Dear VASTA Members,

Since VASTA’s incorporation in 1986, I am its 8th president. In one way or another I served under each of the former presidents. And as I reflect, I am so grateful for every one of them. This organization truly stands on their shoulders, as each had their unique contributions. Dorothy Runk Mennen is the Mother of us all. Barbara Acker refined our constitution. Barry Kur organized our infra-structure. Marian Hampton broadened our scope to the international scene. BettyAnn Leeseberg Lang spearheaded our publications and pushed VASTA kicking and screaming into our age of technology. Janet Rodgers brought us into the new millennium and birthed our journal. And Kate Burke has increased our outreach in a huge way. Through their leadership, VASTA has always been a hard-working, creative, innovative, solvent organization with one goal and one goal only – to serve its members and the advocacy of our profession.

To date, through our work and our publications, the success of this organization is pronounced. VASTA has literally defined what we do for all to see, explains who we are and how our services can be utilized. Thus, academia and other theatre practitioners and specialists now recognize, respect, and seek out our expertise. How far we have come in only 16 years!

But presidents, quite frankly, are only truly effectual and progressive when their constituency is fully behind them. And particularly with VASTA, it’s the membership, the individual member, who makes this organization tick, function, and excel. Presidents dream, propose, plan, organize, guide, watch over, read about and write about the organization. But it’s the Membership that does the work that facilitates us all. Without our publications, without our website, without our directories and VASTAVOX we would all be sitting, once again, alone in our offices fretting over questions and difficulties that can now be answered and solved though one e-mail that will hit several hundred VASTA members within 20 minutes. And most importantly, that e-mail will engage such receptive and responsive souls – our members, who will take a few minutes in their over-busy lives to respond, always with care and grace.

It is because of this membership that I have agreed to serve. It is because of this membership that many of us have the jobs we do, and can continue to do what we love and receive a living wage for our efforts. And, if VASTA is to continue its mission and progress further into the unknown and into these troubled artistic times, it will be this membership’s increased commitment that will hurl us through.

There is so very much to be done. So as your new president, I am soliciting YOUR interest, YOUR energies, and YOUR commitment to serve a while. Create some time in your life for VASTA. Contact me. And in so doing, you will become rich.

And finally, for those of you who did not attend this year’s VASTA Conference in San Diego, we missed you. The conference was a beautiful, stimulating three days and nights with wonderful presenters, lovely accommodations, and lots of warm and friendly souls. Hats off to Eric Armstrong, Judylee Vivier, and Jeff Morrison!

Onward into Service, our 3rd Journal publication, and to New York City in 2003!

Kate Ufema
Your President