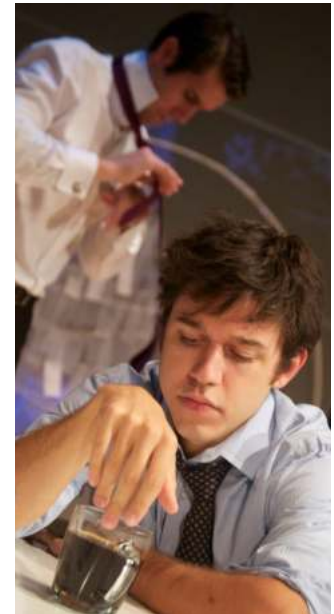
Natural Selection by Eric Coble
Directed by Nathan Fulton

The Other Shore by Gao Xing Jian
Directed by J. Buck Jabaily

Three Andys by Rich Espey
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy
in partnership with the Baltimore Museum of Art

The Long Christmas Ride Home by Paula Vogel
Directed by Jessica Garrett

Linus & Alora by Andrew Irons
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy



2011 - 2012

Church by Young Jean Lee
Directed by Nathan Fulton

MilkMilkLemonade by Joshua Conkel
Directed by Nathan Cooper

Hotel Cassiopeia by Charles Mee
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

Foot of Water by Single Carrot Theatre
Directed by Ben Hoover

THE SEASONS

2012 - 2013

Drunk Enough to Say I love You?
by Caryl Churchill
Directed by Ben Hoover

The Tropic of X by Caridad Svich
Directed by Nathan Cooper

The V.I.P. by Aldo Pantoja
Directed by Aldo Pantoja

A Sorcerer's Journey: Based on the
Works of Carlos Castaneda
Directed by Nathan Fulton



2013 - 2014

A Beginner's Guide to Decide
by Qui Nguyen & Robert Ross Parker
Directed by Elliot Rauh

Worst Case Scenario by Single Carrot Theatre
Directed by Jessica Garrett

The Flu Season by Will Eno
Directed by Alix Fenhagen

The Memo by Vaclav Havel
Directed by Stephen Nunns

The Apocalypse Comes at 6pm
by Georgi Gospondinov
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

2014 - 2015

Social Creatures by Jackie Sibblies Drury
Directed by Kellie MeCleary

References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot
by Jose Rivera
Directed by Steve Satta

Utopia Parkway by Charles Mee
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

Blind from Here by Alix Fenhagen
Directed by Stephen Nunns

White Suit Science by Shawn Reddy
Directed by Jessica Garrett

2015 - 2016

Phoebe in Winter by Jen Silverman
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy

Year of the Rooster by Olivia Dufault
Directed by Dustin Morris

Something Like Jazz Music
by Single Carrot Theatre & Genevieve de Mahy
Directed by Alix Fenhagen

Midlife by Ben Hoover
Directed by Kellie MeCleary

2016 - 2017

Savage/Love by Sam Shepard & Joseph Chaikin
Directed by Jen Spieler

Samsara by Lauren Yee
Directed by Lauren Saunders

Undercurrent: Theatre for Now Festival
Featuring Keith A. Wallace, Nicole Brown,
Madeline Burrows, & Daniel Park

A Short Reunion: A Festival of World Premiere
10-minute plays by SCT produced playwrights

Promenade: Baltimore
by Single Carrot Theatre & Stereo Akt
Directed by Martin Boross



2017 - 2018

Lear by Young Jean Lee
Directed by Andrew Peters

Peter Pan or Wendy, Peter. Peter, Wendy
by Joshua Conkel
Directed by Tristan Powell

A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay
About The Death of Walt Disney
by Lucas Hnath
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy
& Matthew Shea

2018 - 2019

Putin on Ice (that isn't the real title of this show)
by Lola B. Pierson
Directed by Yury Urinov
Co-produced with The Acme Corporation

Pink Milk by Ariel Zetina
Directed by B Kleymeyer

2019 - 2020

Mr. Wolf by Rajiv Joseph
Directed by Genevieve de Mahy
& Lauren Jackson

Safe Space by R. Eric Thomas
Directed by B Kleymeyer

we broke up. by DJ Hills
Directed by B Kleymeyer

2020 - 2021

THE PANDEMIC SEASON

Keep Off the Grass: A Guide to [something]
Created by the Single Carrot Ensemble,
Collaborating Artists, & the Baltimore Community

Healthy Holly's Hidden Hideaway
by Agyeiwaa Asante & April Amara
Directed by Kevin McAllister

I Hope This Finds You...
A collection of multi-media pieces by
the Single Carrot Theatre Ensemble

Covid Monologues
Research based public health monologues

2021 - 2022

Every Brilliant Thing
by Duncan Macmillan & Johnny Donahoe
Directed by Paul Diem & Genevieve de Mahy

Is Edward Snowden Single? by Kate Cortesi
Directed by Alix Fenhagen

Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes
by Terry Guest
Directed by Brandon Rashad Butts

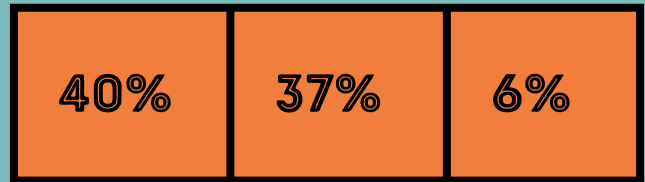
Unmarked: Stories Told, one-act plays
by Sefu Chikelu, Megan Livingston, & Jordan Ealy

Kiss Me, Mr. Musk: a Climate Change Parable
Devised by the ensemble, script by B Kleymeyer,
Tina Canady & Genevieve de Mahy
Directed by B Kleymeyer



PRODUCTION DEMOGRAPHICS

PLAYWRIGHTS



Women

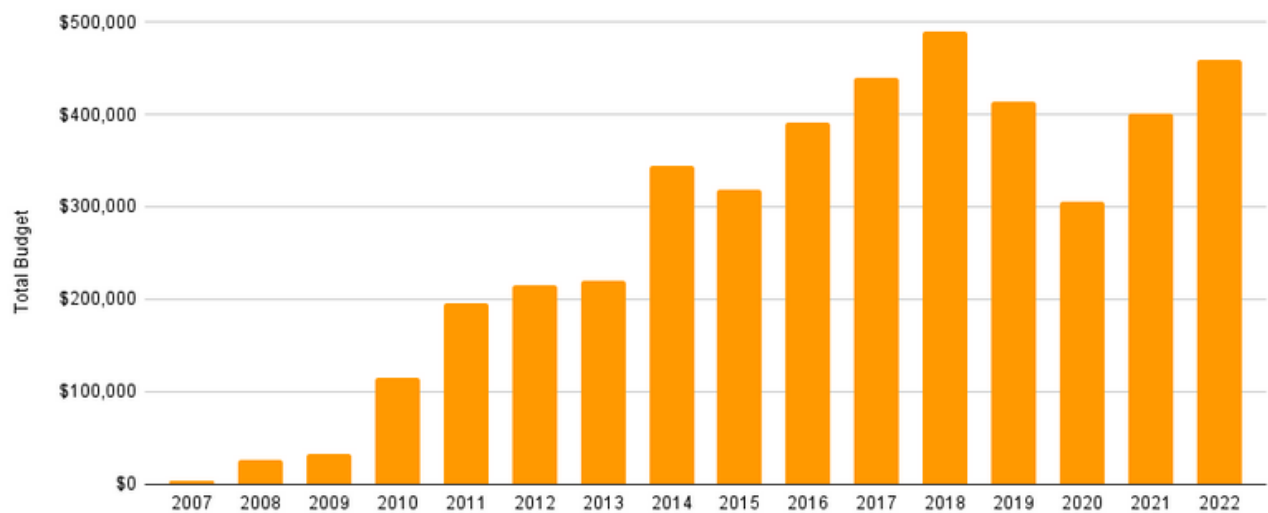
People of Color

Trans & Gender Queer

DIRECTORS



ANNUAL BUDGET GROWTH 2007 - 2022





CARROTS IN
LOVE

CARROTS IN LOVE

ELLIOTT & BRITT



After graduating from Peabody Conservatory Britt had heard a rumor that there was a hit new theater company in Baltimore. After attending a show and being put on SCT's contact list she started receiving subscription sales calls from the box office even though she had moved back to Connecticut. The stars aligned and Britt returned to Baltimore to rehearse and perform in a show that was also being produced in Load of Fun.

After I received coaching on how to communicate via text message with recent college graduates I secured a first date. We went to Brewers Art and the bill was \$22.22 (22 is a lucky number for all Carrots). Our love of theatre, Baltimore, and a shared home town brought us closer together. Since our first date in summer 2010 we got married in 2014, now have 2 beautiful boys, a dog, a cat, and a home together. Our meeting, falling in love, and starting a family would never of happened without Single Carrot Theatre.

