

BACKSTAGE

THE ACTOR'S RESOURCE

OCTOBER 12, 2011

Readers Share Their 'Back Stage' Stories

"What a great idea to feature your readers. I have been reading Back Stage since it was Drama-Logue back in 1986. I attribute my first lead in a feature film directly to Drama-Logue from a posting I responded to in 1986. I got the lead in 'Slaughterhouse.' Since then, I have continued to have success responding to casting notices in what is now Back Stage. Sure, you don't get everything you submit to, but when you're in business for yourself, you can't sit and wait for your agent to get you auditions. Back Stage has great casting notices, articles, and other production postings. I've been informed from the many articles over the years and have also gained production employment from ads placed. Thank you for being such an important part of the entertainment industry."

—Sherry Leigh, Burbank, Calif.

"I have read Back Stage, some of the time with help, for approximately 22 years. I grew up with Back Stage, at the same time that Back Stage was growing from being primarily an East Coast publication. I knew that I wanted to act from the time that I was very young. Someone told my mom about Back Stage so that she could find auditions for me. Back Stage has taken me from 'Annie' at the Grand Dinner Theatre to 'Meet Me in St. Louis' aboard the S.S. Norway to 'An Inspector Calls' at the Ahmanson to 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas!' at the Pantages and an 'Aladdin: [A Musical] Spectacular' at the Disney resort. The jobs I was able to find and book because of Back Stage are too numerous to list.

Back Stage has also been the source of great advice and direction throughout the years and has been a great guide in taking my career from child actor to that of an adult.

—Alex Chester, Long Beach, Calif.

"I moved here four years ago from Dublin, Ireland, after working on 'The Tudors' for Showtime, which was filmed in Dublin. Back Stage is my bible! I've been an avid reader ever since I moved out here. Not only does it help me to get advice on the business, but I read up on the news and features. Keep up the good work, and thank you for keeping me informed."

—Sonya Macari, Hollywood Hills

"I've been reading Back Stage since I first went to New York in 1976! It was my primary newspaper for finding jobs and submitting for parts. It got me many auditions and wonderful parts. I continued that even when I moved out to Los Angeles.

I have read reviews of plays I was in both in New York and L.A. Recently, I was interviewed by Simi Horwitz for the "Transitions" issue (Aug. 25, 2011), and that is a wonderful assessment of where I am now as an older actress. Thank you, Back Stage, for all your years of wonderful work for actors."

—Willow Hale, Hollywood



Holgie Forrester (Photo by Allen Birnbach)

Thanks, Back Stage readers, for your kind words in celebration of our 50th anniversary. We couldn't have come this far without you. Here's to the next 50 years!

"I'm proud to say I'm 62 and have been reading Back Stage from L.A. and NYC as long as I can remember. I've worked on both coasts in film, TV, and theater for over 40 years with the help of Back Stage and look to continue to do so! All the best to Back Stage for their support and continuing success in providing actors access to work!"

—Holgie Forrester, West Los Angeles

"I have been reading Back Stage for as long as I can remember. It's a really important 'staple' of my life to get that paper every Thursday and look through each and every article for jobs, tips, and reviews. As a matter of fact, I can't think of one thing great that ever happened to me in the business that didn't involve Back Stage!"

—Amanda Trees, Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

"I've been an actor since taking acting lessons in 1987, with my first role as an extra in 'Bright Lights, Big City.' I began my subscription to Back Stage 21 years ago in April 1990. Back Stage keeps me informed and up-to-date about the entertainment industry and most of all has been my prime source for successful auditions. I look forward to receiving Back Stage every week. Your casting notices are essential for an actor."

—Steve Kasprzak, Floral Park, N.Y.

"What seems like an eternity ago, back in 1995 Back Stage West ran an audition announcement from the American Heartland Theatre out of Kansas City, Mo., for the first-ever regional theater presentation of the London hit musical 'Buddy—The Buddy Holly Story.' They were looking nationally for the lead part of Buddy. I would never have known about this audition if not for Back Stage West. In actual fact, I had not purchased one from the newsstand that week, but my friend John Keller called me and told me to go pick one up. I did and I got the part, but more importantly, it set me down a path of more productions of this show, many other opportunities, and then eventually my own concerts, fully realizing my goal of full-time entertainment work. Cheers to you, Back Stage."

