

FINAL REPORT:

Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects

A tour of Four Unique Performance Cultures in the United States

Baltimore • Austin • San Francisco • New Orleans

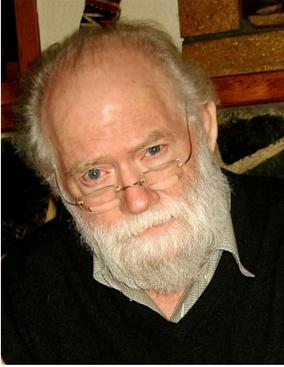
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Directed by
The Center for International Theatre Development (CITD)



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Philip Arnoult

Founder and Director, Center for International Theatre Development (CITD)

Director, Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects

I have looked at the draft of this report on an extraordinary project that brought four Russian cultural animators from Omsk, Yekaterinburg, St. Petersburg and Perm/Moscow to four distinct theatre cultures in Baltimore, Austin, San Francisco, and New Orleans. Our long-time partner, John Freedman, was invaluable in finding the right Russians for this journey.

During a 3-week visit, these Russians, along with Yury Urnov, a Russian Fulbright scholar, and journalist Robert Avila, and a CITD team met with 140 performing/performance artists. We saw performances, rehearsals, and spaces as well, but the core of the project was these one-on-one exchanges between performance makers from the two countries.

While the American artists represented a wide range of visions, forms (theatre, devised performance, dance, puppets, improvisation), and organizational models and scale, they shared a central vision around the making of their art in a community—in Baltimore, Austin, San Francisco and New Orleans.

I knew these American stories well, and have spent the bulk of my career in the US linked to these trailblazers—whether in the '70s and the new movement I wrote about, The Sixth Theatre, the growth of the ensemble theatre in the '90s, and the maturation of that movement, now grounded and articulated in terms of PLACE—the artist choosing a place and the work created growing out of that PLACE.

It is a very powerful phenomenon. And, possibly, a uniquely American one.

I was delighted when that central connection was made with our Russian friends.

Here are a few key responses:

I am greatly astonished by the commitment of American theatre to serve the community. This, for me, indicates that theatre in the USA is part and parcel of the society—the idea which is highly questionable when applied to Russian theatre

Pavel Shishin, director/5th Theatre, Omsk

*We've seen a wide range of places, organizations and theaters on this trip, but three things that seemed to be most important for artists and art-managers here keep coming to my mind: **community, relationships, development.***

I even thought that all American ideology is built on these three principles. And it will take me some time to think of the ways to introduce these concepts to the Russian theater people, and to apply them on the Russian grounds...

Milena Avimskaya, founder and artistic director, ONTheatre, St. Petersburg

Actually, the term 'community' became very important for me during this trip. It is what differs the Russian theatre from the American one – the distance from the audience, the wall that we often build between art and people.

I personally believe that we should more actively engage audience with arts and transform it from spectators into participants, especially the young people and teenagers, as they will be our future audience, partners and creators.

Maria Kroupnik, freelance project manager, Moscow and Perm

It is possible that already in the next decade the theatrical landscape in our two countries will undergo serious structural changes: independent, mobile, and dynamic groups can put competitive pressure on larger and financially-powerful organizations. Probably even the role of Theater as of the social and artistic institution will start to change – from the slowly stiffening and impregnable warehouse of cultural values - to the new, socially-reactive, artistically-brave, and independent organization.

Yury Urnov, Russian director and Fulbright Scholar

Seeds were sown. And I have no doubt there will be ongoing conversations, initiatives and projects growing out of these extraordinary encounters.

I remember saying to Mike Hurley, our partner in this venture in our Embassy in Moscow, that this project of THE AMERICAN SEASON of THE BILATERAL PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION that these American-Russian encounters will still be resonating, long after both presidents are gone.

I truly believe that to be the case now.

BEYOND THE CAPITALS IN NUMBERS:

- Meaningful interactions with 140 artists in 4 cities
 - 72 hours spent in one-to-one interactions with these artists
 - 18 hours spent meeting with artists while partaking in local cuisine
- Over 5,500 miles traveled around the United States
 - 20 hours spend getting “door-to-door” (between cities)
- 13 performances and 4 rehearsals viewed from 17 companies or artists:
 - 29 hours spent viewing performances
 - 11 hours spend watching rehearsals
- Approximately 25 hours spend dancing and singing at various gatherings



Having brunch with Robert Faires, longtime critic for the Austin Chronicle

Meeting with Kathy Randels, Artistic Director of ArtSpot Productions, the Country Club, New Orleans



Milena Avimskaya, St. Petersburg, enjoying the Carnival Parade in the Mission District, San Francisco



PERSONAL REPORTS

This section contains the personal reports of the main participants in Beyond the Capitals:

- The Russians:
 - Maria Kroupnik
 - Pavel Shishin
 - Milena Avimskaya
 - Natalya Druzhinina

- Yury Urnov, a Russian director now based in Baltimore and project coordinator for Beyond the Capitals

- Susan Stroupe, assistant to Philip Arnoult and project manager for Beyond the Capitals

- City Partners:
 - Graham Schmidt (Austin)
 - Robert Avila (San Francisco)
 - Jim O'Quinn (New Orleans)



Maria Kroupnik,

Freelance Art Manager, Translator, and Media Specialist

Moscow

On 14 May - 4 June 2012 I took part in the Beyond the Capitals: NOT The Usual Suspects project that was supported by Bilateral Presidential Commission and American Seasons in Russia.

I became one of 4 Russian art and theater managers invited to take part in a tour through the 4 beyond the capitals cities of the USA to meet diverse art initiatives and theatrical professionals.

This tour appeared to be very valuable experience for me in many ways: personal, cultural, geographical and professional.

Each city was very different in comparison with the others. I want to mention several issues and ideas that seem very important for me.

BALTIMORE was the ideal starting point of our tour. It showed us not only the vast diversity of theatrical initiatives and creative businesses but also very interesting approach to the city development through the arts, which combine with different tools and concepts:

- Identification and legislative support of particular city's districts through the special taxation schemes;
- The strategic research and mapping of creative industries and arts initiatives in the city in order to create open information database
- Idea of healing with arts – the development of artistic solutions for the disadvantages city's districts (for example through building the art landmarks / pathways with visual arts installations linking the separated neighborhoods)

These are the most striking pieces but we also have seen the brilliant Towson University facilities and met people developing art housing and artists' residences in the city.

I think that some ideas that I've seen in particular in the Baltimore area might be used in Russia, especially when I think about the research and mapping techniques.

AUSTIN presented us not only a hot summer days, but also some unique theatre forms in drama (Rude Mechanics Co.) and puppetry (Trouble Puppet Theater) as well as original business solution for the contemporary theatre venue survival (Salvage Vanguard Theatre).

In addition, I want specially mark the interest in Russian contemporary drama that was expressed by the Breaking String Theatre and its founder Graham Schmidt.

I was amazed by the ability of theatre companies in Austin to cooperate and help each other in order to create art product and keep high quality level of art events in a particular venue to serve the local community. That is very different from the competition and rivalry climate in the Russian theatrical world.

SAN FRANCISCO was very interesting in terms of looking into the cooperation of theatre with other types of art such as contemporary dance and visual arts as well as opportunity to meet people working in a very small town like Sebastopol off the San Francisco.

For me personally one of the discoveries that I brought from this city is the 'Literary Ball'. It was the cooperation project of French playwrights and American translators, who in 24 hours created a play around 10 dance songs and performed it in the Z Space. I shared this idea with some Russian playwrights and got very positive response, so we might do something like that in the future.

I also want to mention the Intersection for the Arts (<http://theintersection.org>) - as the space and organization. It was inspiring experience to visit its venues and talk with people.

NEW ORLEANS was the most beautiful possible ending of our trip. It is visually, architecturally and spiritually beautiful city. Notwithstanding all hardships that Katrina brought, it recovers and develops, attracts young creative people and makes them stay. It was one of the most interesting places for me personally.

Even though the theater is losing venues there young artists are coming to the city to pursue their artistic careers and they feel their responsibility to project and communicate art to the local community. They appreciate the New Orleans festivity and try to bring new colors to its culture.

Actually, the term 'community' became very important for me during this trip. It is what differs the Russian theatre from the American one – the distance from the audience, the wall that we often build between art and people.

I personally believe that we should more actively engage audience with arts and transform it from spectators into participants, especially the young people and teenagers, as they will be our future audience, partners and creators.

The participation in the Beyond the Capitals: NOT The Usual Suspects project inspired me to think about lots and lots of issues that I face in my professional activities as well as about the development of Russian theatre in general.

Another valuable outcome of our tour I believe is the links that we've built between the Russian participants. I want to thank you, Philip Arnoult and John Freedman for presenting me with 3 great future partners in Russia and with couple potential partners in the USA.

One of them I hope will be Graham Schmidt, who with your help and support will be able to come to Moscow and build new links for the future New Russian Drama Festival in Austin, Texas.

Thank you once again for all your attention and facilitation.



Maria with Ida Daniel, a director from Bulgaria, and Susan Stroupe, Beyond the Capitals project manager in the Mission District in San Francisco.



Pavel Shishin
Literary Director, Fifth Theatre
Omsk

Participating in *Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects* project was in many ways a revelation to me. American theatre has never been well-known in Russia except for a few names of the prominent playwrights like Eugene O’Neill, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. This fact, I presume, brought to life the previous project, *New American Plays for Russia*, in which I was happy to participate as a reader.

Having visited the four cities of Baltimore, Austin, San Francisco, and New Orleans, I have come to realize that American theatre is notably vibrant and diverse. I cannot say that Russian theatre, beyond the capitals in particular, enjoys a similar vibrancy and diversity—the fact which in its turn has highlighted for me the advantages and disadvantages of the very different ways theatre is organized and functions in our countries.