My favorite time playing the stage with Britt was when we played brother and sister in **The Long Christmas Ride Home** by Paula Vogel. A close second was **The Britt and Elliott 40-Minute Variety Hour** from Baltimore Fringe in 2013.

DOMINIC & ZIPPORAH

Dominic and Zipporah met during the workshop for **Promenade: Baltimore** in fall 2016 at Single Carrot Theatre. They were both cast in the official production of the show the following summer in 2017. They instantly hit it off as friends, but of course, it didn't take long for them to fall in love! On Tuesday, November 21, 2017, they decided to be together! On Saturday, March 20, 2021, they were engaged, and on Thursday, October 20, 2022, they were married!! Single Carrot Theatre will always hold a special place in their hearts for being the place where they found true love.



STEVEN & ILANA

When Ilana Silverstein's punk rock feminist dance trio, Tia Nina, performed at Single Carrot, she was wooed by Single Carrot sound designer Steven Krigel's mad Qlab skills. Well, I don't need to tell you what happened next. They had a baby. A baby with Ilana's grace and Steven's shit-eating grin.

ALEX & BRENDAN

In the dark of the theater, I thought Brendan was leaning into me and I was all, "Whoa, this guy is making moves!". I realized later I had draped myself over his shoulder. He told me that he was all, "This lady is all over me!" And at some point, I turned my head and kissed him right on the mouth! Because I'd committed to not flirting, I stared into the theater and thought, "Shit. I have a boyfriend now."

In Feb 2023, we celebrated 10 years together. Most years we would go to a Single Carrot show for our anniversary and cheers the Carrots for being critical waypoints in our early relationship. We're grateful to Single Carrot for bringing so much joy and thoughtful storytelling over the years--hooray for the hard work, the love, the hugs, and the fun!



GENEVIEVE & KAVEH

Kaveh and Genevieve first became acquainted while working at another theatre in town. After over a year of missed attempts to flirt with one another, Kaveh came to see Genevieve perform in Richard III. It was opening night in July and it was hot. Seriously, there was no AC in that place. After the show, Genevieve was very sweaty and nervous. Kaveh joined Genevieve and the crew at Joe Squared. The next week, he asked her out on a date. 15 years later they have two children and are celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary. Even though their thruple with Single Carrot is ending, they are looking forward to many more decades together.



NATHAN & VASILENA

Nathan met Vasilena in 2011 when they were introduced by Philip Arnoult. Their theatre companies (Single Carrot & 36 Monkeys) started an international collaboration, which soon turned into a more personal collaboration for them. They now live with their children in Sofia Bulgaria, where they are both independent artists.



JOEY & EMILY

From carrots to beans— Brought together through climbing rope, Samson the elephant, and a scrappy theatre company. Single carrot (and the work of Mr. Elliott Rauh) made this love story happen.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

As Single Carrot's Director of Artistic & Community Partnerships, it's been amazing to partner with so many local communities and individuals. I want to thank all of the organizations that have been a part of SCT's journey and left an impact on our artists and audiences. I'm so proud to have cultivated these relationships and highlighted just some of the incredible work going on in Baltimore.

From making seed bombs to help keep Baltimore green to commemorating the 41 unmarked gravesites of African Americans discovered at St John's cemetery, it's been an honor to dive head first into creating community based theater. I have also had the opportunity to highlight people on Single Carrot's podcast Carrot Conversations. This podcast has highlighted playwrights, actors, organizations and even best friends. I have loved sitting down with people and getting to know their work and their stories. Below are a few highlights.

Unmarked was a collaborative project between Single Carrot Theatre, St. John's Church, and residents of Waverly and the surrounding communities. The project commemorated the 41 unmarked gravesites of African Americans from the latter half of the 19th century in the cemetery of St. John's Church in Waverly. Single Carrot Theatre and commissioned playwrights worked with the Waverly community, and historian and local resident, Jessica Douglas, to uncover as much historical information as possible about the individuals interred and life for Black Americans during the Reconstruction Era. The result was staged readings of plays by Sefu Chikelu, Megan Rucker Livingston, and Jordan Ealey.

Our partnership for **Is Edward Snowden Single?** included interviewing local best friends about what makes their relationships so special. A new podcast episode was released every week leading up to the show's premiere and our final episode featured playwright, Kate Cortesi and her best friend!

For the production of **Every Brilliant Thing** we worked with the American Foundation for Suicide prevention, On Our Own Maryland and Bmore Clubhouse. A few carrots participated in the annual Out of the Darkness walk and AFSP donated mental health beads which were free for the audiences of Every Brilliant Thing. I also spent "A day in the life" at Bmore Clubhouse and filmed some of the amazing work that they do. On Our Own Maryland was featured on Carrot Conversations as well!



Tina Canady in Safe Space

One of my proudest collaborations at Single Carrot was presenting Baltimore's first Black Theatre night for our production of **Marie Antoinette and the Magical Negroes** by Terry Guest. This night provided discounted tickets for audience members who identified as Black, a pre-show happy hour and a talkback with participating artists.

During Marie Antoinette, we also partnered with Black Yield Institute. This partnership allowed the cast of the show to perform at Black Yield's weekly farmers market and BYI featured their photo in the lobby of the Peale Center.

Tina Canady, an ensemble and staff member, created and supported community and artistic partnerships for 2 years. In 2019, Single Carrot changed its mission to focus on community engaged art-making. Tina was the first staff person to hold a position solely dedicated to this work.

EDUCATION

With the belief that access to the arts is a right, not a privilege, our work onstage and in the community grows from the conviction that participatory cultural experiences facilitate learning and that artistic expression is a form of civic engagement. Our commitment to creating 21st century learners and fostering desire for learning through theatre has reached over 10,000 young people over 16 years.

"You had a great impact on my young life. I am forever grateful to you all! Thank you."

- Dyrrell Moon, Howard U. graduate

PARTNERS



36 Monkeys
901 Arts
Annapolis High School / Apex Arts
Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Arena Players
ArtsCentric, Inc.
Association of Independent Maryland Schools
B'More Clubhouse
Baltimore County Public Schools
Baltimore Crisis Response
Baltimore Rock Opera Society
Baltimore School for the Arts
Baltimore Spirit Co.
Bard High School Early College
Benjamin Franklin High School
Better Waverly Community Association
Billie Holiday Elementary
Black Yield Institute
Blue Water Baltimore
Branch Homeschool
Calvert School
Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary Middle School
Camp Imagination
Carver School for Arts and Technology
Cecil Elementary School
Center for International Theatre Development
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Charmington's
Chase Brexton
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company
Child First Authority, Inc.
Children's Mercy Research Institute, Kansas City
Church of the Guardian Angel
City College High School
City Springs Elementary/Middle School
Civic Works
Clifton Mansion
College of Notre Dame
Community College of Baltimore County
Coppin State University
Dance Exchange
Dorothy I. Height Elementary/Middle School
Dutch Courage
Education Based Latino Outreach (EBLO)
Enoch Pratt Free Library (Orleans Branch)
Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary/Middle School
Fells Point Corner Theatre
Fort Worthington Elementary (through YMCA)
Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School
FutureCare Health
Goucher College
Greater Remington Improvement Association
Harford Heights Elementary Middle School
Hearts and Ears
Joe Squared
Johns Hopkins University
Johnston Square Elementary (through YMCA)
Live Baltimore
Loyola College of Arts and Sciences
Lyric Baltimore
Margaret Brent Elementary/Middle School
Maryland Chapter of the American Foundation for
Suicide Prevention
Maryland Institute College of Art
Maryland State Police Child Recovery Unit
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
(NCMEC)
On Our Own of Maryland
Panic Button Theatre
Peabody Heights Brewery
PFLAG
Promise Heights
Renaissance Academy High School
Reservoir Hill Improvement Council
Shenandoah University
St. John's In The Village Episcopal Church
St. Paul's School
StereoAkt
Strand Theatre Company
Strong City Baltimore
Sweet 27
Teach for America
The Acme Corporation
The Community School
The Greenmount School
The Park School
The Peale Center
The Space for Creative Black Imagination
Towson University
Turnaround Inc.
Two Strikes Theatre Collective
Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia
University of Baltimore
University of Maryland School of Social Work's Child Sex
Trafficking Victims Initiative
Village Learning Place
Walter P Carter Elementary Middle School
Wiley H. Bates Middle School
William S. Baer School
Wombwork Productions
Young Audiences of Maryland



NARRATIVES



THE BEACON ON THE HILL. THEN THE BURDEN

The move to and from Howard St.

by Genevieve de Mahy

Single Carrot Theatre came from humble beginnings and spent the first five years of its life as a tiny 50 seat storefront theatre in a grassroots arts collective building called Load Of Fun, now the Motor House at 120 W. North Avenue. This space had a tiny jam packed audience, barely a backstage, and depending on the configuration of the stage, limited entrances and exits for actors and audience alike. In a few short years, Single Carrot experienced rapid growth: from start up funds of \$1,000 in our founding artistic director's bank account when moving to Baltimore to crossing the \$300,000 mark for our annual budget by 2014, this growth resulted in the need for a permanent and long-term home. Single Carrot believed that that it could attract more funding if it was better established and institutionalized. At that point in time we were under the conviction that a "legitimate" theater requires a permanent space and robust administrative structure. After conversations with many other developers, the board and ensemble decided on the Tire Shop at 2600 N. Howard St. as our permanent space. Once Single Carrot moved into the Tire Shop a year later, there was the palpable thrill of feeling like we had finally made it. We were finally home.

