

# **GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE**

## **VASTA Guidelines for Program Credit in Professional Theatre**

Prepared by Judith Shahn, Ursula Meyer, Amy Stoller, Phil Thompson, and Lynn Watson

Based on the committee members' collective experience of voice, speech, text and dialect work on Broadway and other New York theatres, regional theatre, and prominent Shakespearean festivals, we have prepared the following recommendations for VASTA members to advocate for getting the proper credit for the work you do. We also reached out to voice and speech professionals in our international membership for their input. For each of us, this has been a process of educating those we work with, and learning from experience over time. There are no absolute rules here. Each situation has its specific needs, yet as voice and speech professionals, we would like to continue advancing in the direction of acknowledgement commensurate with the important role we play in a given production.

### **1. Your Contract**

The very first conversation can be clearly reflected in the contract that you sign. We advocate for parity with the creative team on the production: designers, fight directors, choreographers, dramaturgs, etc. Your contract could state:

1. Title page credit, listed with the designers and creative team.
2. Biography included in the program along with the creative team.
3. Your name included in the press packet and all promotional materials, including the theatre's website listing of cast and creative team.
4. Lobby posters and other publicity posters listing the production's creative team could include your name and credit.
5. Programs or lobby displays where creative team has headshots could include your headshot.

Note: Sometimes, a theatre will hire you on the grounds that they only need a little work for a small number of hours. A suggestion would be to add a rider that states that if the job grows notably in the number of hours needed, the fee can be renegotiated to reflect those hours.

### **2. Your Title**

We, as a committee, agreed that you should have input as to what you are called in the program. There was a wide variety of titles that we have used over the years. They include:

1. Voice and Text Director (more common in company situations or for Shakespeare productions.)
2. Dialect Designer
3. Voice and Text Coach
4. Dialect Coach
5. Voice and Text or Dialects (with no qualifier)
6. Voice, Text or Dialect Consultant (typically with minimal time spent)

We recommend that you pick the title that is most appropriate for the job you perform, and that you advocate for that title.

### **3. Inheriting a show or passing on a show**

Many of us have experienced inheriting a show that has been coached or designed by another Voice/Speech professional. If the original material is being used, or if your job is to maintain the work that has already been done, we recommend that the original Voice, Text or Dialect professional be credited in the program, in addition to your own credit.

Similarly, if you are passing on a production to another Voice/Speech professional, or believe the production is likely to be remounted, advocate for creative credit in the program of the new production. Delineations of individual contributions may not always be crystal clear, but we advocate for credit where credit is due.

### **4. Be vigilant about checking on your program credit**

Circumstances have taught us that you may have something written in your contract that the publicist or marketing director isn't aware of. It is up to you to communicate with the people who generate the program so they know how your information should appear. An e-mail can save heartache later on!

Feedback from a selection of voice and speech professionals from our international membership underscored the need to continue to raise awareness among theatre producers, directors, company managers, and those in charge of marketing, about our creative contributions to any given production, and about credit and billing that reflects those contributions.