The most striking feature of American theatre is probably that there is a huge number of people who are able *and* willing to create, to make theatre despite their geographical location, or shortage of funds. It is only recently that Russian theatre has become to witness the emerge of a similar movement, mainly in Moscow and St. Petersburg; therefore, the theatre scene in Baltimore seems unique to a Russian eye. The city has been attracting young talents from all over the USA, gradually turning itself into the city we have got to know: active, colourful, predominantly young theatre location. I do hope this way of developing is in store for Russian cities as well: some day, the young will come to revitalize provincial theatre scene as much as they have been doing now in the capitals.

What is also fascinating is the number of venues which do not belong to a particular theatre company and which often accommodate several companies under the same roof. Such venues are rare even in the Russian capitals, not to mention the provinces, but I am sure that there will be appearing more and more of these venues throughout Russia—it looks like a very natural way of keeping theatre alive.

I am greatly astonished by the commitment of American theatre to serve the community. This, for me, indicates that theatre in the USA is part and parcel of the society—the idea which is highly questionable when applied to Russian theatre. For decades, there has been a strong division between the theatre and the audience in Russia into gods and dust; that is why, I believe, we now have to face the lack of interest in the art of theatre in Russia. I admire that American

theatre successfully avoids this division and never loses the connection with the community it belongs and serves to.

Remarkable is a huge interest of American theatre in contemporary playwriting and devised work—the majority of the artists we met mentioned that their primary focus in art was on contemporary issues rather than on re-staging classical texts, which adds immediacy to the theatre—again, something that often lacks in Russia. What is more striking here is the existence of a theatre company that only stages contemporary Russian plays: in the USA, Austin-based Breaking String Theatre does what many Russian theatre companies do not, even if it is they who are expected to care more about contemporary playwriting of their home country. Among others, it is for me a significant indicator of American theatre's interest in other cultures and acceptance of cultural diversity.

All in all, participating in this project and visiting the USA has been a great impact on me. Having encountered American theatre face to face, I have hopefully gained an experience that can be transferred to and successfully implemented in Russia. The way theatre is functioning in the present-day Russia is mainly the legacy of the Soviet times; the country, though, has changed and theatre needs changing as well. The approaches to these changes I hope to find in my American experience.

Moreover, I have met very many theatre practitioners in the USA and their sharing ideas with us has been particularly invaluable. I am very happy to say that I have met people I shall be delighted to collaborate with in the future and I am absolutely sure that collaboration of any kind will be to the benefit of both parties: while remaining unique, our theatres and communities should definitely try to demystify and demythologize themselves to one another. I am grateful for this experience to Philip Arnoult, to John Freedman, and to all those who made this visit possible and thereby changed my perception of your country, your people, and your theatre.



Pavel and Jenny Larson, Artistic Director of Salvage Vanguard Theater in Austin, TX



Milena Avimskaya

Artistic Director, ON.Teatr

St. Petersburg

First of all I want to say, this was the most interesting and event-intensive trip in my life. To spend three weeks in a wonderful company of smart and kind people, real professionals in permanent conversation with each other, and meeting more interesting people together – this was the colossal professional and life experience for me.

About people...

The strongest impressions of mine were PEOPLE, and each of the seven days I've been back to Russia by now, this understanding was growing stronger and stronger. The more I think of culture, theater, architecture, way of life, and other components of the trip, the more I understand there is nothing as valuable as the HUMAN BEING. The highly-developed, responsible, and free personality evokes my admiration by its ability to use freedom with purpose, readiness to be useful to the society, and desire to listen to "the other".

The system of sponsoring and co-sponsoring of the theaters by "regular" people is absolutely unbelievable. Certainly among the reasons is the mutual need of people in each other, as well as the fair taxation system. Yet the human right to choose an object of support is a huge factor in formation of the free society!

About cities...

The city I've found to have the highest level of the social development and theatrical diversity was **Baltimore**. *Station North Arts and Entertainment* project mission – development of the socially-meaningful cultural space through the material benefits for cultural organizations - seemed new and interesting to me. This approach increases the number of art-organizations and leads to the development of a particular city-area, which results in strengthening of the infrastructure and economic growth. Yet the most important result is that many new cultural organizations find new home, and are conveniently located in one district; that the supply in the field of art and culture is growing. My interest was also attracted by the project of visual artist *Deborah Patterson*: to make the pedestrian intersection of the avenue separating city blocks from the park safer, she is building huge sculptures of elephants and placing them next to the intersection, to attract drivers' attention, and to slow down the speed of cars approaching this area. This project promises to be an interesting example of

resolution of the complicated city-problem, and, at the same time, the new sightseeing point will appear on the map of Baltimore.

Equally impressive is the project with city participation in building of the house for artist to live and work in. This is an ideal chance for a number of artists to buy a reasonably cheap apartment, and to work in the same building in collaboration with their colleagues, and for the city – to create a new cultural area in the district which used to have no art-content in the past.

The theatrical diversity in Baltimore is very high – *Single Carrot* movement theater, high-quality program at the *Towson University Department of Theatre Arts*, spectacular and musical *Baltimore Rock Opera Society*, multi-genre performances at the *Baltimore Theater Project*, and many others. I believe such diversity is a result of the long-term work on creation and development of the theater field, and of a cultural transfusion with a permanent need in vivification.

The most interesting theater project for me was *Now Now Oh Now* by *Rude Mechanicals* in **Austin**. The overall objective of this production is the metamorphosis thirty spectators are going through when watching it; audience members are leaving theater space with the new level of unity, of comprehension of the “higher objectives” in life. Its’ quest-format isn’t new for Russia (teens play this kind of games on the streets of St. Petersburg, there’s even a specific children-theater which is using the similar approach), but being built into the full-scale theater production, it turns out to have a very strong impact on the audience participating in it.

It was very interesting to attend the *Buddy Night with Austin Artists* as well.

Trip on *The Magic Bus* is my strongest memory from **San-Francisco**. This ride combined in itself the curious historical tour with the entertaining musical performance, and left me with indelible impressions.

Bal Letteraire was surprising and inflammatory. The idea which immediately came into my head after the first dance-episode was: “we should do the same project in Russia”. The amazing combination of interesting texts and musical material. united by one theme, and uniting a large amount of interested people – what can be more important in the theater?

One of the brightest impressions from **New Orleans** was *Kiss Kiss Julie* – the interactive performance, where spectators became an integral part of the almost voluptuous carnival. The very energy of this city, which in the last 6 years is experiencing a rebirth, attracted me a lot. It is a place with the huge potential and incredible fate.

Conclusion

We’ve seen a wide range of places, organizations and theaters on this trip, but three things that seemed to be most important for artists and art-managers here keep coming to my mind:

1. **Community**
2. **Relationship**
3. **Development**

I even thought that all American ideology is built on these three principles. And it will take me some time to think of the ways to introduce these concepts to the Russian theater people, and to apply them on the Russian grounds...

My immense gratitude to Philip Arnoult, John Freedman, Susan Stroupe, and Yury Urnov for this dreamlike trip.

With respect and hope for partnership and collaboration.



Milena with Graham Schmidt, the Austin city partner, learning about the history of contemporary Austin theatre from Robert Faires.



Natalya Druzhinina

**Executive Director, Real Theatre Festival
Executive Assistant, Young Spectator Theatre Festival**

Yekaterinburg

Participation in the project *Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects* turned out to be a revelation for me. Revelation of a new country. I name it a revelation, because before this trip I used to think that I knew a lot about the theatrical culture of the United States. A number of distinguished playwrights produced around the world, names of well-known directors and actors, Hollywood and Broadway at long last...

But I was wrong; I was wrong because in reality everything was different. All listed above is the inheritance, the tip of the iceberg, and, in case with Hollywood and Broadway, kind of the foam, the quintessence of all achievements in one, the ideal model of the ideal entertainment industry. While the reality of American contemporary theater: its tendencies, new trends, particularities and – I want to say its basis – all of that is *NOT* in the capitals, *NOT* among the stars, and *NOT* in the luxurious palace-like theaters. The real American theater culture is in the more or less provincial cities and towns. Some of them evoke connotations recognizable for a person from Russia (like New Orleans and San-Francisco); others (like Baltimore and Austin) stay unconnected to any familiar cultural context.

Four different cities are four different theater planets. Yet all four revolve on the same orbit. For me the general often seems more interesting than the particular, especially when we are talking trends, tendencies, the “breath” of culture of this or that country. So I’d like to concentrate my attention not on the differences between these cities, but on the similar principals of life of the “provincial” American theaters, which make it both unique and so unlike Russian one.

1. Financing and Performance Run.

Principles of financing and the performance-run system are two fundamental patterns, two “whales” on which any theater system is built. And we must admit that here Russian and American theaters are radically different.

99.9% of the American theaters don’t get any Federal support, and the larger part of them is not supported by States or cities either. In a word, these are private, independent theaters that finance themselves, and survive as they can. Here we see both the space for creativity in finding ways to unite people around

the theater, like organizing clubs of subscribers with the whole system of audience stimulations and bonuses, or throwing fundraising parties, with the singular goal: to raise some money for the new production, as well as tons of routine paperwork to apply for numerous grants (again from mostly private, non-governmental funds). Therefore we see how often members of the theater collectives play many roles at once: any actor or director is not just a “creative unit”, but a real multitasking machine, manager, driver, technical director, stagehands, fundraiser, and PR specialist at the same time. Everyone does everything. And this is on top of the fact, that many actors and directors also have to have a day-job (like waiting tables in restaurants) to support their families, and to be able to do their favorite thing: theater. American theaters don't expect handout from the State, and this makes them free in the choice of a play or aesthetics. There is no ideological pressure from the State, there is only financial pressure--you are responsible to the people who give you money.