—John Mueller, Los Angeles, Back Stage reader since 1994

"Back Stage has been my bible on two coasts, over 20 years and five agents. It's informed, inspired, and instructed me along the way. In a sometimes solitary career, it's made me feel like I have a family of actors to turn to for guidance."

—John F. McCormick, via email

"I have been reading Back Stage for decades. As a novice coming to NYC, Back Stage was my resource for auditions, photographers, classes, and anything and everything I needed to know about the business. As a professional now residing and working in Los Angeles, Back Stage continues to be a valuable resource connecting me to my new West Coast community and allowing me to keep in touch with East Coast news and events, too. I respect and value Back Stage as the ultimate guide for information of all things stage, screen, TV, and other media forms. Thank you, Back Stage, for 50 years of valuable service to our community of artists."

—Andrea Lyman, Los Angeles

"Before I even took the leap and moved to Los Angeles nearly 14 years ago, I subscribed to Back Stage West, readying myself to hit the ground running once I arrived. I was here for pilot season for five months by myself with no family or friends, and Back Stage was my lifeline. Reading it and submitting to casting notices really helped me feel part of the game. To this day, especially in this fast-paced, electronic age we live in, I still subscribe to the hard copy of Back Stage, and I love sitting quietly reading it over coffee. It's like a dear old friend. Thank you!"

—Tracy Weisert, Los Angeles

"I have been reading Back Stage for five years, and I have blossomed into an actress/model by reading the success stories in Back Stage, attending events through your direct advertisement, and of course getting emails to the latest castings. It has been a great year of success. I have booked numerous roles through casting resources. I have attended seminars where I have met up with your top leads to agencies and directors and to hear heartfelt stories about other actors in the business. I love what you're doing. Continue the great work, and I will be a reader for life. I am grateful to grow and develop, and thanks for being a vital part of this role in my career. Thanks for

building a bridge where there was a gap for me, and providing me with the tools to make it work."

—Irvina Moody, New York

"As a native of Los Angeles, I started picking up the first issues of Back Stage West in person, when you were located on North Gordon Street. At the time, those early issues were created on cardboards. Over the years, I have found agents and work during the casting newspaper's early days. In conjunction with electronic casting, Back Stage should be a necessity for actors to read each week. My best wishes are sent for continued success."

—Jeff Zandberg, Los Angeles

"When I moved to Los Angeles, many of the first jobs I received were as a result of the listings in Back Stage. So without a doubt, it was instrumental in me setting off on the right foot in the industry—and since most of my friends are people with whom I initially worked, developing those relationships, too. That's close to 14 years!"

—Nate Barlow, Los Angeles



Tony Stengel

"I have been intermittently reading B.S./BSW since it has been

available in L.A. I have used it to cast my indie projects and acting classes, which have led me to make new friends and a group of go-to professionals to work with. In 1993 BSW ombudsman Tom Mills contacted the syndicated news magazine show 'The Crusaders' on my behalf. Ironically, the show where the reporters were 'crusaders,' or 'advocates dedicated to making change where injustices were found,' was refusing to pay me for my acting services. I quickly got paid as a result. Thanks again, Back Stage."

—Tony Stengel, actor-director-producer, Los Angeles

"Back Stage has kept me informed of the entertainment industry involving real work and auditions in this economically stressful time in our profession. There are opportunities in many areas. I moved to Park City, Utah, six years ago and have grown and learned much in my professional career. Thanks."

—D. Justin Cole, Park City, Utah

"I have been reading Back Stage as one of only three actor's resources for casting and film updates that I trust through years of researching what is accurate and what is up-to-date, as a professional film actor. When I lived in Los Angeles, I absolutely depended on it for every update. I now live in my hometown of Pittsburgh, Pa., where the city and state have become a film hub over the past decade. It is so interesting to read not only about my hometown in your magazine and online, but it is fun just to see what is going on in the industry as a whole and how everything in the industry ultimately affects me here, as an actor. Your magazine and online site are a kind of universal source that keeps everyone connected to what is going on in the entertainment industry. Thanks for supporting an industry I hope to always be a part of."

—Bill Ehrin, Pittsburgh, Pa.

"I began reading Back Stage in 1981 when I moved to New York City. I always looked forward to the weekly issue and received many jobs from the audition sections!"

