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TheaterJones | Theatre Three Statement on Jac Alder

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1 comment



Photo: Robert Hart/TheaterJones

Jac Alder

Dallas — Theatre Three's Board of Directors has issued a statement about [last week's death of longtime Executive Director-Producer Jac Alder](#). It includes info on the memorial service, which will be 6 p.m. Monday, July 13—Theatre Three's opening nights were on Mondays, so that day of the week makes sense—at Dallas City Performance Hall in the Dallas Arts District. Also, longtime T3 guest director and costumer Bruce R. Coleman has been named Acting Artistic Director, and Marty Van Kleeck will continue as an administrative advisor (a few months ago she returned to running the Bath House Cultural Center, after a short stint as Managing Director at T3).

Also, this announcement came in from the Dallas Arts District: City Performance Hall and the AT&T Performing Arts Center have announced that the marquee lights will be darkened, the lobby lights dimmed and the Winspear Chandelier extinguished for three minutes Friday, May 29, 2015 at 7 p.m. in honor of Jac Alder. Theatre Three invites the Dallas-Ft. Worth theatrical community to join us in our appreciation of all that Jac has done for this theatre and the theatrical community at large by following suit.

Here is the complete Theatre Three statement:

When Jac Alder died last Friday, Theatre Three and the Dallas arts community lost a great friend, mentor, and advocate. While we all mourn this giant of the theater world, we should also reflect and rejoice over the thriving Dallas arts scene that Jac left behind—because he certainly would have wanted us to do exactly that.

From 1961 (when Jac co-founded Theatre Three, along with his then-future wife Norma Young, Esther Ragland, and Robert Dracup) to today, Theatre Three has brought to Dallas a professional stage featuring classic plays, world premieres, and the best of musical theater. Jac and his theater also provided a home to three Pulitzer-prize winning authors (Beth Henley, Tracy Letts, and Doug Wright) and introduced a young Morgan Fairchild to Dallas audiences. Jac led a theater that put on shows that pushed boundaries, as well as shows that achieved great success (including the longest-running show in Dallas theatre history, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*). But it was not just Theatre Three that Jac championed – he championed and mentored countless individuals and organizations, donated to scores of other theaters, was a vocal advocate for arts funding in Dallas and Texas (having chaired the Texas Commission on the Arts theater panel and the board of Texas Non Profit Theatres), and he even made sure that each Theatre Three patron knew what was on stage at other theaters in the Metroplex by listing their current productions in the playbill. Jac was also active in civil rights, being at the forefront of casting African-American actors and a long-standing friend of the gay community, and he strongly supported arts education, including serving on the Presidents Council of the Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual and Performing Arts and as the director of drama at the University of Texas at Arlington.

And the house that Jac (and Norma, Esther, and Robert) built will continue to honor the vision of its founders —seeking to illuminate the human experience with exemplary, intimate theatrical productions while nurturing authors, regional artists and audiences. Marty Van Kleeck will continue as volunteer advisor to Theatre Three’s administrative staff, and Bruce Coleman is the acting Artistic Director. Both Marty and Bruce were personally selected by Jac to lead Theatre Three through this transition, because he knew the passion they have for Theatre Three and for the stage. The Board of Directors is very grateful to these two for agreeing to lead the Theatre during this critical time, and while they do so, the Board will be working hard to select permanent successors to helm the Theatre, not as a replacement to Jac, but as heirs to his legacy.

Over last weekend, while we all considered how best to move forward without Jac, Theatre Three continued bringing professional theater to Dallas, with audiences still laughing, and still being inspired, just as Jac wanted. As you reflect back on the extraordinary life of this bundle of artistic energy, please join the Board of Theatre Three in giving thanks to Jac Alder for his leadership, his passion, and his vision, and make plans to attend a performance on the stage of your choice. And while you are at it, make plans to attend the celebration of Jac’s life and career, which will be held at the City Performance Hall on July 13 at 6 p.m. Finally, in honor of Jac and his vision, the Board of Directors of Theatre Three has established the Jac Alder Memorial Fund, which will be used to secure the future of Theatre Three and Jac’s legacy. Donations to this fund can be made to Theatre Three, with a notation that they are for the Jac Alder Memorial Fund.

As Jac wrote in one of his monthly columns in *Theater Jones*, he loved that the theater has “the ability to inspire our community of both artists and attendees toward visions of common humanity.” Without a doubt, Jac Alder played a leading role in inspiring us all. Bravo! **TJ**

Comments:

Lenore Naxon writes:

Friday, May 29 at 10:09AM

I interned and then worked at T3 in the 1970s and have always been proud to call Jac a mentor and friend. On some levels, I feel like I grew up as an arts administrator there. So many important memories, lessons and experiences that I will always cherish. Thanks, Jac.