



2010 Arts Presenters/MetLife Foundation Excellence in Access Award

Acceptance Remarks by
Tim McCarty
President/Artistic Director
Quest

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Hilton New York

Association of Performing Arts Presenters National Conference Awards Banquet

On behalf of the Quest Family, I want to sincerely thank the Arts Presenters and the MetLife Foundation for this important award. We are also deeply touched by this significant validation of our work.

The impetus for QuestFest emanated from a desire to increase employment and cultural opportunities for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Little did we realize at the time that QuestFest would resonate well beyond the deaf and hard of hearing world.

True communities evolve through shared experiences. As our communities grow more diverse, we are challenged to bridge ethnic and cultural barriers in order to gain understanding of our neighbors. Traditionally, the arts have served as an important tool for bringing people together. Theatre is a particularly communal art form. Most people think of plays as words written on paper that are then spoken in front of an audience. However, with our increasing diversity, which includes a growing number of people with disabilities, Quest contends that one of the barriers many people face with our theatre is language.

QuestFest strips away the artifice of language and returns to the roots of theatre. Visual theatre is not necessarily the absence of text, but instead places an emphasis on the use of the performer's body as a communicative and expressive tool.

Through QuestFest, Quest and our partners (Gallaudet University, Baltimore Theatre Project, Creative Alliance, Imagination Stage, Center Stage) use a multi-pronged, community-based approach to welcome all people to the creative process.

Many people characterize their QuestFest experience as "life changing." However, the most frequent comment heard at any QuestFest gathering is, "I am home." It is a remarkable thing to hear this comment in a room filled with individuals from around the globe, people who can hear and can't hear, people who speak English fluently and those who struggle with the language; and people of all different hues. Yet they are all at home. During QuestFest 2006, one staff member noted, "Tonight, I heard deaf and hearing people laugh at the same time." With QuestFest, cultural and language divides evaporate and for that time we all share together in the theatre, we are simply human.

Once again, I want to say (Sign – THANK YOU...HEART)

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