The system of performance-runs is also quite unusual from the point of view of the Russian repertory theater, where life is divided into “seasons”, and each of 10 or 20 performances of the repertoire is presented once or twice a month. In the American theater the “season” is 4-5-6 (in the best case) weeks of the performance-run (usually Thursdays through Sundays). It is certainly much more efficient financially – during this period everyone potentially interested in the production comes and sees it. And what's next? Rehearsals of the new production.

2. Theater from “inside”.

I've already mentioned the truly heroic devotion of the American actors and directors to their artwork. Probably this very need in the permanent fundraising and rigorous money-saving policy helped to form another pattern of the American provincial theater life – very attractive one from my point of view. I'm talking about artists and theaters being the part, and living their lives as a part of the broader city community. And it's not about organizing any kind of a formal Union with monthly membership payments. It's about the mutual aid, the desire to work together, to help with development of a new project. And it doesn't really matter that formally people work in different theaters. They are open and ready to invite their friends and colleagues from the neighboring theater, to ask the designer they know to help with the set, to create a performance together. There is both financial and creative interest in it. But most importantly, there is a feeling of the integrated creative field, understanding that all these people are doing one big work together. In some places like Baltimore the city administration helps to create the whole art-district, where artists live and work neighborly, which certainly stimulates communication between them, and leads to the birth of new projects.

American theater is often multi-disciplinary and interactive. Comparing to Russia, here the borders between theater styles are less strict. The production of the

contemporary play can include rap-poetry episode, dance or acrobatic elements, or video-art. Reading of translations of the contemporary French drama can be followed by a disco-party. In the course of another performance spectators are sitting at the table, and, after a good portion of the liquor cocktail, are creating their own “perfect new world” with the help of the DIY-set (fir-tree branch, small stone, wooden board), and play roulette. Russian drama theater is much more text-oriented, and leans toward clearer genre-division; also theater-audiences are much more isolated from the action on stage.

American provincial theater is not taking itself same “seriously” (in a good sense) as the Russian one, but at the same time – more thoughtfully. American actors are not afraid to experiment. The Theater is born not when the building rent-documents are signed, but when people want it to be born. You are personally responsible for the life of the project or the performance, this responsibility is not delegated to the abstract theater-manager or founder.

All of that creates the amazing artistic “vibration”, because artists are not limited by any borders – neither by the outer (often their theatres have no walls), nor by inner ones (they are not isolated from their colleagues, competition is not same strong or violent).

3. Theater from “outside”.

Theater from “outside” – it is, first of all, the spectator. I was really impressed by the “consciousness” of American audiences. They see themselves as valid and active part of the creative process in the theater they like and go to. To support the theater in their understanding is not just to buy a ticket and to attend a performance. More likely it means to become a subscriber – the member of the theater fan-club, to contribute money (sometimes a lot) to support new productions, to participate in the theaters life in every possible way. Interaction with the audiences is a well-adjusted mechanism in the American provincial theater, it works almost perfectly, helps theaters survive, and even prosper creatively.

Possibly such consciousness of the “regular” inhabitants of American cities is a result of them understanding theater as a part of their society, community, district and street life? Because what they see in theater reflects their own mentality, their own lives in this or that way?

The definition dictionary explains the word “community” in the following ways – population, people living together, fraternity, society, and nation. It amazes me how Americans sharing same city and neighborhood always identify themselves as a part of a particular community, where they’ve found themselves and now live. It can be a regular middle-class neighborhood, or the one in some way different – Mexican, Afro-American, poor or rich, hippie or gay. They don’t just live there, they consider it’s their duty to help this place develop and prosper.

With no exaggeration, 100% of artist we've met in one or another way were speaking about belonging to the particular community; for all of them it was important that their theaters meet the needs of people living in the area, become the part of their social and cultural life. And - no exaggeration again – 100% of audience members testified that theaters they attend play an important role in life of their neighborhood, that they meet their needs. There is no such thing as a “statistically typical” or an “average” spectator in the American provincial theater – but there is a “guy from the neighborhood”, and the performance must reach him and speak to him. Such an approach influences the repertoire-policy, the play-choice, and the esthetics of theaters. And certainly such an approach makes theater more close and understandable to its audiences; theater here is no more the art for aristocratic aesthetes, it is literally “coming to people”. Every theater has its own audience, and actors always know who they perform for. As a result, American theater is very much a social instrument, and not the ideological tool of the government. I was deeply overwhelmed by how much artists want to serve their society, and how much the society embraces its artists. Looks like American theater doesn't really have a problem of being “dramatically far and isolated from its nation” (it's from Lenin, who we now often quote ironically).

Obviously everything I wrote above about the American provincial theater is not an “absolute truth for every case”. Certainly there are theaters which are very different from the ones I've described. But I was writing about tendencies, which made me generalize a lot, and not to go into details too much.

What did I get from participation in this project? I think the future tense is more appropriate here – what “will I get” – I deeply believe the trip itself was just the beginning. I had the invaluable possibility to get acquainted with the general tendencies and to dive into particularities of the contemporary American theater development process, to meet real people who make this theater, to see the results of their work. And not less importantly, to tell them about us, about myself. It is the two-way nature of this trip that made it unique for me. Such a deep interpenetration makes one change his/her perspective, open new horizons, even start thinking in a slightly new way. The cultural exchange - which was happening in the framework of this project - is a multi-layered process. First of all it brings in new ways of thinking, approaches to the work; it makes you want to use the experience of American colleagues in the Russian theater, to apply its “know-how” to the Russian soil, to adapt and transform it for the local needs and circumstances. Secondly it opens new possibilities for collaboration and cooperation with the American colleagues – this can result into exchange-tour, festival, or co-production. Here the process becomes mutually interesting and beneficial – each of our cultures has a lot to share with another one, which is a great foundation to build our further collaboration on.

I'm very glad to be the witness and the immediate participant of the cultural rapprochement between the United States and Russia. First I was honored to select work for the project *New American Drama in Russia*, now to be the part of

Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects. It's also symbolic that both projects were extensively supported by the US Embassy in Moscow, Bilateral Presidential Commission, and the program *American Seasons in Moscow*.

I believe the organizers and inspirers of such rapprochement chose the right strategy – to create and reinforce long-term connections between American and Russian theater professionals, instead of supporting one-time collaborative projects.

I want to express my gratitude to the US Embassy in Moscow officers, who made this project possible, to Philip Arnoult and John Freedman, who kindly invited me to participate in this amazingly interesting program, as well as to all our American colleagues, who cordially hosted us during our trip to four cities.



Natalya experiences the handcrafted puppets of Connor Hopkins (in background), artistic director of Trouble Puppet Theater Company in Austin, TX.



Yury Urnov

**Freelance Director, Project Coordinator
Fulbright Scholar**

Moscow/Baltimore

First of all I want to thank everyone who organized and sponsored this amazing tour. I clearly realize the uniqueness of the opportunity afforded to us all, and I'm convinced that its consequences will keep manifesting themselves many years from now.

Many organizations and individuals deserve mentioning, but specifically I want to name: The US Embassy in Moscow and personally the Head of the Public Affairs Section Michael J. Hurley; Center for International Theater Development and personally Philip Arnoult, John Freedman, and Susan Stroupe; as well as curators of our programs in the cities – Buck Jabaily in Baltimore, Graham Schmidt in Austin, Jim O'Quinn in New Orleans, and – especially – Robert Avila, who organized the San-Francisco segment of our trip, and also was travelling with the group to three other cities.

To bring together places and theater communities, which are usually left beyond the radar of international theater organizations and foundations attention, instead of connecting two acknowledged artistic capitals of our countries - I find this idea of Philip's precise, surprising, and elegant. It is in Yekaterinburg, Austin, Omsk, and New Orleans today where the new ideas of the theater process organization are born; it is in these places where the new generation of theater artists and managers is being formed; it is this generation, which tomorrow will be defining the paths for theater development in our countries.

Below I will try to explain this idea, which first looked disputable for me, but which is very clear to me now, after the trip.

Both theater systems of Russia and the US are now at the edge of deep structural and esthetical transformations. The philosophy of the Theater itself as of the social institution undergoes changes. Today's networks of the "*oblastnoy dramatic theaters*" in Russia and "*regional theaters*" in the United States were created in and for different times, purposes, and circumstances. Very successful for their time, these structures today experience serious ideological, financial, and social crisis.

In Russia this crisis first of all manifests itself through the financial unprofitability of the system, through theaters total dependence on the State funding, which

leads to the artistic and social impotence of the theater as of the institution. The only thing that doesn't let this boat sink is the traditionally tremendous interest of the audiences to theater events in the country.

Manifestation of the crisis in the US theaters is different. The main visible sign here is aging (if not extinction) of the "*regional theaters*" audiences. The endless circle (or more accurately - the loop) is: the growing budgets demand the permanent raise of the ticket price – high ticket price cuts off the younger/more progressive audience – elder and more conservative audience demands the more conservative artistic content from the theater – which cuts off the more progressive segment of the audience one more time – which, in its turn, leads to the permanent growth of the budget needed to attract the decreasing amount of audiences to the theater. As a result – the content becomes more and more conservative and expensive, and the audiences "turn gray" in front of our very eyes.

With regard to all the differences between the situations in two countries, and considering multiple exclusions, in both cases we are dealing with slow and sure degradation of the quality of the artistic process, with the further loss of social importance by the theater as by the institution in Russia and the United States. Right at these times and given circumstances we need new ideas in the field of organization and functioning of the theater process. And right here and now we see the positive effect of the "*syndrome of the small cities*", where these new ideas are born.

The rules of play in capitals are much tougher - from the price of the theater-space rent (as well as life-price in general), and on out to the fierce competition for the audiences and critics between the artistic "products". The described rules create serious obstacles for the new generation of theater artists - often they just can't afford to live and work in the capital. But even less these circumstances favor the brave artistic experiment, full-length rehearsal process, or any kind of financial and artistic risk, without which it's hard to imagine the development of the theater.