—Holly Kerr, New York

"I have been getting Back Stage since the mid-'90s, and I have had much success with getting auditions and taking acting classes and finding acting groups like The Groundlings as well as voiceover work

through Kalmenson. I was able to audition for 'Rent' and several amazing opportunities through Back Stage. Thanks so much, Back Stage, for all your effort to keep us actors and singers plugged in to what's going on."

—DC Pincus, Beverly Hills, Calif.

"I have been reading Back Stage for the past 10 years, and if not for Back Stage, I would not have known anything about acting jobs in N.Y. The biggest was when I landed a feature part in the movie 'I Think I Love My Wife' with Chris Rock. I was the Homeless Man coming through the street as Kerry Washington was dropping money out of the window of Chris' office. There have been other jobs I have gotten from the magazine, but that was the most prominent. I recommend this magazine to every actor everywhere."

—Ken Peebles, Richmond, Va.

"I've been reading Back Stage since the '80s when I first came up in the Philadelphia/N.Y. scene and pretty much got all my work through the paper. Now, almost 25 years later, I get the paper every so often, but with the Internet I mainly get my info through Back Stage Espresso; it's quick and easy and gets right to union casting notices to save time. It's a great tool for any actor at any level."

—Ryan (Orion) McCabe, via email

"I have been reading Back Stage since the beginning of my career in the mid-'80s. The articles on the tools of the trade have been the most rewarding for me. Those helpful tips continue to enable me to make a living in this crazy, wonderful business."

—Peter Tocco, Detroit, Mich.

"Back Stage was the best resource I had when I moved to New York. I will never forget picking up my first issue at the newsstand and, in turn, booking an indie feature. Back Stage has progressed and offers far more information than any other publication for everyone in entertainment. Happy golden anniversary, Back Stage!"

—Shelley Bennett, writer-actor, via email

"Happy 50th, Back Stage. It has helped me a great deal with industry info, especially the classifieds. And the many ideas, wonderful casting

calls from New York to Los Angeles, etc. Thanks, Back Stage. Keep on bringing it. We love it."

—Earl L. Thompson, Lancaster, Calif.

"Back Stage was the very first newspaper I went to in 1979 when I arrived in NYC. It helped me get my first professional job and Equity card. It was for a national tour of 'The Sound of Music.' I was hooked ever since. I still read it today. I like it because it is correct, ethical, and gets to the point. Thanks, Back Stage. Happy Anniversary!"

—Lani Martin, via email

"Back Stage has been the backbone of my 40-year career as an actor and speaker and helped me get into show business and created an opportunity for acting knowledge and the ability to get out among the public as a doer and spearhead my passion to educate and follow the ideas of Back Stage. Without Back Stage's encouragement, my success and awards would never have happened."

—Burt Richards, via email

"Back Stage gave me the information I needed. I would get calls for auditions and land acting jobs. I have been reading it for 18 years. Thank you, Back Stage."

—Michelle Csitos, Winnetka, Calif.

"About 15 years ago I saw an ad in Back Stage. It was from AGVA. They were looking for performers to do a show at the Actors [Fund] Home in Englewood, N.J. I sent them my photo and résumé and told them all about my one-man show on Groucho Marx. I figured that the average age group there would love it. I was right! I was hired by Fran Gaar and still do shows to this day. So, thank you, Back Stage."

—Ron MacCloskey, Edison, N.J.

"I started reading Back Stage soon after I arrived in NYC in 1969. I've had good years and bad years in the business (and a few great years), but the lion's share of my work has always come through notices in Back Stage—film, TV, and stage work—including one terrific Off-Broadway contract ('Tamara') that paid close to Broadway salary and lasted over two years. Every time I think that the EPAs listed in Back Stage are useless, a happy surprise comes as a result of one (like my

next gig at Westchester Broadway Theatre). Especially when one is without an agent (and even when one has an agent), Back Stage is a friend and an ally."

—Kathleen Huber, New York

"Love. Motivation. Passion. Oh, how Back Stage has helped me through many a troubling time in the acting world! As actors, we all feel moments when we are ready to collapse at the mystery that is casting! But Back Stage has been a tremendous help at demystifying the process. As a matter of fact, it has demystified many a process in regards to all elements of acting, whether it be through the sexy Secret Agent [Man] or intelligent interviews. Thank you, Back Stage, for giving me added strength to continue my endeavors!"