After just a year of being in the space, costs to our landlord increased significantly. When moving into the building, the expense was already ambitious. Over the coming years, rent and facilities costs increased to a place that posed a significant organizational challenge. When Single Carrot had the "Save Single Carrot" emergency campaign in 2018, after 4 years at the tire shop, our rent and facilities costs exceeded \$6,000 per month, not including electricity and other expenses.

We were fortunate that this campaign was successful for us to continue as a company, but it also illuminated the fact that we were spending too much money on a building and wanted to redirect those resources to invest in people and programming. Single Carrot went through a collective and extensive strategic planning process to determine its next moves. Inspired by the community centered approach to recent productions like *Peter Pan* or *Wendy, Peter, Peter, Wendy* and *Promenade: Baltimore*, we shifted our mission to focus on Baltimore communities through site-specific and partner based artistic programming and an expansion of process centered education programs.

Two productions into this new model, SCT was beginning to map a path forward when the COVID-19 pandemic halted our final production of Season 12.

In the years after moving out of the Tire Shop, we were able to invest significantly more in people so that we could better serve our new mission. We increased our staff from 5 to 6.5 full-time equivalents, which included expanding existing positions and creating new positions like our Director of Artistic and Community Programs. Salaries increased by an average of 25%. We doubled artist pay with an average artist stipend range of \$300-1000 in 2018 to \$600-1700 per production by our closing. By investing in a full time Education Director, education programs more than doubled, making Single Carrot one of the largest employers of theatre teaching artists in Baltimore. At the same time, pay for teaching artists increased from an average of \$30/hr to \$70/hr.

While the increases in salaries and stipends were still not adequate for long term retention and sustainability, SCT successfully reduced its facility and production expenses to invest in people and programs. In 2017, a little over 50% of our budget went to personnel costs. In 2022, personnel made up over 75% of our budget, with over \$150,000 being paid to artists, teaching artists and other freelance creatives.



Facility costs went from 19% of our budget in 2017 to 4% in 2022, saving approximately \$70,000 annually that went straight into supporting personnel. Due to the other challenges during the pandemic and emerging from it, SCT was never able to fully invest in and realize its community focused, facility-free model before making the decision to close.

In the future plans that never came to fruition, SCT was still seeking a pathway to reach hourly minimum wage for artists. This would have required SCT to double its artist pay again, to average \$2000-2500 per artist stipend. While these visions were not achieved, SCT made great strides in staff and artist pay and was one of the highest paying non-equity theatre companies in the city. Other structural hurdles of the industry and funding amount limitations in the philanthropic sector prevented this vision from being fully realized before Single Carrot's closing.

RISKY BUSINESS

by Alix Fenhagen

“We take risks in the pursuit of artistic excellence and innovation,” is one of Single Carrot Theatre’s stated values. While this sentiment was only thus articulated on a formal list of values years into SCT’s existence, artistic risk-taking and Single Carrot Theatre have been intertwined since the company’s inception. This brief article will reflect on some of the factors in SCT’s 16-year lifespan that supported and contributed to artistic risk-taking as well as those that stood in its way, and in doing so, will hopefully provide some insight to encourage and guide the future theatre explorers.

Baltimore

There are many things about Baltimore that contribute to its being home to an artistic community empowered to take risks. Compared to other cities with robust theatre scenes like New York, Chicago, and DC, the cost of living in Baltimore is significantly lower, the cost to rent space is lower, and, while the field of philanthropy is in flux and has certainly shifted over the past 16 years, the region has grants and funding for both small arts organizations and artists to make theatre. These factors were amongst those that brought a small group of graduates from University of Colorado Boulder to found Single Carrot Theatre in Baltimore in the first place.

Let’s be clear, creating theatre is always a risk, and even when producing a known and beloved hit show, there is never a guarantee of success--artistic, commercial, or other. When mounting a new play by an emerging playwright, an original devised production, or a piece verging on performance art, the chances of recouping costs of production are significantly reduced. The affordability of the city and slightly lower costs of producing theatre here reduce the financial stakes of trying something and failing.*



This was especially true in the early days of Single Carrot Theatre, when all the labor and creation was avidly fulfilled by a bunch of creative 20-somethings. There is a freedom in knowing that the stakes are low when it comes to the commercial failure or success of a show. It allows artists to reach beyond their known ability and find new things. It encourages playfulness in the approach to theatre. Part of this knowledge comes with knowing that there will be another time to try: one failed risk, one failed production won’t be the end of things. And because of this freedom, young artists were able to try new things: roles they would not otherwise be cast as, plays that would not otherwise have come to Baltimore audiences, approaches, staging, or experimenting with technology they had no experience with.

* In truly examining costs of producing live theatre, there is a larger, urgent, and more complicated conversation about appropriately compensating theatre artists in a city like Baltimore, which I will not address here. The addressing of this issue by the arts and funding community, however, is paramount to not only ensuring that talented artists who make up the aforementioned “artistic community empowered to take risks” remain in this city, but also to increasing the diversity, equity, and inclusion of this community.

Ensemble

At the start of Single Carrot Theatre, it was clear that the ensemble was the driving force behind the company, or, to be more truthful, the ensemble was the company. There was, of course, a small, dedicated, and enthused board, but the ensemble members chose, made, and carried out every production and almost every role in and behind every show. All the Carrots had come from the theatre department at the University of Colorado, Boulder. They had studied together, performed together, hung out together, and moved across the country together. They knew each other, how one another worked, and what one another was capable of. And there was an immense amount of trust in this intimate knowledge. This was certainly not to say that the theatre-making process was free of conflict, creative people are often temperamental, and where there are strong drives, there are often big opinions and feelings. But the drive to create and the trust and intimacy that had grown amongst the ensemble members through their time and experiences together, led to collaborative art-making teeming with artistic risks and to the realization of work beyond what one person might dare to do on their own.

As the ensemble expanded beyond the founding members, it held firm to the belief that the ensemble was the heart of Single Carrot Theatre. Members were involved in multiple productions per season, and the ensemble invested time and money in artistic trainings together. At one point these were long-form contact improv in the style of Double-Edge Theatre out of Massachusetts. They later opened up to other practices, explorations, or activities led by different members. The introduction of new members to the ensemble meant having artists with different theatre backgrounds and training. The idea behind trainings was for the ensemble to create and share in a common artistic vocabulary to draw from and to continue to build and foster artistic trust. Scheduling and investment from all members for trainings was often a challenge and would continue to be so until the company's decision to close earlier this year. But even so, when the ensemble got into a room to work together, the sum always added up to more than the parts.

This belief, support, and trust encouraged artists to try something new. Risks were collaborative and involved different ensemble members in different ways—each to his/her/their own capacity. Carrots jumped whole-heartedly into the work, and committed to the risks. The result was sometimes magic, and sometimes mess, but was almost always unexpected and interesting.

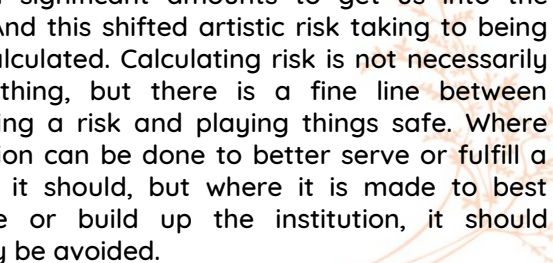
As the ensemble shifted and aged, other life obligations became more pressing, and members became involved in different capacities and degrees. Carrots were not involved in every production of the season and they didn't hang out every weekend. At the same time, trainings became fewer and far between. With ensemble members filling fewer roles, SCT looked to include more guest artists as performers, designers, and directors. This allowed more voices onto SCT's stages and into the creative process. Artistic risk taking was still important to the company, and plays being considered for the season were assessed with this in mind, but the nature of ensemble building changed. Rather than being inherent to the body as a whole, the ensemble found intimacy to take on artistic risk on a production by production basis, which depended on the rehearsal process led by that play's director. During this period SCT also looked towards collaboration and partnering internationally as a path through which to enhance artistic risk-taking in the work. Examples of this include working with Hungarian company Stereo Akt on **Promenade: Baltimore**, partnering with the Acme Corporation on **Putin On Ice (that isn't the real title of this show)**, as well as SCT's early international collaboration with Bulgarian company 33 Monkeys on **PO Box Unabomber**.



