

SABRINA MANDELL

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Sabrina Mandell is the Artistic Co-Director, Executive Director and Founder of Happenstance Theater, a professional company committed to devising and producing original, performer-created visual, poetic physical Theatre. She also does all of the costume design for which she won a Helen Hayes Award in 2016. Since 2006 she has collaboratively created over 25 new works including:

PANTHEON

The Happenstance quintet delves into Ancient Greek Mythology with guest artist Craig Jaster generating a live musical score. In a pared-down 1940's aesthetic a chorus of workers assembles lightning bolts and mines the Underworld. Like Sisyphus they must endlessly repeat their tasks. With an ample smattering of amusement, the performers invoke the Muses, offer Sacrifice, suffer Hubris, consult Oracles, and meet Fate as they portray an array of mortals and Gods whose flaws reflect their own.

Featuring Mark Jaster, Sabrina Mandell, Gwen Grastorf, Sarah Olmsted Thomas, Alex Vernon and Craig Jaster.

"...A fantastical spectacle for the eyes and ears...it is a staged reminder that without risk, life is not worth the living. In this case the risk paid off, and this adventure of a show is worth every penny of admission."

- B.I.T.R. Sisters Blog

BAROCOCO

In this collaboratively devised ensemble work, the award-winning, DC-based company, Happenstance Theater portrays oblivious entitlement on the brink of extinction. BAROCOCO takes a physical comedy dive into the late Baroque and flaunts 18th century finery, wigs, panniers, gestural styling, elaborate ornamentation and the excesses of Rococo. The show navigates the dangerous curves of manners and the Age of Enlightenment from the exquisite to the revolting. This charming and charismatic six person ensemble exposes an indulgent aristocratic lifestyle and invites you to experience the charade — from parlor games to pantomime, from the exquisite to the revolting — in this delightful comedy of manners.

Featuring Mark Jaster, Caleb Jaster, Sabrina Mandell, Gwen Grastorf, Sarah Olmsted Thomas and Alex Vernon.

"Polished to an aristocratic shine" – Washington Post

"Kooky and astute" – DC Metro Theatre Scene

BON VOYAGE: A Happenstance Escapade

Features 6 dreamers who meet on the way to Paris at the end of the 19th Century, the obstacles and surprises they encounter, their comic misadventures at the Moulin Rouge, the Métro, the Catacombs, and the Grand Universal Exposition. This show reminds us of the beautiful values of Liberty, Equality, and Camaraderie. A delight for all ages!

MOXIE: A Happenstance Vaudeville

Premiered at the Round House Theatre in the summer of 2016. Nominated for 11 Helen Hayes Awards.

"With its stream of motley diversions, Moxie has the piquant flavor and pacing that surely contributed to vaudeville's appeal. At the same time, this show maintains a sly modern perspective, drawing attention to the old-fashioned nature of many of its acts." - The Washington Post

BrouHaHa

Created for the 10th Anniversary of the Capital Fringe Festival, BrouHaHa has subsequently been presented at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, the Baltimore Theatre Project, The NY Clown Theatre Festival and Celebration Barn. In the coming year it will be touring to the Reston CenterStage, the Staunton Music Festival and Theatre for the New City in Manhattan.

"The high level of ensemble work continues to impress. These multifaceted actors/singers/clowns/mimes and movement artists are so attuned to each other, it's easy to believe they'd be inseparable when the world ends." - J. Wynn Rousuck, WYPR

Cabaret Noir

Our Film Noir inspired theatrical montage was described by Broadway World as having *"a glimmer of story, a hatful of characters, a whisper of atmosphere, a smorgasbord of music and a scent of mystery. Those who love Film Noir will be delighted, those who don't care for it will be charmed and amused, and those who don't know about it will never hereafter be able to take it seriously."*

IMPOSSIBLE! A Happenstance Circus

In 2016 *IMPOSSIBLE!* won 3 Helen Hayes Awards for *Outstanding Ensemble*, *Outstanding Costume Design* and *Outstanding Lead Actor*. A theatrical collage on the theme of circus set against a backdrop of hard times. In a kaleidoscopic homage to classic circus characters and images, Happenstance Theater applies virtuosic theatricality to a circus of the imagination. This show has toured to Baltimore and Grinnell College.

"Happenstance Theater specializes in the old skills - physical theater, clowning, mime - all served here with winking whimsy." - Washington Post

Cabaret Macabre

A pastiche of comic, poetic and poignant Victorian vignettes, loosely inspired by the works of Edward Gorey, with original live music. Sold out its run at the Round House Theatre Silver Spring in October 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, was nominated for three Helen Hayes Awards in 2014 and has toured to Baltimore, New Orleans and Lafayette.