—Edi Monroy, New York

"Having recently arrived in New York, as a dancer (musical theater and commercial), Back Stage has been my bible. I read it religiously every week. From the audition/casting notices to where to take classes and get headshot repros, it has been an invaluable tool for someone who has just moved to the city. The articles and features are informative and entertaining, from show reviews to what to pack in your dance bag!"

—Belinda Campbell, New York

"In the 20 years that I have been an actor, Back Stage has been there. When I needed to find out who was filming where, Back Stage was there. When I wanted a photographer, school, or someone to make copies of my pictures, Back Stage was there. When I do seminars and students ask, 'What is the first thing you do after you decide you want to be an actor?,' [I tell them,] 'Read Back Stage.' Back Stage has told me about plays I wanted to see, and some I didn't even know existed. Back Stage has inspired me by having conversations with new actors, older actors, agents, and producers to get their perspective on what actors should and shouldn't do in the business. Even when I was not working, Back Stage was always on the newsstand waiting for me to pick it up and find a new job. Now here it is for me some 20 years later, and I sit here reading Back Stage on my iPad and think about all the changes that have come over the years—and wonder, 'What is coming next?' Happy anniversary to Back Stage."

—Vernon W Campbell, via email

"I knew of Back Stage when it was still Drama-Logue. My first memory of the paper was hanging around in the dance studio where I participated (at age 6) in a junior version of the musical 'Fame.' Grown-up women would be hanging around reading Drama-Logue, and I knew there was something wonderful inside. I started reading the paper myself as soon as I was old enough to drive myself to all the auditions inside, which means I've been thumbing through the audition listings for about 11 years. Back Stage has helped me book paid gigs, free gigs, and connected me to the large but very 'small world'-ish theater community in Los Angeles, and I look forward to the next 50 years! Thanks!"

—Bonnie Sludikoff, Glendale, Calif.

"What's great about Back Stage is that it's a place that says, 'It's awesome to be an actor.' As you travel further in this roller coaster of a profession, you can always turn to Back Stage as a fertile ground for advice (situations are oftentimes tricky), reviews of good teachers, and how to manage your finances. It has increasingly become a destination of comfort and trust. It's so supportive that sometimes it can feel like 'crack for actors.' "

—John Pick, via email

"I can say that my career really started with the help of Back Stage. After studying in New York at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute I moved to Los Angeles and did what all actors probably should be doing: buy a copy of Back Stage every week. One day I saw this casting notice in Back Stage for the AFI film 'Remote Control.' After several auditions, I landed the leading part. The film screened worldwide at prestigious film festivals and won numerous awards, including a Student Academy Award nomination. That was over 10 years ago—this film really launched my career and helped me to get my first agent back then and even other film offers. So thank you, Back Stage! Happy Anniversary, and here's to many, many more years!"

—Branko Tomovic, London and Los Angeles

"I joined AEA May 31, 1957. My last Equity job was in 1984. Those almost 30 years were among the happiest days of my life. Back Stage was the source of all my employment—no agents, no managers. Regional, Broadway, Off-Broadway before it became "fashionable." I

had the honor to work with Dame Judith Anderson, Bert Lahr, Claire Bloom, Judith Malina, Ruby Dee, and Irene Papas. I do some film and television and am currently dancing with Naomi Goldberg Haas' dance group and am happy to be doing that form of creativity. I use my acting skills through movement and improvisation. Times have changed. So has Back Stage."

—Dina Paisner, New York

"Happy Birthday, Back Stage! I am grateful for all the informative interviews, resources, and opportunities you've always provided—online and in print. Here's to another 50 years of incredible work."

—Jeremy Glazer, Hollywood, Back Stage reader since 2000

"Back Stage has always been part of my professional theater life. When I lived in Boston, D.C., and NYC. Now that I live in New England, it keeps me connected and makes me feel part of a larger network. Thanks for always being there."

—Sandra Gartner, via email

"It surprises me that Back Stage is only 50 years old. It seems I began reading it, and getting gigs through it, longer ago than that. I suppose my introduction to Back Stage must have been in the '70s. Keep on keeping on."

—Eugene Hobgood, via email