It is worth noting that in the early years, while the ensemble was the force behind artistic innovation and risk-taking, there was sometimes a tension between the work that would serve the artists involved and work that served the audience and community. Single Carrot Theatre was trying to serve. This is a tension that remained throughout its existence, but paying attention to it, and questioning the intentions behind taking on certain projects as well as considering who, beyond ensemble members, should be involved in the creative process, allowed SCT to often strike a balance that led to theater equally fulfilling to those involved and those watching. This is what kept artists and audiences continuing to invest in Single Carrot Theatre.

A Higher Underground

In its transition to 2600 N Howard Street, what had been positioned as SCT's forever home, SCT uncovered challenges to the earlier freedom it had felt to take artistic risks. The cost of failure had increased in numerous ways. Firstly, the cost of operating had grown: rent and utilities had gone up significantly, and there was more staff to pay. Then there was the cost of reputation with patrons and funders. With the move came the expectation that SCT had gone from being a DIY, scrappy company, to being a community anchor and an independent theatrical institution. So, where was this money to support this new identity to come from? Well, from selling more tickets was the expectation, but we remained committed to keeping prices accessible, and continued to create work that was often weird, unknown, and unpredictable. This meant that failure and bombing at the box office threatened not only our bottom line and ability to operate, but also our reputation with those individuals and foundations who had donated significant amounts to get us into the space. And this shifted artistic risk taking to being more calculated. Calculating risk is not necessarily a bad thing, but there is a fine line between calculating a risk and playing things safe. Where calculation can be done to better serve or fulfill a mission, it should, but where it is made to best preserve or build up the institution, it should certainly be avoided.



I would like to think that for the most part, SCT managed to do the former, but certainly there were shows that didn't make our seasons for the latter reason. Up to this point, a shift in the season's schedule, a delay of an opening by a week, or a swap of a show would not have been a big deal, but now, with the expenses, and salaries, and loads of communication needed to be done to put butts in seats, such shifts to accommodate hiccups that arise with creative-risk taking became situations to be avoided at all costs. And consequently, risks were sometimes subdued to only those that we could be pretty sure would work out well. This was especially true in new work or devised pieces. The deadline of being production ready on a certain date meant that the creative development process was often cut short too early to assure that the final product would be ready to reflect our new elevated brand.

Devising/Revising

This focus on deadlines and drive to make things that would be marketable put the most pressure on Single Carrot's devised work and processes. Creating new work, stemming from collaborative generation rather than an already authored script is by definition jumping into the creative unknown. It is something that artists in the ensemble at Single Carrot Theatre were drawn to time and again. Jessica Garrett, a founding ensemble member, used to say that the show would take as long to create as the time we had. And certainly this was true, but in large part this was due to the continued pressure to move onto the next production, to make sure that we were programming more, and putting more butts in the seats. This meant that as a devising process began, the deadline already loomed large, and often the creative exploration, the risk taking, and the exploration of the weird and wild was suffocated or subdued by the impending knowledge that we needed to arrive at a performance-ready product in X number of weeks (the X usually being a number substantially lower than would ideally foster a devising process). While the deadline ensures forward movement, as time went on and the risk of failure became heavier, the free and explorative devising would be cut short, curtailed, or strong armed to ensure enough time to get to something performance ready.

The result was that few of the pieces devised by SCT were truly performance ready—they were polished enough, but the creative substance and life of innovation were not fully there. The ensembles of the pieces and the larger Single Carrot Ensemble agreed that there was always more to flush out to be explored. But once mounted, there was no room in the season or the capacity of the organization or the people involved to return to the process in order to revise what was only partially finished or build upon what had been learned from putting things in front of an audience. And so, what felt like a huge artistic risk, rarely fully paid off for those involved or the audience watching.

There were exceptions and most of those involved partnership and the guidance of a director who had workshopped previous iterations of the piece, as was the case with **Promenade: Baltimore**.

Beyond the Walls

One sadness of Single Carrot Theatre closing when it is, is that the tremendous opportunity to take artistic risks surrounding the embracing of untraditional venues has not yet been fully explored. Just as the architecture and restrictions of the space at Load of Fun, where Single Carrot Theatre resided in its early seasons, led to creative solutions and use of the space. Taking theatre beyond the black box meant that each play and each set would require adaptive solutions, and each selected setting would contribute to the artistic quality and impact of each play.

Creative risk-taking is built into this model of theatre, but it is also incredibly labor intensive and best realized with ample advance planning, something that SCT, with too few people stretched to do too many things, was never really able to do. Even so, in the early parts of this model there were exciting discoveries that came with the more immersive and intimate settings of some shows we undertook. From **Safe Space** in the basement of a historic mansion, to **Is Edward Snowden Single?** in a bar, to **Every Brilliant Thing** in an outdoor tent in different backyards around Baltimore, the constraints of the space provided fodder for creativity and the spaces themselves became sources of inspiration.



So What?

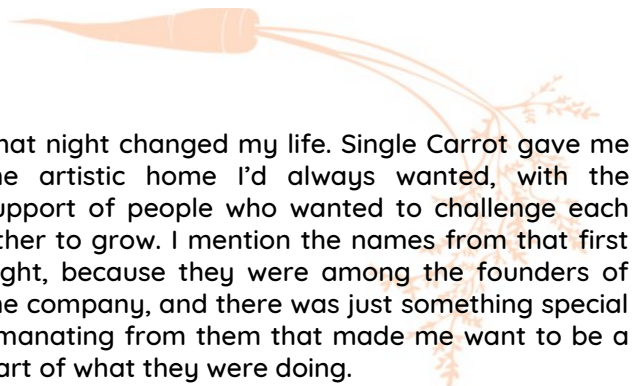
Single Carrot Theatre is no stranger to taking risks. Artists were drawn to work with the company or find their artistic home there as an ensemble member in some part because of this. Not all of these risks yielded the payoff of a transcendent moment of theatre. Sometimes they leaned towards artist indulgence, sometimes they were not leveraged enough or explored as deeply as they could have been. Sometimes they were just plain arbitrary. But at large, when the environment permitted the space, the freedom, the support, and the creative input, sometimes they resulted in moments of theatrical magic. Those are the moments that audience members who were there continue to reflect on to this day. And whether fully realized or not, the company never ceased striving to strike the right balance of risk. Making theatre is hard and it is not worth doing without taking the risk—it is often on the edge of complete disaster when a risk shifts into an unforgettable theatrical experience.



THAT NIGHT CHANGED MY LIFE

by Paul Diem

I first heard of Single Carrot when I lived in Los Angeles. My sister was working for Baltimore Crisis Response, whose director Edgar Wiggins was also a board member for Single Carrot. After seeing a show at SCT she called me and said, “Hey, there’s a theatre company here in Baltimore doing the same kind of weird stuff you love, maybe you should come home... They’re called Single Carrot.” You don’t forget a name like “Single Carrot Theatre,” and it stuck with me. Several years later (Season 4 of SCT) I was back in Baltimore, driving south on 95 when another actor, a mutual friend of the Carrots and mine called and asked if I wanted to go see Paula Vogel’s **Long Christmas Ride Home** at SCT. I’d been meaning to check out the company, had marveled at their marquee on North Ave. when driving by, and as a long-time fan of Vogel’s work, I took him up on his offer. I remember so much about that evening, Jessica Garrett handing me a program and a Boh, Aldo Pantoja as the preacher, Genevieve de Mahy as the mother, and Elliott Rauh nailing that incredibly difficult monologue in Act 2. It was an electric experience. After the show my friend and I went out for a drink with Gen and Kaveh (Genevieve’s husband in the show and soon to be in real life) and Gen mentioned that she was looking for an actor that played banjo. My friend mentioned that I played banjo, and 10 days later I was in rehearsal for **Linus and Alora**.



That night changed my life. Single Carrot gave me the artistic home I’d always wanted, with the support of people who wanted to challenge each other to grow. I mention the names from that first night, because they were among the founders of the company, and there was just something special emanating from them that made me want to be a part of what they were doing.

I came along at an interesting time in the company. As I was working on **Linus**, the founding artistic director Buck Jabaily and his wife Meg (another founding member) were transitioning out of the company full-time. When I worked with the company again in Season 5 they had taken on their first non-CU grad members. By Season 6 when I was a fellow, **Load of Fun**, the space the company used, was shut down and we had to transition to a new space on the fly. At my first company meeting as a fellow we looked at the blueprints for the space at 2600 N. Howard. Towards the end of Season 6 Aldo Pantoja and Nathan Cooper (SCT’s second Artistic Director) announced they were leaving before Season 7 and before moving into our “permanent home” at 2600 N. Howard. By Seasons 8 and 9 Nathan Fulton and Elliott Rauh were gone and Genevieve de Mahy was the only remaining founder.