Both Austin and New Orleans serve as good examples of how different is the situation in "small cities". Besides obvious advantages – lower life price and competition – the artistic groups in these cities in order to survive are forced to invent new approaches to organization of their creative lives; often here the disadvantages and limitations lead to invention of the new and substandard ways of theater development.

Below are some of them.

1. *There are not enough theater spaces in the cities, especially in the city centers.* Theaters are moving to the less well-doing neighborhoods, and are accommodating non-theatrical spaces for their needs. As a result – the area becomes more attractive, while theater obtains a cheaper and unusual space to work. Indicative here is the experience of Baltimore with

its *Station North* area – abandoned and unsafe in the recent past and populated today by theaters, galleries, cafes and restaurants; as well as the *East Side* of Austin, where groups of theater and visual artists settle in deserted warehouses and factories; even more so – the production about lives of “flower children” performed for us on board of the bus moving through streets and times in San-Francisco; and quite a revolutionary approach in New Orleans, - in the city after Katrina there were almost no theater spaces left, so companies perform everywhere – on streets, in parks, build their sets on water, and so on. Again, - all these limitations and complications work for the better artistic results, give birth to the new theatrical forms and approaches, even change our attitude to the idea of the theater performance in general.

2. *It's too expansive for a small theater company to rent a permanent theater-space.* Companies unite and share space with each other, as well as they share rent-expenses, and work together on keeping it in an operant condition. As a result we see the new multi-field cultural Center born, uniting theater, contemporary dance, music, visual arts, and puppet theater. We also see the interpenetration of the audiences of different groups and genres – people who used to go see rock-concerts only, now come visit the performances of the puppet theater as well and so on. At the same time the Center is developing as an educational organization – people from the neighborhood take different classes here; this increases potential audiences, brings in some financial support for the organization, and enhances liaisons between the artists and the local community. The best example of such collaboration is *Jennie Larson* and her *Salvage Vanguard* Center in Austin. From the previous Artistic Director she has inherited a company with a huge debt and unreal hope to pay it off, or even to keep the theater itself alive. In a few years only she has managed to turn this dying enterprise into the prospering and popular cultural center, and to return most of the borrowed money. Now the Center's calendar is so packed, that it's working year-round, often presenting more than one event a day. The main thing Jennie did – she opened the doors of her Center to the number of small, talented, but homeless companies, such as *Trouble Puppet Theater* of *Connor Hopkins*, *Glass Half Full Productions* headed by *Caroline Reck*, and others. The result on a bigger level is that Austin leaves an impression of a town with an amazingly solid community of theater artists, independent and original in their own work, but truly supportive of each other.

3. *In a smaller city the pool of professional actors is smaller as well; the technical resources are less accessible.* Let's look at the whole city as at one company, in which actors, directors, and designers work with one theater today, and with a different one tomorrow; and if one of the theaters doesn't own necessary equipment, it can always borrow it from neighbors when they don't need it. This situations looks very natural, when you think

about all these young theaters, - such as *Goat in the Road*, *Cripple Creek Players*, *NOLA project*, and the others, - moving to New Orleans quite recently, after the hurricane; from the very beginning they desperately needed each other's support, while local companies - enrooted in the city, such as *Southern Rep*, - were glad to see young groups moving into Orleans in its dark days.

Listed above approaches were echoed and supplemented by the experiences the Russian group brought to the table.

For example the Saint Petersburg *ON-Theater* headed by *Milena Avimskaya* invented the structure that partially reminds of *Salvage Vanguard*s and *Rude Mechs* approaches. One of the few independent and not-commercial theater projects in Russia, the *ON-Theater* is built as an Open Theater Space, where different young directors and companies have a chance to perform their works. All the decisions are made by the Artistic Board of 19 (!) directors and Milena herself. Organized very differently than what is considered normal in the highly-hierarchical Soviet and Post-Soviet theater structure, this "melting pot" brings wonderful artistic results. The similar approach is practiced by *Theater DOC*, and *Playwrights and Directors Center* from Moscow, which *Maria Kroupnik* is affiliated with.

One of the developmental/promotional tools, in which Russians are probably a step ahead of their American colleagues, is the independent theaters festival movement, growing in Russia these days. Festivals are specifically important for the geographically large countries like Russia and the United States; the independent and contemporary-thinking theater collectives are scattered around the country, it's hard for them to find ways to exchange experience, to understand their place in the integrated national artistic process. *Natalia Druzhinina* is curating one of the unique Russian theater festivals – *The Real Theater Festival*. In Russia all roads and flows, - asphalt and cash accordingly, – lead to Moscow; railway stations in all time-zones work on Moscow-time; horizontal migration is weak; and division of the art into "provincial" and "metropolitan" looks almost pathological. *Real Theater Festival* was created in these given circumstances as a festival for theatres not from Moscow or Saint Petersburg, but for all other ones daily presenting their "real" productions to the "real" Russian audiences. One of the most visible results of the work of this Festival is that productions – after being successfully presented in its framework - more and more often win main awards in the National Golden Mask Festival in Moscow later in the same season.

Another example – the festival organized by the Omsk *Fifth Theater*, and curated by *Pavel Shishin*. Created in the beginning of 90-s, in times of total disintegration in the country, the Festival was called (and succeeded in that) to support young independent theaters in the Russian provinces, to not let them get lost on the

post-revolutionary fields of the free market. Today it is one of the most interesting festivals in the country.

One of the reasons of the festival-movement success in Russia is a simple fact that it is easier to find money here to support a short impressive event than the everyday routine theater-life. I'm not sure if it's the same in the US, but I do hope that experience and technologies Natalia and Pavel shared will be useful for their American colleagues.

I was not sure if I could bring my impressions to any kind of a clear conclusion, but it suggests itself: ***the summarized American-Russian experience in the field of the new independent non-commercial theater development represents a serious positive alternative to the obsolescing system of "oblastnoy drama" / "regional" theaters in Russia and the United States accordingly.*** It is possible that already in the next decade the theatrical landscape in our two countries will undergo serious structural changes: independent, mobile, and dynamic groups can put competitive pressure on larger and financially-powerful organizations. Probably even the role of Theater as of the social and artistic institution will start to change – from the slowly stiffening and impregnable warehouse of cultural values - to the new, socially-reactive, artistically-brave, and independent organization.

The three-week tour with intensive schedule, filled with meetings, presentations, productions, and excursions left much more impressions of itself than a report like this can hold. Just the view of Pacific Ocean from Lands' End in San-Francisco; just the meeting with a brilliant theater critic *Robert Faires* in Austin; just the opening night at *Rude Mechanicals* theater, - each one of these deserve a separate report. And nevertheless, I'm truly glad I didn't have to fill these few pages with beautiful yet fragmentary impressions.

I'm glad that the strategy of a dialogue, suggested and formulated by Philip Arnould, and embodied by John Freedman and Susan Stroupe with my modest participation, turned out to be so successful. From the very beginning the potential subjects for it were correctly identified – young theater artists and administrators (all between 30 and 40), developing and applying new technologies in the field of innovative independent theater in our two countries. It's not surprising for me that the dialogue between them was interesting and productive; from the very beginning they were united by similar problems and hopes, while the only thing dividing them was the distance. From Omsk to San-Francisco.



Susan Stroupe

**Assistant to the Director, CITD
Project Manager for Beyond the Capitals**

Baltimore

My name is Susan Stroupe, and I am recent graduate of Towson University's MFA in Theatre program in Baltimore, and have worked as a graduate assistant to Philip Arnoult and CITD for the past two and half years. On Beyond the Capitals: NOT the Usual Suspects, I served as Project Manager. My duties included organizing the larger details of the project (while the city partners managed the individual city schedules), and acting as kind of a "stage manager" for the tour as it was happening.

I found this trip immensely invigorating, both for its cross-cultural exchanges and for myself as a theater artist. After I began working on this project with Philip a year ago, I soon decided to write my final paper for my Master's degree on the project, focusing on the relationship of theatre and place. I used the four cities on our tour as case studies, and discussed the potential connection between Russian and American theater cultures in terms of having a "cultural capital."

Many of the ideas I was speculating about in my paper happened during the trip: while there were similar themes that kept cropping up in each city—community connection, racial issues, funding issues, etc—it seemed like the Russians were able to experience the differences in each city's culture, and to understand in some way, with only a few days of experience, how the city's art was a product of the place.

But there were a few surprises for me: I didn't anticipate how much the Russians would connect emotionally to American theatre culture. To be fair, most of the artists Philip and the city partners chose for the Russians to meet had a distinct inclination towards more experimental or community-focused theater, so they were not really experiencing the heavily commercial side of American theatre. However, the Russians' surprise at how much the American theatre artists *wanted* to connect sincerely to their audiences gave way to several moving testimonies from the Russian participants on how they wanted that same connection between Russian theater artists and audiences.

The second thing that surprised me was the urgency with which the American theatre artists connected to each other. On several occasions we had American artists from different communities, whether at a gathering of various artists from the same city, and or in the instances where we had geographically different artists with our group, like Jenny Larson from Austin and John Schneider from

Milwaukee joining the Baltimore leg. In every meeting with these situations, the American artists seemed just as eager to speak to each other as they did to the Russians. This seems like it could have been a problem, but instead it illuminated for me a need I didn't really understand for American theatre artists, and which I think also applies to our Russian participants: if New York is the theatrical mecca for America and Moscow for Russia, often theater artists from the "provinces" only communicate with that mecca, when in fact, the provinces can and should connect with each other to exchange ideas and help with artistic goals.

