

**FOCUS 20/20: Your Theatre, Your Town
33rd Annual Conference and Theatre Tour
Cleveland, Ohio July 15-18, 2009**



Last updated 6/26/09; Subject to change.

BackStage with . . . PlayhouseSquare's Education Collaboration

Thursday, July 16, 2009

2:00-3:15 PM

Idea Center, PlayhouseSquare

A joint educational and programming initiative of PlayhouseSquare and WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN ideastream®, *BackStage with* provides a behind the scenes view of groundbreaking Broadway musicals, introducing masters of the performing arts – composers, writers, producers, stars and more – for an intimate look at the creation of the shows we all love. Join **Colleen Porter**, PlayhouseSquare's Director of Arts Education, and **Gina Vernaci**, Vice President of Theatricals, in a discussion of this successful education program. A tour of Idea Center follows their presentation.

SPEAKER BIOS

COLLEEN PORTER

**Director of Community Engagement & Education
PlayhouseSquare, Cleveland, OH**

Colleen Porter has been the Director of Community Engagement and Education at PlayhouseSquare since 2002. Porter is responsible for programming PlayhouseSquare's school and family performance series, artist residencies and community arts events. Through her work with local, national and international arts organizations, PlayhouseSquare annually provides programming for more than 150,000 participants. She brought the International Showcase of Performing Arts for Youth to Cleveland in 2005 and has orchestrated the event's return to the city in 2007 and 2009.

Colleen was instrumental in the development of the Idea Center at Playhouse Square™, the \$42 million renovation of a historic building in downtown Cleveland's theater district into the headquarters for Cleveland's public broadcasting stations and the home for Playhouse Square's arts education programs. Through the one-of-a-kind partnership between Playhouse Square and WVIZ/PBS & 90.3 WCPN ideastream, Colleen develops innovative new programming including *BackStage With* and the *Careers in the Performing Arts* distance learning series.

Prior to her arrival at PlayhouseSquare, Colleen spent seventeen years in Buffalo, New York as an artist, faculty member at Canisius College and Chair of the Performing Arts Department at The Nichols School.

Colleen is Vice President of Programming and Selection Committee chair for International Performing Arts for Youth. She serves on the boards of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, National Education Directors of Performing Arts Centers, The Lit and The Bureau of Cultural Arts Advisory Board.

GINA VERNACI

**Vice President of Theatricals
PlayhouseSquare, Cleveland, OH**

As the Vice President of Theatricals, Gina Vernaci oversees Playhouse Square's bookings, sales and marketing. Since joining Playhouse Square in 1984, she has been responsible for upwards of 1000-plus annual performances.

**FOCUS 20/20: Your Theatre, Your Town
33rd Annual Conference and Theatre Tour
Cleveland, Ohio July 15-18, 2009**



In 2007 she was awarded the Broadway League's 11th annual Samuel J. L'Hommedieu Award for Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management.

In January, 2008, Vernaci was one of only seven "road presenters" to be named to the Executive Committee of the prestigious Broadway League in New York City. In addition to her Broadway League duties, Vernaci also serves on the executive and investment committees for the national Independent Producers Organization. She is a past board member of the National Alliance of Musical Theatre Producers and the Ohio Presenters Network.

Ms. Vernaci holds a masters degree in Urban Studies from Cleveland State University. Born and reared in the St. Louis area, she spent eight years in Kansas City launching her career in theater following graduation from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She and her husband, William Hilyard are residents of Lakewood, OH.