Vanitas

In this Theatrical work of Visual Art, The Queen, Fool, Musician, and Three Fates create an animated Cabinet of Curiosities that will remind the viewer to consider Imagination as a vehicle to transcend life's Inevitabilities. Death is coming, Play while you can.

Diz and Izzy Aster

Vaudeville's Late Bloomers is an offbeat Vaudeville duo who bring their baggage to the stage in wartime harmonies and cheery songs of the Great Depression. They have appeared at several senior centers and toured to the 2010 NY Clown Theatre Festival, a Revels gala event in Boston, at the DC Clown Cabaret, and in 2011 was presented at the Strathmore Mansion for their Duke Ellington Festival, and as part of HumorFest in Richmond VA at the Weinstein JCC.

Pinot & Augustine

A classic, family-friendly clown duo inspired by the golden age of Circus. The show bubbles over with physical comedy, virtuosity and musical surprises from the sublime to the ridiculous. Pinot and Augustine have toured to schools and venues including Wolftrap Theater in the Woods, Kennedy Center "Look Both Ways" Festival, Smithsonian Discovery Theater, Embassy of France, Embassy of the EU, QuestFest, TheaterKapelle, Berlin, and the Walters Museum in Baltimore.

PERFORMANCE SELECTIONS

2006 - Present

Happenstance Theater (See above) **Artistic Co-Director/Performer/Executive Director**

2006 - 2016

Big Apple Circus Clown Care **Doc Molly** Children's National and Johns Hopkins Hospitals

2014

Victorian Music Hall **Titania** (Featured Principal) The Cambridge Christmas Revels

2011

The Three Fools **Star Fool** (Featured Principal) The Cambridge Christmas Revels

Amadeus **Teresa Salieri/Servant** Round House Theatre Bethesda

2010

The Ghosts of Haddon Hall **Greasy Joan** (Featured Principal) The Cambridge Christmas Revels

2008

All-Girl Romeo and Juliet **Sampson/Comic Servant** Taffety Punk Theatre Co.

2007

An Elizabethan Entertainment **Greasy Joan** (Featured Principal) DC Christmas Revels

Bootleg Henry VIII **Porter's Man/Sergeant** Taffety Punk Theatre Co.

2006

The Trojan Women **Andromache** Referendum at Source Theatre

TEACHING

Theatrical Clown and Physical Comedy at The Shakespeare Theatre, Arena Stage, North Carolina School for the Arts, Round House Theatre, Everyman Theatre (Baltimore), Lumina Theatre, Grinnell College and Movement and Clown at The Duke Ellington School of the Arts and the Theatre Lab DC and Devising at Catholic University of America and Round House Theatre.

TRAINING

2014

Directing for Devisers Emmanuelle Delpeche The Movement Theatre Studio NYC

2012

3 day intensive taught by Avner the Eccentric

2004 - 09 Jacques Lecoq Pedagogy Dody Disanto The Center for Movement Theatre Neutral Mask, Clown, Buffoon, Character Mask, Body-Motion-Gesture and Ensemble Creation

2008 Big Apple Circus Conference - 3 x 8/hr day Clown Intensive Chris Bayes

2007 Big Apple Circus Conference - 3 x 8/hr day Clown Intensive Ami Hattab

2006 Big Apple Circus Conference - 3 x 8/hr day Clown Intensive David Shiner

ASSOCIATIONS & AWARDS

2017 Won a Helen Hayes Award for **MOXIE: A Happenstance Vaudeville** for Outstanding Costume Design.

2016 Won two Helen Hayes Awards for **IMPOSSIBLE! A Happenstance Circus** for Outstanding Costume Design and Outstanding Ensemble;

Received a Morgan Fund grant for the creation of **IMPOSSIBLE! A Happenstance Circus**

Received a Community Foundation Share Fund Grant for the operation of Happenstance Theater 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019;

Received a Morgan Fund grant for the creation of **MOXIE: A Happenstance Vaudeville.**

2015 Received a Morgan Fund grant for the creation of **BrouHaHa.**

2014 Received a Community Foundation Share Fund Grant for the operation of Happenstance Theater;

Nominated for a Helen Hayes Award for Costume Design for **Cabaret Macabre.**

2013 Received Individual Artists and Scholars Grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County for the creation of **IMPOSSIBLE! A Happenstance Circus.**

2010 - 2012 Round House Theatre Artistic Round Table

2011 Received an Individual Artists and Scholars Grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County for the writing of **Vanitas.**

2008 - 10 Artist's Roundtable Advisory board at the Round House Theatre

2009 Received a Creative Projects Grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County for the creation of **Look Out Below!**