Since I was the stage manager for the majority of the trip (I had to miss the Austin leg because I was speaking at my graduation), my duties often were administrative and managerial in nature, but I still felt like I was able to take in the artistic implications of the trip. I think with the time and care spent to craft the experiences of the Russians, the Beyond the Capitals tour will have artistic implications for decades to come.

A few notes on Baltimore:

Since our Baltimore city partner, Buck Jabaily, is unable to provide a report, I will provide a few thoughts on the Baltimore leg of the trip since I live in Baltimore and was as much a tour and cultural guide there as a stage manager. I think Baltimore was a great place to begin the entire tour, because there were several valuable lessons learned in Baltimore that served us for the rest of the trip. First, one of the primary goals of many Baltimore theater artists is to connect to their community, and this theme recurred with almost every artist we met. The Russians all reacted strongly to this effort, which they see as not existing in Russian theaters and were surprised to find it in America.

In addition, we were also able to find a "rhythm" to the structure of the days, and discovered when it was best to meet with people, when everyone needed a break, and how many meetings were too many. I think the laid-back atmosphere in Baltimore allowed us to adjust the schedule as needed without causing disruptions to the artists we were meeting.

Personally, since my three years in Baltimore have been devoted almost exclusively to Towson University's MFA in Theatre program, I really enjoyed meeting the interesting and driven artists of Baltimore, finding potential collaborators for future projects and getting a better understanding of how the Baltimore arts community works.



Graham Schmidt

**Artistic Director, Breaking String Theatre
Austin City Partner**

Austin

The Center for International Theatre Development's Four Cities project brought four arts producers from various places in Russia over to Austin from May 19 through 24th of this past year. Working with Philip Arnoult, I developed an itinerary that brought our visitors to Austin from May 19 through 24th was an exciting opportunity to develop links with arts producers from Russia, and often to compare. As the project's director – I developed an itinerary that would expose our visitors to Austin's experimental theater community, located mainly on the city's east side. The visits with Austin theater artists were geared toward painting a clear picture of this neighborhood, developing an understanding of the repurposed warehouses that serve as venues for many of Austin's experimental theater artists, and an understanding of the communities they serve.

The trip was anchored by two live performances – the Rude Mechanicals' *Now Now Oh Now*, and a collaboration between choreographer Heloise Gold and lighting designer Natalie George called *Pretty Bee and Other Translations*. Both express Austin's identity as a center for devised work, and for the sense in which the city's performance artists delight in mixing genres to find new forms of theater, and new forms of communicating with local audiences. Also, these performances enriched our visitors' exposure to two important nodes of creativity here in Austin – the Off Center (home to the Rude Mechs) and Salvage Vanguard Theater, helmed by Jenny Larson.

Jenny's presentation provided an object lesson in SVT's unique business model, where resident companies exchange labor for workshop and rehearsal space, and preferred performance slots throughout the year. Ms. Larson's curation of the theater and her drive to create a home for new and experimental performance art has made Salvage one of the city's most important hubs of creativity.

This discussion of certain unique business models in Austin echoed aspects of the New Work Community grant, currently administered by Caroline Reck, with whom we met for happy hour on the Russians' first full day in Austin. The New Work Community was a cohort formed when the Melon Foundation devoted \$90,000 for consensus-driven, research-based solutions to challenges involving sustainability, artist well-being and resource sharing here in Austin. The ways in which Austin artists go beyond simply the odd favor here or there. By pooling resources, finding ways to distribute labor and financial burdens among various

stakeholders, and sharing best practices with one another, Austin artists find ways to create shared structures for the benefit of all.

I was excited to see the Rudes' engagement with our Russian visitors during our post-performance meeting. Lana Lesley, Shawn Sides and Thomas Graves – three members of the Rudes' leadership cohort – discussed the animating ideas behind *Now Now Oh Now*, including the drive to find new ways to engage with audiences, Charlotte Bronte, and evolution. Each of our visitors expressed excitement at the daring form of the piece, and the exquisite professionalism the Rude Mechs demonstrated in their production.

It is exciting to contemplate the potential collaborations that could emerge from this visit, and I was particularly excited to make contact with such important Russian theater professionals, and to know that the work of connecting our societies on such a rich level continues, thanks to the Center for International Theatre Development under the leadership of Philip Arnoult and the US Embassy in Moscow's American Seasons Initiative.



Robert Avila

**Theatre Critic, San Francisco Bay Guardian
San Francisco City Partner**

San Francisco

The group's time in the San Francisco Bay Area (May 24–28) was marked by lively interactions with a wide-range of theater and performance presenters, curators, producing artists and administrators. At this point in the four-city tour, we were joined by Ida Daniel of Bulgaria, who added a fresh perspective in ongoing conversations about the relationship between theater-making and place, as well as the economics of independent theater in the evolving markets and societies of Russia and Eastern Europe.

The group experienced and/or participated in performances, rehearsals, formal and casual conferences, and a variety of social events throughout, while getting an in-depth tour of the city and the surrounding region.

The group's immersion into Bay Area theater began in the late afternoon of May 24, when we met with Carey Perloff, artistic director of American Conservatory Theater—the brightest star in the Bay Area's theatrical firmament in terms of size, prestige and its nationally renowned conservatory. Ms. Perloff invited us to ACT's offices and personally gave the group a tour of the organization's impressive teaching and production facilities downtown, before joining us for dinner and escorting us to that evening's performance at ACT's palatial Geary Theater, where the group enjoyed Tony Award–winning actor Bill Irwin in a program of Beckett plays.

May 25 included a tour of the city proper aboard a rolling multimedia performance by San Francisco's legendary Antenna Theater. The "Magic Bus" introduced the group to this company founded and led by Chris Hardman (famed for innovating "walkmanology"), while also immersing the Russian and Bulgarian audience in a dialogue about San Francisco in the Beat and Counterculture years, while implicitly drawing lines of continuity and change from that famous era to today. At least one of the Russian guests said it was her favorite encounter with a US city thus far, and the beautiful weather showed off the city at its best.

That evening, the group attended the opening night event—a performance and dance party modeled on a popular French literary tradition called the "Bal Littéraire: A New Play Nightclub"—of a transnational festival of literary translation, the Des Voix Festival: Found in Translation. We returned as honored guests of this festival (produced by San Francisco Playwrights Foundation artistic director Amy Mueller and French cultural attaché Ivan Bertoux) on May 27, where the Russians and Ida Daniel took part in a lively colloquium by American

and French playwrights and theater professionals on the role of the playwright today, a discussion that was broadcast via live-streaming on the web (<http://www.desvoixfestival.com/colloquium/>).

The day before, on May 26, the group made an excursion to the North Bay, where we met with a diverse but cooperating group of theater makers in the surrounding towns of Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Sebastopol. This evening included tours of theaters and workshops, a group dinner with a cross-section of the theater community and a performance at Santa Rosa's Main Stage West.

May 27 saw an excursion to the East Bay for a sense of the very active theater community operating just across the Bay Bridge from San Francisco. Highlights in the East bay included a meeting with Tom Ross, artistic director of Aurora Theater and a longtime theater maker in the Bay Area with roots in Joe Papp's Public Theater in New York; attending a rehearsal for Aurora's latest production, written and directed by leading Bay Area auteur Mark Jackson—which sparked an enlightening discussion among the group of aesthetic conventions in Russia and the US; and attending a production at Shotgun Players' Ashby Stage in Berkeley, a leading mid-sized theater, followed by an informal pizza dinner and talk with the company's managing director, Liz Lisle.

Highlights from the final day in SF, May 28, included a meeting with a small and highly successful company (Cutting Ball) operating in the city's Tenderloin district; a fascinating conversation with another local theater company (Mugwumpin) at the outset of a yearlong process in the creation of their latest devised work (on the subject of American prophesy); a guided introduction to Intersection for the Arts, a major cross-disciplinary arts organization in the Bay Area; and an invigorating theater salon in which a cross-section of Bay Area artists and producers shared conversation, wine and song with the Russians until late in the night.

Initial responses from local participants in these encounters have been extremely enthusiastic, in some cases suggesting the formation of new relationships as well as new avenues of communication and artistic/curatorial exploration for the parties concerned.



Jim O'Quinn

**Editor-in-Chief, *American Theatre* magazine
New Orleans City Partner**

New Orleans

To begin with, the New Orleans hotel in which the Beyond the Capitals group stayed was a virtual emblem of the city itself: a converted brick warehouse in an historic district with emblems of its past preserved for the delectation of present visitors.

For our Russian (and Bulgarian) guests, this encounter with N.O. was an encounter with history—geologic history (the Mississippi River and the delta land it created), American history (from the Louisiana Purchase to the Civil War to the racial and economic upheavals of the 20th century), literary and theatrical history (with Tennessee Williams being a special case in point), and cultural history (including food appreciation, a major theme; the unique cityscape and architecture of N.O.; and the modern impact of the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe). Our first-night dinner was purposefully set in an uptown neighborhood bar/restaurant frequented only by locals, with a down-home menu of fish and seafood, preparing the way for informal camaraderie and the array of dining experiences to come.

On May 30, by special arrangement with the HNOG, the group viewed a capsule history of the city in a moderated slide show, then spent an hour or so examining the museum organization's remarkable collection of Tennessee Williams materials—one-of-a-kind original artifacts of the playwright's life and work. A walking visit to his main French Quarter residence (model for the boarding house in *Vieux Carre*) seemed to captivate the delegation, as it gave them an initial impression of Quarter architecture and atmosphere. Lunch was at nearby Napoleon House, built in 1798 and redolent with regional history.