By season 10 even the new members added before I joined the company were gone. I felt (and still feel) a deep responsibility to those people who chose Baltimore and picked up and moved here to start something special. I had found my artistic home, because of the sacrifices they had made.

As an actor, there is nothing quite like having a home where you can grow with other artists who share the same values. Having this consistent base of artists allows you to truly push yourself. Working with an ensemble allows you consistent artistic feedback from other artists invested in your growth and a unique opportunity to attempt new roles that expand your own artistic process. A working actor is a solitary existence, but working with an ensemble gives an actor the same community that we value in production on a consistent basis. The individual and collective growth that can be built upon in an ensemble is remarkable, and can be career-altering for an actor.

Because of these two factors, the unique time in which I entered SCT, and the value of an artistic home, I remain deeply indebted to the company and the opportunities it provided, and deeply reverential of those who uprooted their lives to choose Baltimore. As a company grows, it's natural for what has been in place for a year or two to seem like stasis, and the sacrifices made by those who came at the forefront of the company are forgotten by those new to the work. It has always been incredibly important to me to uphold the memories and legacies of the founders. There is no SCT without the founders, and the legacy of the company doesn't exist without college students driving a Penske truck across the country, sight unseen to a city whose mass-media reputation was then and continues to be deeply tarnished.

The fact that the founding ensemble chose Baltimore, as opposed to anywhere else, was a vital part of Baltimore accepting and supporting the Carrots. In 2008, we (Baltimore) needed a "win", and something so small as an ensemble theatre company choosing the city seemed like something special. SCT continued to be something special, and I'd like to think it helped change the city's scene. It certainly changed my life.



The "life altering" part of all of this is what I think will be the company's legacy. The relationships, the friendships, the marriages, the children... all of that spawned from the work Single Carrot created. In the end, an ensemble is simply a collection of individuals with a shared goal - to create something together. "A Single Carrot - freshly observed - will set off a revolution." While it may feel like our revolution stalled at 15 years, I think its reverberations will be felt through generations, both artistically, and personally. Elliott Rauh (founding ensemble member) and I were once sitting on top of a platform in the theatre and he said to me "the best part of being in an ensemble is that I know that if for some reason I just threw a ball in the air during a show, that someone would catch it, and no one would know that it wasn't planned." I couldn't have said it better, and it has been one of the great joys of my life to toss balls in the air with Single Carrot Theatre, to carry on the work of the founders, and to help sustain it to everything it accomplished. I love you SCT. I don't know what I'd be without you.

NEW YORK ISN'T COMING TO SAVE BALTIMORE

by Laura Malkus

In 1984, Esquire Magazine heralded William Donald Schaefer as the Best Mayor in America in response to his folksy, charismatic PR campaign. Like most urban centers, Baltimore was navigating industrial decline, draconian cuts in federal investment, and a legacy of pernicious white supremacy that erodes the very foundation of our city. Still, Schaefer's antics garnered national attention. Thus began a decades-long lie: That Baltimore will be saved by forces outside of its borders. Whether it be tech investment (1990s), real estate development (early aughts), or even an international brewery (2018), surely - surely - someone is coming to save Baltimore.

Just as our economic and political leaders have embraced this sentiment, so too have our artistic institutions. It is long forgotten that Baltimore Center Stage was first a community theatre group, that the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was the only US orchestra created as a branch of municipal government, that the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) was commissioned to bring cultural legitimacy to a city decimated by a Great Fire. Our arts anchors are genuinely home-grown. So why do our institutions disdain Baltimore's artists so much?

The first answer is and always will be racism. For well over a century now, many of Baltimore's municipal policies related to taxing, policing, education, and even our cities' borders have been specifically designed to disenfranchise Black citizens. So what happens, then, when our city is increasingly Black? Structural racism has made our city deeply unstable; economically, politically, ethically. Meanwhile, a minority of white Baltimoreans still hold an overwhelming majority of regional wealth - and power - by all measures. And our arts anchors are still primarily led by wealthy white people.

Baltimore Center Stage hired its first Black (but British!) artistic director in 2011, but the BMA and the BSO are only getting around to diversifying their artistic leadership this year.



The Creative Alliance and the American Visionary Art Museum hired their first leaders of color in 2022. Artistic Leaders of these institutions (of any ethnicity) hailing from our actual region can be counted on half of one hand. If culture is meant to be representative of a people, our cultural anchors clearly hope to represent London or New York or maybe Chicago. Our leaders equate success and artistic rigor with what they see in magazines from other markets. Baltimore's largest arts institutions - people and places - don't want to be part of a club that would have them as a member.

Meanwhile, Baltimore's artistic "quirk" is famously lauded in travel magazines and style publications. From John Waters to our viral salt boxes, from our historic House Music legacy to the oldest continually running community theatres in the nation, our artist culture makes us a bonafide destination. So why won't most of our artistic anchors hire and support Baltimore's artists in a way that allows them to make a living? Perhaps for the same reason our legislature sold out local breweries to attract a Guinness factory to town. It is just easier to follow the promise of something shiny than it is to fix a fundamentally broken infrastructure. Especially post-Covid, arts institutions need to make radical strategic and budgetary shifts, adjust to the economic realities of our region, and calibrate to actual justice.



To do that, we'd almost have to start from scratch. It is far easier to hire a magical new artistic leader from New York or Chicago and ask them to fix it all without any tools.

Unfortunately, what we've seen is that the success of other markets can't be replicated the same ways in our city. Baltimore is a tricky consumer market. Her residents are stubborn, stratified, and have long memories. We hold grudges. And most importantly, Baltimore's funding entities are either incapable of or uninterested in meaningfully investing in a thriving artist economy.

As the Development and Communications Director at Single Carrot Theatre at this, the tail end of its existence, I have never seen a small theatre so adept at institutional fundraising. From Deutsch to the NEA, Shubert to small, under the radar family foundations, Single Carrot Theatre left no grant stone unturned - and was wildly successful with a miniscule staff. In the past year, we had a 90% win rate with grant applications. And still that extraordinary success resulted in barely enough to pay three full-time staff for one year, let alone produce any theatre.

Our artistic anchors devour an overwhelming share of public and private resources, and what little corporate investment remains in our area is also focused on these same institutions. The same funders that offer Single Carrot Theatre a maximum of \$5,000 a year do not hesitate to offer Center Stage five times that. The reasons for this are complex - mostly related to demands for largescale popular impact, maintenance of large institutional liabilities (which are maddeningly viewed negatively in smaller organizations), and a desire to associate with a higher profile than Baltimore authentically commands. But this means that an infinitesimal percentage of local funds go Baltimore's artists. Is it more objectively impactful to offer a popular artistic offering to a large

number of passive audience members, or to hire the largest number of theatre teaching artists in the state, as Single Carrot Theatre was doing last year? With its revised mission Single Carrot Theatre doubled down on Baltimore, on artists, and on community. While its programs, its art, and even its fundraising efforts were objectively successful, in the end there weren't enough resources available.

In 2018 a delegation of New York theatre press came to Baltimore on a fact-finding mission. Baltimore's theatre influencers assembled to tout the merits of the Baltimore scene and pitch Baltimore-centric theatre stories. The idea on our end was that maybe media intelligentsia from New York might have an actual interest in our art. Perhaps that could get the ball rolling here. But the The New York Times folks were not coming to save Baltimore. They hoped to sell our quirk, our resiliency, our inspiration to their national readership.

The incredible pluck and resilience of Baltimore's artists in the face of perpetual divestment is a testament to just how strong and brilliant our artistic light is. Imagine how bright that light would shine if our leaders and our funders made seeding a thriving local artist economy their driving goal. Imagine if Baltimore City paid its largest capital grants outright instead of requiring arts institutions large and small to front hundreds of thousands of dollars out of pocket. Imagine if our corporations' paltry charitable dollars weren't negotiated in backrooms by Buddies on Boards. Imagine if funding formulas rewarded or even required local representation in the work presented by our wealthiest institutions. Imagine if artists could pay taxes, enrich our schools, brighten our streets, connect our neighbors, engage and uplift our kids AND make a reasonable living? Wouldn't that mean public dollars going right back into our communities? That was the Baltimore that Single Carrot Theatre hoped to help build: The Baltimore that saves itself.

PLANTING SEEDS & CREATING SPACE IN BALTIMORE

by Matthew Shea



I first moved to Maryland in 2008 to begin my acting studies at Towson University. Just one year earlier, almost to the day, Single Carrot Theatre opened their first production in Baltimore. While at Towson, I had the opportunity to see many shows across Baltimore's theatre scene, including multiple early SCT productions. After all, traversing Baltimore's theatrical landscape didn't take that long. While there were many small theatre companies throughout the city, when I graduated in 2012 there were only two traditional Equity regional theaters: Baltimore Center Stage, which was about to celebrate 50 years in the city, and Everyman Theatre, which was coming up on its 25th season. Now, eleven years later, only one other company has joined that tier: Chesapeake Shakespeare Company.

But union status isn't everything, and the vast majority of working actors in Baltimore are not part of Actors Equity. They, like me, graduated from one of the many college theatre programs in and around Baltimore and were looking for work. At the time, Center Stage was mainly casting out of New York and most roles at Everyman were held by the resident acting company there. So most Baltimore-based actors bounced around from one company to the next throughout the city.

Oddly enough, by 2015 I had worked at both Center Stage and Everyman ... on staff. For an actor, that can be a difficult position to be in at times. You can't help but feel like you're on the outside looking in. And it was while on staff at Everyman that I was cast in my first show at Single Carrot: *Phoebe in Winter*. I was cast just one day before the first rehearsal, so when I entered the room the whole process felt like a bit of a whirlwind. 36 hours prior doing a show that fall wasn't even on my radar and now here I was sitting down at the table with a cast of five other actors, three of whom were members of the Single Carrot Ensemble and another was a board member. The director was Genevieve de Mahy, the Artistic Director and only remaining founding Ensemble member. So as I pulled my chair up to the table, I was intimidated. This was Single Carrot's ninth season and these people had all been working together for most, if not all of those years. They had a shared language and knew each other intimately, on both a personal and professional level. I may be at the table now, but would I fit in, or would I once again feel like an outsider?

The answer came almost immediately. From the very first read through it was clear that SCT worked hard to make everyone in the production feel at home. While I may not have been in the Ensemble during that show, I felt welcomed and embraced by that Ensemble - the ensemble of the production. Throughout the process I never felt like a free agent playing for one team for just a few weeks, soon to move on (as I had while acting at other small theaters in the city), I felt like a key part of the team. So when the show ended, I was gutted. I really felt like I was losing something, that a chapter had ended. I suppose the feeling was mutual, because a little over six months later I was asked to join the Ensemble, where I would stay for the next seven years.

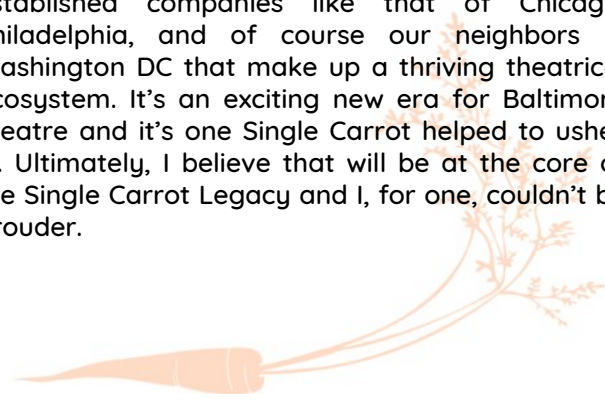
And while not every actor's SCT journey culminated in joining the Ensemble, many guest artists I've spoken to have shared that they felt the same way I did during Phoebe: that they belonged there. Whether you were in the Ensemble, on staff, or were a frequent collaborator, Single Carrot always tried to make theatre artists feel like they had a home in a theatre scene where "the big opportunities" could be hard to come by.

At our peak, Single Carrot boasted a large and expanding Ensemble housed in our own theater. We may never have ended up becoming an Equity theater (in fact for some Ensemble members it was important that we stayed non-Equity), but we were on our own path to joining the "top tier" of Baltimore theaters. That is to say: a fixture of the theatrical landscape of the city, an institution. One with an extensive group of artists beyond the resident Ensemble that regularly worked at the company and could feel at home there.

But the fact was, after a decade in the city we had already become one of the tent poles of Baltimore theatre. We were, as City Paper once said, "The Dean of Baltimore's Alternative Theatre Scene."

Before the arrival of Chesapeake Shakespeare from Howard County, Single Carrot was the third biggest theater in the city and we had earned a reputation for doing newer, more daring work and employing a wide range of theater artists beyond our core residents.

So today, while Single Carrot may be folding, there are many more theaters following the same trajectory that SCT helped pave: young, brave companies producing new and exciting work while providing an artistic home for young, non-Equity artists to grow, to thrive, and to feel safe, welcomed, and respected while doing it. I see a not-so-distant future where there is no "top tier" of Baltimore theatre, but instead many well-established companies like that of Chicago, Philadelphia, and of course our neighbors in Washington DC that make up a thriving theatrical ecosystem. It's an exciting new era for Baltimore theatre and it's one Single Carrot helped to usher in. Ultimately, I believe that will be at the core of the Single Carrot Legacy and I, for one, couldn't be prouder.





RUNNING A SMALL THEATRE TAKES A HERO (YOUR THEATRE LEADERS ARE NOT OK)

by Genevieve de Mahy

Nationwide, leaders are stepping down from theaters. From a quick search in American Theatre Magazine (the monthly industry publication) I found that in a little over 2 years (2020 through the first quarter of 2023) there have been 64 leadership resignations. In the 2 years prior (2019 and 2018), there were a total of 23. In earlier years, the numbers go back up, hovering in the high teens or low 20s. But the difference is that in that timeframe, roughly one third of leadership departures are retirements. Now, there are several leaders are leaving after a few years, some as little as 6 months.

Why are leaders leaving?

Obviously while the pandemic has taken a toll on the theater industry, there have also been incidents of institutions faced with acts of racism and abuse. Additionally, with the challenge to workforce norms happening across industries, one would expect demanding, all-consuming and under paid jobs like non-profit arts leadership to have some shake-ups. But something else is happening. Leaders are leaving with a new urgency, sometimes before their replacements are lined up.

In the San Francisco Chronicle article from August 2022, “Why are so many Bay Area theater leaders leaving their jobs?,” Lily Janiak notes various leaders’ time being consumed by administrative pressures, top to bottom tasks like coiling cable, and the lack of opportunity to build creative spaces or be creative themselves. And this time there is an even more startling difference - more theatre leaders are leaving the industry entirely, many of whom are only midway through their career.

The American theatre industry is structurally flawed. It is squeezed into a part capitalist/part non-profit model, neither of which fully fit, but without adequate subsidies it’s the only way that works well enough to keep things going. On top of this, it is saddled with the starving artist trope and expectation that there are people with a deep seated passionate need to make theatre who do not need fair compensation. Artists have chosen this life, and therefore, suffering is to be expected. The arts in general, are not valued in American culture as a legitimate profession, or a pinnacle of a thriving society, but rather an indulgence, a passionate side project, something only worth being a hobby.

To throw in a wrench, theatre is a human based industry- it takes a lot of people a lot of time to make theatre. So as time goes on, making it becomes incredibly expensive, outpacing the revenue generation to meet it. Over decades, theatre has increasingly relied on human capital to address this - counting on the fact that there will always be someone desperate for exposure. Let us not forget the industry trope, “the show must go on.” Because of this, in any theatre of any size, the trickle down cost of labor falls on someone’s back. That impact is frequently felt by its most vulnerable—temporarily contracted artists and employees. Regional theatres and summer stock festivals have relied on the unpaid or barely paid internship programs. For non-union companies, this burden usually falls on artists who get paid in stipends (rather than wages) that come nowhere near minimum wage. For volunteer-based community theatres, it falls on, well, the volunteers. Rarely are administrators getting paid adequately either for their jobs’ demands. Foundations are not increasing their funding at a pace rapidly enough to keep up with the cost of making theatre, nor are individual donors, as millennials and Gen Xers don’t have the disposable income of generations before.

These structural challenges run deep and are at the foundation of the American theatre. Theatre leaders alone cannot shift their singular institution to resolve an industry-wide problem. While they may seem powerful enough to do it, they are not. There is a tension right now between theatre leaders and artists and staff, and this tension is only growing. (Let me take a pause to acknowledge the many circumstances that have arisen to warrant distrust of leadership - Supporting abusers, being abusive themselves, acts of racism and exploitation both large and small, ego fueled leadership, etc.) Staff and artists alike are feeling undervalued and overworked. And most of the time, they are. The thing that may or may not be as seen is that theatre leaders feel the same way. In writing this article, I have talked with theatre leaders at all levels from volunteer to professional companies. These are leaders who see the inequities in the industry and are passionate about fixing them. But change does not always happen quickly, and these leaders alone cannot shift the entire industry away from a model reliant on human capital.



While leadership in theatre seems like a place of power and glamor, it is largely a role of servitude. A leader is serving its artists, its staff, its board - working to meet the needs of all of those entities and advocating for the most vulnerable when there is disagreement. One artistic leader I spoke with who is leaving the industry described the job as “thankless.” While it may seem like artistic directors are basking in the glory of opening night toasts and play reading, they are tirelessly working behind the scenes to make the thing itself happen, and this work largely goes unseen. You need to check on your theatres’ leaders. They are not OK.