At the Garden District home of former University of New Orleans theatre professor Carol Gelderman, a trio of well-informed women—Gelderman herself; Russian expat Natasha Ramer, who runs a performance series called *Moscow Nights*; and veteran N.O. actress Lyla Hay Owen—offered the group an overview of N.O.'s literary and theatrical high points. The city's less-than-stellar participation in the professional regional theatre movement that began in the '60s and '70s was among the subjects addressed. Appropriately, that conversation was followed by a visit from Aimee Hayes, artistic director of Southern Rep, the city's only current professional company, who was not only informative but effective in drawing out comments from the visitors about their own theatre practices and organizations.

A whirlwind bus tour through the city and its environs included the mansions of St. Charles Avenue; the fringes of the Tulane and Loyola University campuses; the expanses of City Park, with its great live oaks; and areas of the city impacted by Katrina, including the still largely vacant wastelands of the Lower Ninth Ward. Hopeful signs, such as the innovative housing being built by NGO's like that sponsored by actor Brad Pitt, were noted. Yet another characteristic area of the city, the neighborhood bordering Lake Ponchartrain, was the site of a festive seafood dinner that night.

On a detailed tour of one of the city's most remarkable public institutions, NOCCA, a model high school for the performing arts, the group witnessed an example of the best in American arts education. NOCCA spokesperson Richard Read (who had worked previously with Philip Arnoult) conducted the tour, which included facilities for visual and performing arts, including theatre, dance, music and cuisine. After lunch at a neighborhood restaurant in the arts-conscious Bywater district of the city, the group walked to a gay-owned-and-operated facility called the Country Club, where meetings were held with the leaders of three leading independent theatre companies in the city. The conversation was lively as storm clouds raced overhead and visitors snapped photos along nearby Desire Street.

The Joan Mitchell Center, funded by the estate of a late visual artist and housed in a beautiful historic home in the city's Bayou St. John district, was the scene of a group dinner hosted by the ArtSpot Performance Company. Dinner was accompanied by an audience-participation performance staged by ArtSpot, drawn from its recent production KISS KISS JULIE, based on Strindberg's classic MISS JULIE. Clever installations enabled the actors to draw out audience members' ideas and reminiscences about sexual matters, all handled with good taste and delicacy. The play's frankness about matters of sex and gender and its simultaneous openness and good humor seemed to be a revelation to our guest artists (to all of us, in fact). After the performance, we sang American and Russian songs outdoors on the lawn of the center, deep into the night.

On May 31, we visited The Jazz and Heritage Festival offices. The J&HF is a major performance organization in N.O., responsible for the internationally known jazz fest that occurs each spring. Executive director Don Marshall, whose career has also included heading the city's Contemporary Arts Center and its prestigious community theatre Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre, met with the group to discuss ways the region's musical heritage fits into the local and national arts scene. Another independent theatre leader, Joanna Russo, joined the group to talk about the work of New Noise. Following lunch, there was free time to tour a range of museums in the central city.

On June 1, one of N.O.'s most distinguished senior artists, John O'Neal, founder of the civil rights-era group Free Southern Theatre as well as the subsequent company Junebug Productions, spoke with the group at Ashe Cultural Center, a

multi-purpose facility with ties to arts and social services organizations. O’Neal expressed deep interest in the work of our visitors and made inspirational comments. Another Ashe-employed artist, director John Grimsley, offered related observations about the city’s theatrical scene and about artistic commitment in politically troubled times.

On June 2, we met with two remarkable women—arts consultant and director Lisa Mount, and NPN executive director MK Wegmann—shared their hip Faubourg Marigny home and their artistic savvy with the group, prompting a revealing conversation about contrasts in management and leadership styles in the U.S. and Russia. Under a shade tree at the nearby historic U.S. Mint building (which now houses a museum about jazz), we met with A.J. Allegra, a representative of the post-Katrina influx of socially concerned artists who have made N.O. home in recent years. His accounts of the work of NOLA Project—including a production called GET THIS LAKE OFF MY HOUSE—made an indelible impact.

The final day of the N.O. visit was taken up mainly by a visit to Destrehan Plantation, about an hour north of the city on the banks of the Mississippi. A tour conducted by a guide in Antebellum dress revealed the intricate and often sordid relationship of plantation families and the slaves they owned. The simultaneously beautiful and morally ambiguous setting provoked much thought and emotion among us all. Back in the city, at the Columns Hotel on St. Charles Ave., we met with a final group of local artists, including the team of University of New Orleans graduates who call themselves Inside Out, and Mondo Bizarro’s moving force, Nick Slie (also an actor in KISS KISS JULIE, though he was not present for the earlier performance).

That the final leg of the trip was in New Orleans was entirely for the best: the theatre of New Orleans is entirely wrapped in the city’s history, particularly of the last seven years in the wake of Katrina. Every theme of Beyond the Capitals—community, collaboration, place, etc—was present and very alive in New Orleans. As we came to the end of the tour, spending the last hours in one of the oldest and most culturally unique cities in America had a lasting impact on everyone involved.

RESPONSE FROM US ARTISTS

We received feedback from many of the artists we met with in the four cities; here are some of the experiences they had:

Jessica Robinson Love, Executive and Artistic Director, CounterPULSE, San Francisco:

It was illuminating to hear about the work these artists are undertaking, particularly those outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg. We compared notes on the economics of making performance, the structures that best support emerging artists, and the Russians' need to cultivate a more 'American' funding model. As I look to grow and innovate with my own organization, it's incredibly helpful to hear about how art-making is working elsewhere—what the realities are 'on the ground,' and how we're all coping and finding solutions.

Artistically, San Francisco and the Bay Area are incredibly rich, but our community can also feel a bit insular. I was excited by our guests' hunger to hear what, specifically, makes San Francisco unique—such as the crossover between the drag club and theatrical stages, and our focus on queer performance and identity. Conversely, I think it was useful for local artists to hear about the artistic concerns of their counterparts, and to have the chance to articulate their own.

AJ Allegra, Artistic Director, NOLA Project, New Orleans:

Programs such as this are far too few, and I felt absolutely privileged to meet and speak with our Russian friends. I was excited to share my company's own successes and failures and compare them to the challenges and successes currently happening in modern day Russian theatre. I think far too many of us in the US think of Russian theatre as standing still or stagnating post-Stanislavski, but the opportunity given to us by Beyond the Capitals opened my eyes to some amazing similarities between our two countries. Though oceans apart in geography, we are all really of one basic artistry, and I appreciated being reminded of that.

Jenny Larson, Artistic Director, Salvage Vanguard Theater, Austin:

My expectations were surpassed because I also had the privilege to create friendships and hopefully long lasting working relationships with a lot of the people, both international and domestic, that I met on this journey. I met all four Russians in Baltimore we bonded hard and fast. There was a lot of drinking, eating, singing, banging on the table, drag shows, dance parties, and other such shenanigans. More importantly there was a lot of conversation about art, business, gender identity, politics and more. The thing that really stuck with me about Baltimore was the social justice and community driven aspect.

The team then moved on to Austin. MY favorite part about them being in Austin however was that I was able to show them my home and they met my daughter and we had margaritas at my favorite little restaurant. Pasha, Masha, Natasha, and Milena were kind, thoughtful, and wonderful people. I hope our paths continue to cross. The last night in Austin, they saw a modern dance piece at my theater. It was a really lovely end to my time with the Beyond the Capitals team before they set off for the next two cities. I'm excited to keep all of these conversations going...

Nick Slie, Actor and Founding Member, Mondo Bizarro, New Orleans:

It was an honor to meet with the group of Russian artists that recently visited our city. The cross-cultural dialogue with which we engaged help illuminate things about our work and inspired me to stay more informed about the work happening in Russia. It was refreshing and enlightening to exchange stories, to learn that we have much in common, even as we live thousands of miles away. This type of exchange is vital in a world where we are seemingly more in touch; yet, so distanced from the reality of day-to-day life in other countries. Meeting face-to-face was invaluable.

Mark Jackson, director and playwright, San Francisco:

It was my pleasure and privilege to visit Moscow for the first time this past April, when I attended the Golden Mask Theater Festival as a guest of the Center for International Theater Development. The experience was an enlightening one, to say the least. It was then a boon to be able to meet with the Russian theater artists who visited San Francisco as a part of CITD's Beyond the Capitals program. I had multiple opportunities to spend time with the Russians, including joining them on a tour of the city, a visit by them to a rehearsal of mine at Aurora Theater Company, and a Salon held at the end of their visit to which they and a wide range of San Francisco artists were invited to eat, drink, and talk about the theater. In addition to experiencing a rewarding exchange of culture, world views, and aesthetic philosophies, I also made professional contacts that could very well lead to future exchanges between myself, the theater companies I work with in San Francisco, and the Russian companies these artists represented. CITD's projects are simple, effective conduits for cultural exchange and understanding between two countries that for so long viewed one another with such misunderstanding.

Christopher White, Artistic Director, Mugwumpin theater company, San Francisco:

Meeting with our Russian counterparts was a wonderful experience, highlighting our commonalities and divergences in a way that I believe we both found inspiring. Not only did Mugwumpin have the opportunity to pick their brains about

the piece that we are currently creating, we also made meaningful contacts that I believe will continue to bear fruit far into the future.

John Schneider, playwright, Milwaukee, WI:

If the four young Russians, exhausted as they must have been coming straight from their flight on their first visit to the United States, absorbed even one quarter of the information and real life personal experiences that were shared with all of us during the five days we spent together in Baltimore, their visit must have been of great value to them. To think that they went on to have comparable experiences in Austin, San Francisco and New Orleans is staggering. I was only involved in the Baltimore segment of “Beyond the Capitols,” and it was transformative for me, so stimulating that I am inspired both to make new work of my own and to work hard on behalf of my own city.

All the true issues we face making theatre in the United States today were on full display – from the detailed aesthetic concerns of artists in rehearsal, attempting to make something beautiful and valuable and meaningful, to the visionary business people, managers and administrators, researchers, fundraisers and educators striving to make the work possible and available. We saw and heard – and we could feel and sense in the energies and body language of these valiant American citizens – how artists and their work can transform a dying neighborhood, unite people, excite them and encourage them to stay in their city and work on its behalf.

The Russians were able to see that many different kinds of people from different backgrounds and walks of life are working together to lift people, neighborhoods and communities through innovative, sometimes radically contemporary art; and all of the arts – theatre was not made separate from the other art forms, although we focused on it. The Russians could certainly see that art does not exist in an ivory tower in this country, nor is it stifled by moribund traditions. They saw that there is in the United States – certainly in Baltimore – a great passion to try new things in new ways, and a willingness to sacrifice, along with a communal faith in the broad value of art.

BEYOND THE CAPITALS: NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS FINAL SCHEDULE

BALTIMORE MAY 14-19

May 14 (Monday)

2:25pm	Jenny Larson and John Schneider arrive	BWI
3:00pm	Russian guests arrive	Dulles
6:30 or 7pm	Russians check-in at Center Stage Housing	Center Stage Housing
7-9pm	Optional: Pub Performance - Vincent Thomas <i>VTDance/Vincent E. Thomas</i> presents "Table Talk: On Masculinity	Liam Flynn's
8-9:30pm	Optional: EMP Collective - Extraordinary Birth of Rabbits	EMP Collective

May 15 (Tuesday)

9:45am	Depart Center Stage housing	
10-11	Project Overview: Welcome to America	1800 N. Charles St
11-12	Baltimore Open Theatre Philip Arnoult and Buck Jabaily, Founders	1800 N. Charles St
12:30-1:30	Lunch / Kevin Brown, owner	Station North Arts Cafe
1:30-2:25	The Strand, Rain Pryor, Artistic Director Elaina Kostakis, Managing Director	1808 N. Charles St
2:30-3:30	Station North Arts and Entertainment Ben Stone, Executive Director	1800 N. Charles St
4:00-5:00	Baltimore Theatre Project Anne Fulwiler, Director	Baltimore Theatre Project
5:15-7:00	Dinner with Single Carrot	Joe Squared
7:15-8:15	Single Carrot Rehearsal	Single Carrot
8:15	Optional: go back to CS Housing or stay at rehearsal until 10pm	
10:00pm	Back to CS Housing	

May 16 (Wednesday)

9:45am	Depart Center Stage housing	
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10-11:30	ARTblocks & Druid Hills Park Conservatory	801 Arts Hampden
	Deborah Patterson, Director	
12-1:15pm	Baltimore Art & Social Justice Project	Café Hon
2:00-5:00	Towson Department of Theatre Arts	Towson University
	2:00-3:00 Robyn Quick, Department Chair of Theatre Arts	
	3:00-4:00 Juanita Rockwell, Professor, Writer, Director	
	4:00-5:00 Stephen Nunns, Associate Professor, Director, MFA in Theatre program	
5:40-6:45	Dinner with	One World Cafe
	Vincent Thomas, Bashi Rose, and Love the Poet	
7-8:30	<i>A Fierce Longing</i> rehearsal	St. Michael's
	John Schneider, playwright	
	John Wilson, Director	
8:30	Optional: Go Home or Stay at Rehearsal until 10pm	
10pm	Return to CS housing	



Meeting with the Baltimore Art and Social Justice Project at Café Hon, a restaurant that celebrates Baltimore's "kitsch" culture in the Hampden neighborhood

May 17 (Thursday)

9:45am	Depart Center Stage housing	
10-2:00pm	FREE MORNING (option: Inner Harbor and AVAM)	
2:30-4:30	Charlie Duff, City Arts and 10 E. North Ave	Station North
4:45-5:45	Load of Fun	Load of Fun
5:45-7:30	Dinner	Owl Bar
8:00-10:00	Al Letson Performance	Theatre Project

May 18 (Friday)

9:45am	Depart Center Stage	
10:00-11:00	Figure 53	2443 Maryland Ave
	Chris Ashworth, Founder	

11:15-12:45	Creative Alliance	Creative Alliance
12:45-2:00	Lunch	Matthew's Pizza
2:30-3:30	Arena Players	Arena Players
3:30-5:15	CENTERSTAGE	CENTERSTAGE
5:30-7:00	Dinner	Joe Squared
7:00-9:00	<i>Thr3e Zisters</i> , Yury Urnov, director	Bell Foundry
9:00-11:00	Transmodern Festival	H&H Building

Performance of *Thr3e Zisters*, at Baltimore's Bell Foundry. The show was produced by the Acme Corporation and directed by Yury Urnov.



May 19 (Saturday)

10:30am	Pick-up at CS Housing	
1:10pm	Everyone flies to Austin John S to Milwaukee	BWI

AUSTIN MAY 19-24

May 19 (Saturday)

3:45pm	Arrive	Austin-Bergstrom Int. Airport
4:45pm	Hotel Check-in	Holiday Inn Austin-Midtown 6000 Middle Fiskville Road
5:30-6:15	Dinner at El Chilito	El Chilito
7:00-8:30	Performance: <i>Now Now Oh Now</i> The Rude Mechanicals	The Off Center
10:15-12	Studio Fifty-Forklist Fundraiser Allison Orr, Director	East Side Stages



The Rude Mechanicals' production of their original work *Now Now Oh Now* at the Off Center in Austin, TX.

May 20 (Sunday)

10:00	Pick up from Hotel	
10:30 - 12:00	Austin Theater Community Overview Brunch with Robert Faires	Contigo 2027 Anchor Lane
12:30 - 3:00	Driving Tour / Free time	Jo's Coffee (1300 SoCo)
1:30pm	then free to walk around the area	
3:30 – 4:30	Robert Matney – “On Digital Interactive Theater”	Long Center Conference Room
5:00-6:00	Dinner	Blue Dahlia Bistro
6:00-8:00	Theatre Community Cookout and Margarita-off Home of Connor Hopkins and Caroline Reck	906 Cherico

May 21 (Monday)

9:30	Pick up from Hotel	
10:00-12:00	Barton Springs Pool	Barton Springs Pool 1707 Barton Springs Rd
12:30 – 2:00	Lunch with Alison Orr, Graham Reynolds	Yellow Jacket Social Club 1704 East 5th St.
2:00-3:00	Breaking String Theater Co.	The Off Center
3:00 – 4:00	The Rude Mechanicals	Takoba
4:30-8:00	Dinner	Salt Lick BBQ 18300 F.M. 1826
10:00	Performance: Dale Watson	The Continental Club

May 22 (Tuesday)

9:30	Pick up from Hotel	
10:00-11:00	Jeremy Lamb and Roy Janik (Austin Improv)	The Hideout
11:15-12:45	Lunch	Lucky's Puccia
1:00 - 2:15	Beth Burns and Liz Fisher (Hidden Room)	Hyde Park Theatre (HPT)
2:30 - 3:30	Nigel O'Hearn (Palindrome Theater Co.)	Hyde Park Theatre
4 – 5:30	Christi Moore (Scriptworks) and Ken Webster	Hyde Park Theatre
6:00-7:00	Dinner	Hopfield's
8:00-10:00	The Broken Spoke Honky Tonk (Time Jumpers)	The Broken Spoke



Robert Matney of Hidden Room Theatre discusses advances in digital technology, multimedia, and theatre.

May 23 (Wednesday)

10:30	Pick up from Hotel	
11 – 12:00	Salvage Vanguard Theatre Jenny Larson, Artistic Director	Salvage Vanguard Theater
12:00-1:00	Lunch	El Chilito
1 – 1:30	Trouble Puppet Theatre Co.	Salvage Vanguard Theater
2:00 – 3:00	Return to hotel, packing for departure	
3:30 – 5:00	Fusebox Festival (Ron Berry)	Contigo
5:30-7:00pm	Dinner	Blue Dahlia Bistro
8 – 10pm	<i>Pretty Bee and Other Translations</i> Heloise Gold	Salvage Vanguard Theater

10:30-12am Drinks Violet Crown Social Club

May 24 (Thursday)

7:30am Hotel check out
Airport Van Pickup

9:45am Depart for San Francisco Austin-Bergstrom Int. Airport



Yury Urnov among the puppets at Trouble Puppet in Austin.

SAN FRANCISCO MAY 24-29

May 24 (Thursday)

1:45 pm	Arrival	SFO, San Francisco International Airport
	Hotel check-in	Opal Hotel (1050 Van Ness)
5:00pm	Walking tour of the theater district	Union Square
6:00pm	Dinner @ Colibri	438 Geary
8:00pm	Theater Performance: Bill Irwin @ ACT Carey Perloff, ACT artistic director	across the street on Geary

May 25 (Friday) – City Tour on Magic Bus + Mission District

10:00–11:30	Coffee/brunch at CounterPULSE and Intersection for the Arts Executive director Jessica Robinson Love Programming Director Julie Phelps	CounterPULSE
12:30–2:00	The Magic Bus (rolling performance/tour) Antenna Artistic Director Chris Hardman Antenna Theatre personnel; other guests: Playwright Mark Jackson	Union Square

	Actor Beth Wilmurt	
	Director Barbara Damashek	
2:00–3:00	Toasting and chat with Chris Hardman and Antenna Theatre	
3:00–5:00	Walking tour of the Mission and/or FREE TIME	
5:00 pm	Dinner	Schmidt's
	Walk to Z Space after	
7:00 pm	Bal Littéraire: A New Play Nightclub	
	Des Voix Festival	Z Space

May 26 (Saturday) – North Bay excursion

Morning free

12:00	Leave from hotel for Santa Rosa + Sebastopol (with stop at Headlands Center for the Arts for quick look and lunch)	
3:00–5:00	The Imaginists	Santa Rosa
5:30–7:30	visit + dinner with Independent Eye Conrad Bishop & Elizabeth Fuller	Sebastopol
8:00	Performance: <i>Fool for Love</i>	Main Stage West



From left to right: Pavel Shishin, Milena Avimskaya, Maria Kroupnik, Yury Urnov, Natalya Druzhinina, and Robert Avila at the Cliff House outside of San Francisco.