A Hero is born, and perishes.

The situation for small theatres is even more complicated. Very few theatres with an operating budget of under 1 million even have any support staff for leaders and frequently only have a handful of staff to carry out the organizations’ operations and programs. Leaders of small theatres are expected to take on the pressures and responsibilities of running an institution with less internal support and even less compensation. This results in a structure that necessitates a hero. Or an Atlas. (You know, the guy holding the whole world on his shoulders?)

NARRATIVES

This hero (or heroes) are usually one to two people with either leadership or leadership adjacent roles within an organization. This is an unspoken and sometimes unrecognized role. The hero will fill in the gaps wherever necessary to make theatre happen. They greet you when the designated box office person can't make it, they stay up until 1am to get that surprise grant application/report in. They are scheduling the meeting, leading the meeting and taking notes at the meeting. They are taking out the trash and locking up. They are seeing other holes that need to be filled and filling them. This hero has an inexhaustible passion for theatre making. They believe in the power of the arts. They are doing everything they can to make sure the show happens. They are the pinnacle of sacrifice—compromising personal interests, family obligations and, you know, their life outside of theatre. Well, that is, if they have one.

In the post pandemic malaise, a theatre company's team of staff, artists, and volunteers have less capacity to "go above and beyond." They "can't do it." And yet, there is the unspoken expectation that **someone** will do it, and that someone will carry the load to make everyone's artistic dreams a reality. Enter hero. This hero is in trouble. This hero is drowning. Sometimes they see the water at their chin and sometimes they are in denial. This is the person that you need to be checking on. They are not OK.

I have been the hero at certain points during my tenure at Artistic Director, and I have been double cast as the hero with someone else. After becoming a parent, I could no longer be the hero, but a replacement naturally assumed the role. Then they moved on. And thusly, Single Carrot was faced with an impossible puzzle: Without the hero, the theatre cannot survive, but the hero, also cannot survive.



SIDE NOTE

I have not even gotten into the privilege required for someone to become a hero. The ability to work any and all hours without extra compensation. The economic privilege to be underpaid or not paid at all and not need to spend that time on other life sustaining employment. If heroes are parents, having a partner or free or low cost childcare in order to balance evening and weekend obligations. I don't think it's a coincidence that since the founding company members have turned 30, every single Managing, Artistic, and Executive Director at Single Carrot had a spouse who was the primary breadwinner of the partnership—others would not be able to afford to take the job. Furthermore, when leaders became parents, their leadership capacity was strained and another childless and younger hero emerged. This is to say nothing of the multitude of financial, transportation, health or caretaking obligations that would prevent someone from becoming a hero.

In ample times, organizations the size of Single Carrot can have an advantage. They can be adaptable and nimble, and make bold choices without too much threat to an institutional structure. They have adequate resources to take risks and enact bold choices, unlike volunteer based or DIY companies. At this current moment, small professionalized theatres like Single Carrot are vulnerable. They feel the impact of the current industry challenges the hardest. At an institution, there is a deep staffing infrastructure and resources to hire successors. And while jobs at institutions are demanding, compensation is competitive for the industry. On the other side, at a volunteer-based organization people enter with the implicit agreement of the position being voluntary. While volunteer recruitment can be a challenge, and while volunteer based theatres are not without financial obligations, they do not have the same liabilities of a small professionalized organization.

With liabilities to be maintained and the lack of resources to navigate leadership turnover and short staffing, a theatre company like Single Carrot cannot survive. Even if a pause was taken to restructure, when funding streams are disrupted, audience is not maintained, and staff has to be rebuilt, restarting would require a Herculean effort. It would require (dare I say it?) a hero who can save it. So we find ourselves in an unforgivable loop.

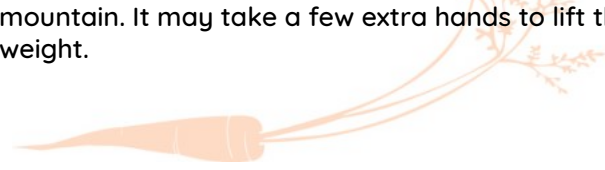
Is there hope for theatre?

I remain hopeful about the industry being able to right itself. We are creative, innovative and can make magic happen on a shoestring.

One thing that gives me hope is the emergence of alternative leadership models that signals the potential for more structural shifts. When I looked through American Theatre Magazine for leadership changes, I saw more than 10 large institutions shifting to more collective-based models of leadership. While there are small theatres with alternative models (Single Carrot decision making artistic ensemble included), this concept has not been implemented by large institutions. Some have multiple artistic leaders or rotating artistic directors, including the Wilma, Steppenwolf, Virginia Rep, City Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre to name a few.

I believe that theater is at a point where it must adapt or it will die, so while there will be carnage (9 theatre closures announced in American Theatre Magazine since 2020), some are embracing exciting new operational and program models that may prove successful.

To the artists reading this: you may be currently wrestling with your own relationship to theatre. The structures that have made theatre possible are deeply flawed. And at all levels, the industry itself relies on the fumes of passion and willpower. But those fumes are thin. We have all found ourselves coming out of this pandemic with our eyes even more wide open to the fact that the way we make theatre just doesn't make sense for our wellbeing. I'm not sure what the path to fix our industry is. But check on your leaders. The leaders who are listening, who you confront with these questions are not your enemies. They are your allies. Find solutions together. They want to make it work. They are trying. And they are tired. And what they are doing is probably not enough. And they can't fix it alone. And they are under a mountain. It may take a few extra hands to lift the weight.





REMEMBRANCES

REMEMBRANCES



As a founding board member, guest artist, and long-time participant in the Baltimore theater community, I have long appreciated SCT and what it brought to Baltimore City. In short SCT restored my conviction that theater can be impactful. The creativity and vibrancy that SCT brought its productions was truly awe inspiring. My involvement with SCT has helped nurture my creative soul and bought me years of passionate engagement in theater.

Richard Goldberg , Founding Board Member

Single Carrot was my first child. Single Carrot was the most fulfilling job I have ever had. I am proud of and grateful for everyone who played a role in its existence.

Buck Jabaily, Founding Artistic Director



Being a part of the Single Carrot community has been a wonderful gift. I was particularly impressed with the creativity and courage that the staff and ensemble brought to the work during the pandemic. I'm very grateful to every person who has been a part of this special organization.

Crystal Adams, Board Member

I remember Giti Jabaily coming to talk to my Senior Capstone class at UMBC in 2012 when I was a BFA Actor. That was the first time I heard a young artist say, "Hey, we're going to do this theatre thing for ourselves; we can figure this out" Without hearing that I'm not sure I would have had the courage to say the same thing to the Interrobangers when we were getting started in 2014. Thank you Single Carrot.

Katie Hilleman, Interrobang Theatre

The Carrots selected Baltimore as home, making us exceedingly proud. Better still, they brought a new energy to Baltimore theater presenting thought-provoking, engaging and entertaining productions. As time passed, some moved on but the core group stayed committed to its innovative processes, audience outreach and enriching Baltimore. Thank you for all you have done to make Baltimore home.

Melissa Warlow, William G. Baker Fund



Single Carrot Theatre created a revolution the moment they touched down in the Greatest City in America. They inspired countless artists - including myself - to make theater and believe in the transformative power of theater.

Britt Olsen-Ecker, Past Ensemble Member

REMEMBRANCES

When Single Carrot was on Charles St., we found *Tropic of X* particularly moving. When asked if I liked it, I said no. My interlocutor was crestfallen. I added, but I am not supposed to like it. I am supposed to be moved and challenged by it. It was a wonderful play beautifully produced. ... Some shows we found less successful, but in all cases, Single Carrot Theatre was doing something significant that no other theater company in Baltimore was offering. That was an important reason for our support. We will feel the void in our cultural calendar and then our intellectual lives.

F. William Chickering, Board Member

Single Carrot Theatre taught me how to make meaningful artistic experiences that can start important conversations. It also showed me the value of collaboration, the importance of fair treatment to artists, and the powerful effect of intimate theater.

**Brendan Ragan, Founding Ensemble Member
Founder, Urbanite Theatre
Artistic Director, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre**

In the end, both Single Carrot's successes and failures can be traced to the same driving force: our ceaseless desire to try. To try to break new ground, to try to innovate old scripts, to try to be a safe harbor to Baltimore artists. We weren't always successful, but we never failed to try. That's why those who call themselves a Carrot today will always be a Carrot.

Matthew Shea, Ensemble Member



Single Carrot was one of the most influential arts organizations in our community, not because they produced high quality productions, which they did, but more than most they furthered the discussion and conversation in a city that needed to have conversations expanded. To me, art is the best when it changes the way you see the world. Your connections to others is different. How you walk through your daily spaces is different. Single Carrot did that for me. I am proud of being connected to Single Carrot and for them allowing me to be connected to their important work - work that will have important ripples in our community for many years to come.