May 27 (Sunday) – East Bay excursion [Carnival/75th Anniversary of GG Bridge]

9:30–10:45	Carnival parade	The Mission
11:00–1:00	Des Voix Festival bagels and international table talk SF Playwrights Foundation artistic director Amy Mueller Ivan Bertoux, French cultural attaché, SF	Z Space
2:00	Glimpse of rehearsal of Salomania	Aurora Theatre, Berkeley

Mark Jackson
Aurora Artistic Director Tom Ross

5:00 The Great Divide Shotgun Players, Ashby Stage

6:30 Meeting with Shotgun Ashby Stage
Shotgun artistic director Patrick Dooley
Managing Director Liz Lisle

8:00 pm Return to SF



At the Des Voix Festival roundtable on playwriting from different international perspectives at Z Space in San Francisco

10:00pm Optional: Drag Show at the DNA Lounge

May 28 (Monday)

Morning Free

12:00–4:00pm Lunch and Meeting, Grand Café
Cutting Ball Theatre
Rob Melrose, Artistic Director
Eugenie Chan, playwright

4:30-6:00 Mugwumpin Intersection for the Arts
Artistic Director Chris White,
Mugwumpin company and associate artists

6:00–7:00 Dinner The Chieftain Irish Pub

7:00–9:00 Theater Salon Intersection for the Arts
Last Planet Theatre—founders John and Kimball Wilkins, Mark Jackson, Beth Wilmurt, Z Space artistic director Lisa Steindler, theater and arts writer Chloe Veltman; plus invited guests

May 29 (Tuesday)

5:00am Depart to airport SFO

NEW ORLEANS MAY 29-JUNE 4

May 29 (Tuesday)

4:05p.m	Arrival	N.O. Int Airport
	Hotel check-in	Country Inn & Suites, 315 Magazine St.
7:30p.m.	Dinner	Frankie and Johnnie's, 321 Arabella St.

May 30 (Wednesday)

9:45	Depart hotel	
10:00-12:00	Historic New Orleans Collection	533 Royal St.
	History of N.O. presentation	
	John Lawrence, Anita Kazmierczak-Hoffman	
	Tennessee Williams memorabilia,	Williams Research Center,
	Mark Cave	
	Walk to Williams locales in French Quarter	
12-1:45	Lunch	Napoleon House, 500 Chartres St. (walk)
1:45	Bus leaves French Quarter for Garden District	
2:00-3:00	N.O. Cultural Overview, Carol Gelderman, Natasha	
	Ramer, Lyla Hay Owen	1527 Fourth St.
3:00-4:00	Aimee Hayes, Southern Rep	
4:00-6:30	Driving tour: Uptown/universities, City Park, Lower 9 th Ward	
6:30	Van returns to hotel, free time till 8	
8:00-10:00	Dinner	TK (CBD?)



Philip Arnoult at the Tennessee Williams Research Center in New Orleans.

May 31 (Thursday)

9:30	Bus leaves hotel for NOCCA in Bywater	
10-12	NOCCA Tour	NOCCA, Waterfront
	Richard Read, Development Director	
12-1:45	Lunch at Elizabeth's	Elizabeth's
1:45	Walk to Country Club	
2:00-3:00	ArtSPOT	Country Club,
	Kathy Randels, Artistic Director	
3:00-4:00	Andrew Vaught, Artistic Director, Cripple Creek	
4:00-5:00	Will Bowling, Artistic Director, Goat in the Road	
6:45	Van leaves hotel for Joan Mitchell Center	
7-10	Dinner, performance: <i>KISS KISS JULIE</i>	Joan Mitchell Center,
	ArtSpot Productions	2275 Bayou Rd.

June 1 (Friday)

10:00-11:00	Don Marshall, Jazz and Heritage Fest	J&HFest garden, 1205 N. Rampart St.
11:00-12:00	Joanna Russo, Artistic Director, New Noise	
12-1:45	Lunch at Mandina's	Mandina's on Canal
2-4	Galleries:	
	Contemporary Arts Center, Ogden, WWII	Adjacent (walk between)
4:00	Short van ride from museums to Ashe Cultural Center	
4:00-5:00	John O'Neal, Artistic Director	Ashe Cultural Center
	Junebug Productions	
	John Grimsley, Dog & Pony, director	1712 Oretha C. Haley Blvd
5:00-6:00	Visit to the new rehearsal/production space	
	Jeff Beck, ARTSpot Productions, et al	
6:00	Van returns from Ashe to hotel	
7:00	Dinner at Feelings, farewell to Philip	Feelings Restaurant



With John O'Neal at the Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans.

June 2 (Saturday)

- 9:45 Van leaves hotel for Lisa and MK's
- 10-12 Lisa Mount & MK Wegmann, 2019 Chartres St.
National Performance Network, Artistic Logistics
- 12-1:45 Lunch (walk) La Peniche, 1940 Dauphine
- 1:45 Walk to Old Mint
- 2:00-3:00 A.J. Allegra, Artist Director, NOLA Project Old U.S. Mint Jazz Museum,
400 Esplanade Ave. (walk)
- 3:00-6:00 Free time: museum and/or flea market next door
- 7:00 Vans leaves from hotel to Frenchman & Decatur for dinner, party
- 7:30-All hours Dinner and reception at MK & Lisa's 2019 Chartres St.
- 8:30pm Optional: John Boutté concert (at bar near Lisa and MK's)

June 3 (Sunday)

Morning Free

- 11:00am Optional: Brunch at Mother's
- 1:00 Van departs for Destrehan Plantation
- 1:30 Arrive at Destrehan, Tour
- 3:00-4:00 Closing session for Beyond the Capitals Mule Barn, Destrehan
(and birthday celebration for Pavel Shishin)
- 4:00 Depart Destrehan for The Columns (Garden District)
- 4:30-5:30 Ashley Ricord, Michael Santos, The Columns
Inside Out
- 5:30-6:30 Nick Slie, Mondo Bizarro
- 6:30-all hours, Dinner TBD

June 4 (Monday)

- 4:30am Departure N.O. Int Airport

END OF TOUR

COMMUNICATION: FACEBOOK AND THE WEBSITE

In order to facilitate conversations in advance of the tour between the Russian participants the artists in the four cities, we created two channels of communication:

- A Facebook group page, which was open to anyone participating in the project
 - The membership of the group eventually grew to 46 artists
 - As the tour progressed, the page was used by both the Russians and the artists of each city to post pictures, comments, well-wishes and invitations for events. It has become both a place for the Russians to communicate with the American artists as well as for the American participants to communicate with each other.
 - We expect to keep using it and adding members as the Beyond the Capitals community grows and continues their work

- A Wordpress blog website, which was designed by project manager Susan Stroupe, and was used for informational purposes pre-tour and for documentation during the tour. <http://beyondcapitals.wordpress.com>
 - In order to disperse a lot of information in the best way before the tour, an informational page was created about each group involved in the project: the Russians, the US/CITD Team, and the artist cohorts in each of the four cities.
 - Photos were posted from the time in each city, for public viewing and those not belonging to the Facebook group.
 - Now that the project is finished, the website will continue to be a space for publication and documentation post-tour: and videos, articles, and pictures open to the public will be posted as they are available.
 - Since its creation on March 31st, the website has received over 1,200 views.

PRESS COVERAGE

Articles and press coverage have already begun on Beyond the Capitals, and the project will continue to receive coverage in the coming weeks and months:

- In February 2012, on an advance trip to Austin, Philip Arnoult was interviewed for the online publication Culture Map: Austin about the reasons and hopes for the project.
 - <http://austin.culturemap.com/newsdetail/02-02-12-the-russian-invasion-philip-arnoult-initiates-a-creative-cultural-exchange/>
- Lisa Drostova of Theatre Bay Area published an article on Russian theatre in San Francisco, focusing heavily on Beyond the Capitals, including the Russians' involvement in the roundtable on the role of playwrights around the world at the Des Voix Festival at Z Space.
 - <http://www.theatrebayarea.org/editorial/The-Russians-Are-Coming.cfm>
- In August or September, Robert Faires, the long-time theater critic for the *Austin Chronicle*, will be publishing a major article on the project for an Austin publication.
- Robert Avila, the San Francisco city partner who accompanied the entire trip, will be writing an article for the journal *Slavic and East European Performance* (SEEP).
- Jim O'Quinn, the Editor-in-Chief for *American Theatre* magazine, will be publishing an article for that magazine later this year.
- On the Russian side, Maria Kroupnik (Moscow), Pavel Shishin (Omsk), and project partner John Freedman recorded an interview for Voice of Russia Radio. The project was discussed on the show "Agree or Disagree," hosted by Marina Dzhashi in English. The show can be heard or downloaded at http://english.ruvr.ru/radio_broadcast/48481846/78488676.html.

BEYOND THE TOUR: SECOND STEPS

All participants in Beyond the Capitals were made aware of funds from the Trust for Mutual Understanding (TMU), a foundation that funds arts and environmental projects with connections to Eastern Europe.

These funds are intended to facilitate “second steps” in the Beyond the Capitals project. The guidelines for these funds are:

- Participants may propose next-step projects, only after 90 days of thinking and planning
- The funds (approximately \$15,000) are to be used for follow-up projects, and will provide funding for travel
- The host participant of the second step project will provide housing and per diem

As the tour came to an end, all the participants were already enthusiastic and filled with ideas for second step projects. Our hope is that after 90s days of thinking and planning, the seeds that were being planted on the tour will have grown into full ideas for future collaborations.