John Brothers, T. Rowe Price Foundation

In 2014, before we had officially formed Submersive, I received a Rubys grant to do our first show ("*The Mesmeric Revelations! of Edgar Allan Poe*"). Ursula and I knew almost no-one in the local theatre scene at the time. Rather than treat us like outsiders, the folks at Single Carrot were encouraging and supportive of our fledgling endeavor. In the years that followed, a healthy flow of talent and support between our companies developed. SCT provided artists - and the city of Baltimore - with the opportunity to engage with challenging, experimental and exciting material. They will be deeply missed.

**Glenn Ricci Co-artistic Director,
Submersive Productions, LLC**



REMEMBRANCES



Single Carrot changed my life. I quite literally do not know where I would be in my life if I hadn't joined with SCT back in Season 4 with Linus and Alora. The inventiveness, the style, the opportunities... SCT's guiding quote talks about sparking a revolution, and it certainly did in my life. "De gustibus non disputandum est - There is no disputing taste." - Charles Mee "The Therapist" - A Short Reunion Season 10.

Paul Diem, Ensemble Member



I'm sure I join with many artists and community members to share that this is sad news, but that the work that Single Carrot did over those 15 years was inspiring. I was honored to spend so many years creating with you all, and you made a big impact on theatre and art in Baltimore when it was very much needed.

**Heather Jackson
Past Associate Company Member**

Single Carrot and the fact that it existed made me feel ok as a theatre artist choosing to move from New York to Baltimore. I saw a company that was willing to take artistic risks and a city where the cost of living and cost of making theatre enabled and even encouraged the company to do so. I wanted to create theatre that was integral and woven into the fabric of the city. At its finest, SCT did this. And for the past 12 years it has been my artistic home.

**Alix Fenhagen, Ensemble Member
Past Managing Director**



Without SCT, I wouldn't be the full time, and union, SM who I am today. Thanks SCT.

**Molly Hopkins
Past Associate Company Member**

I loved Single Carrot for its commitment to artistic excellence and its ability to create extraordinarily engaging theater. Performing in powerful, intimate, captivating shows with consummate professionals was an absolute joy. Kindness, friendship, and love were the ingredients that made it all possible.

Rich Espey, Past Board Member

Single Carrot occupied an area of the Baltimore theatre ecosystem that no one else did, and you provided experiences and theatre that no one else was doing...Thank you for making Baltimore a more interesting theatre place and for giving so much to so many, sustained mostly by your hard work, dedication, and vision.

**Lesley Malin
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company**





Single Carrot was such an integral part of my path to becoming an artist, that without it, I wouldn't be me (I mean, I'd still be me, but not the same me that I am today). SCT taught me that without risk there is no reward, and that with enough hard work and belief anything is possible. I will always remember my time at SCT fondly; for the art we made, for the personal development it gave me, but most of all for the wonderful people I met along the way. With my deepest affection and appreciation,

Nathan Cooper, Past Artistic Director
Founding Ensemble Member



I've worked with many other theatre companies since I moved to New York, but my experience with SCT was still the most unforgettable and freeing.

Yiqing Zhao, Guest Artist in Utopia Parkway

Single Carrot was where I became an adult. It's where I learned the impact a group of determined people can have. One of my favorite memories is when the theater filled with people from all over Baltimore for the production of **Fight the Stigma**. It was a way to give voice to people struggling with mental illness and even the gifts that can come along with it. My time as an actor in Single Carrot showed me who I could be as an artist. My time as an outreach and education director taught me who I could be as an advocate. In May, I will graduate with my Master's in Design for Human Health from the Boston Architectural College. It has been a journey and one where I have stretched myself creatively and used my work to help advocate for wellness through the physical built environment. I credit SCT for giving me the grit and skills to jump into a new field and find the meaningful crossover in making voices heard.

Meg (Giti) Jabaily
Founding Ensemble Member

When I think back on my years with SCT I remember the joy of making art with people I love and respect. One memory that keeps coming to mind these days was tossing a frisbee in the Load of Fun parking lot on a break during tech. Even on breaks we wanted to play together.

Elliott Rauh, Past Managing Director
Founding Ensemble Member



REMEMBRANCES

It takes a very special town to create a landing pad for 10 raggedy Coloradans rolling off the turnip truck and turn them into grownups with something to contribute, but Baltimore is indeed a very special town. Thank you to my founding friends and those who carried the torch long after most of us packed up our Natty Bohs and moved to new cities, new jobs, new lives spinning tales of a handful of years where we got to roll on the floor and jump up and down and sing and dance and drink and laugh our asses off and fight and cry and fall in love so many times. Every show has a quote I could pull and make snugly fit into the collective memoir of the many many Carrots past and present but perhaps Adam Symcowicz said it best in Food For Fish (Season 2): "This was a story."

Jessica "Moose" Garrett
Founding Ensemble Member



I was incredibly happy to work with you and the team when I did, and to this day, I think I've seen some of the best theatre there... plays I've never seen produced anywhere else.

Jessica Lanzillotti, Past Board Member

My entire life path has been guided by Single Carrot. My friendships, my family, my passion, my career. Even in its absence, lessons from my time with it will be my guiding force forever.

It has given me meaning, heartache, joy, pain and unconditional love. Being a part of Single Carrot has been the gift of a lifetime.

Genevieve de Mahy, Artistic Director
Founding Ensemble Member



Single Carrot was an audacious concept, and the energy you and the original ensemble brought to Baltimore was truly amazing. All of you brought intelligence and creativity laced with lots of courage, to your commitment to making challenging and relevant theater to people in Baltimore. Thank you.

Karen Stokes, Past Board Member

Take enormous pride in what you have accomplished. Baltimore is a better place because of the work you and the Carrots did.

Ian Gallanar, Chesapeake Shakespeare

I had the incredible privilege of returning to my hometown - a much-maligned city that I love - to make great art. After almost eight years working both under the spotlight and behind-the-scenes, I've been able to foster new works, bring friends' plays and talents to Baltimore, and along the way made unforgettable memories with irreplaceable friends.

Meghan Stanton, Ensemble Member



PEOPLE

SINGLE CARROT BOARD (CUMULATIVE)

Crystal Adams
Susan Anthony
Amy Bernstein
Bob Bowie
F. William Chickering
Nathan Cooper
Emily Cory
Genevieve de Mahy
Shirley Basfield Dunlap
Rich Espey
Alix Fenhagen
Jessica Garrett
Richard Goldberg
J. Buck Jabaily

Ann Koch
Jessica Lanzilotti
Al Lipperini
Brian Long
Dan McCulley
Joy Munster
Lauren Nation
Elliott Rauh
Lisa Simeone
Karen Stokes
John Segal
Edgar Wiggins
Paul Wissman



SINGLE CARROT ENSEMBLE (CUMULATIVE)

Joey Bromfield
Cyd Cohn
Tina Canady
Nathan Cooper
Genevieve de Mahy
Paul Diem
Alix Fenhagen
Nathan Fulton
Jessica Garrett
Dominic Gladden
Ben Hoover
J. Buck Jabaily
Meg (Giti) Jabaily
Lauren Jackson
Steven Krigel

B Kleymeyer
Emily Kallay
Kate Lynch
Dustin Morris
Kellie Mecleary
Britt Olsen-Ecker
Aldo Pantoja
Brendan Ragan
Elliott Rauh
Lauren Saunders
Mohammad R. Suaidi
Adam Stover
Meghan Stanton
Matthew Shea
Michael Varelli



LEADERSHIP

Genevieve de Mahy, Artistic Director
Emily Cory, Executive Director
J. Buck Jabaily, Founding Artistic Director
Nathan Cooper, Former Artistic Director
Kellie Mecleary, Interim Artistic Director

Elliott Rauh, Founding Managing Director
Alix Fenhagen, Former Managing Director
Paul Wissman, Former Managing Director

FORMER ASSOCIATE COMPANY MEMBERS & RESIDENT ARTISTS

Molly Hopkins
Heather Jackson
Sam Kuczynski
R. Eric Thomas



THE CHAM-BOH



A long long time ago, at Single Carrot opening night, after the crowd began to dwindle, the Cham-boh was born. It quickly became a required indulgence at every opening night. Created with the perfect balance of leftover pre-poured cheap sparkling wine and a half drunk Natty Boh, the Cham-boh makes cheap champagne taste like a nice brut and Natty boh taste like champagne.

Seriously, it's better than you'd think—Give it a try sometime.

Cham-boh Recipe

2 parts cheap brut sparkling wine
(less than \$15/bottle)
1 part ice cold Natty Boh

1. Pour sparkling wine first.
2. Crack open the Natty Boh.
3. Delicately pour beer into cup.



CHEERS CARROTS!

SINGLE
CARRIOT
THEATRE

IS COMING WHEN A SINGLE

2600

THE

John S

Example in my class

