



For immediate release:

New York City, NY: The Stage Managers' Association of the United States (SMA) is pleased to announce *Standing in the Dark: A Series of Conversations with Prominent Stage Managers*. This exciting initiative, a continuation of the SMA's "Legacy Project," will be featured on the Association's website in both podcast and video format.

The Legacy Project has been in development for the past few years under the leadership of the SMA Chair Elynmarie Kazle who has been working to create a structure for the concept and a way of preserving these important voices. It was originally conceived as a series of video conversations. *Standing in the Dark*, is a series of audio recordings of prominent stage managers and was created by Rachel Zucker, who envisioned this project as her MFA stage management thesis at Columbia University. The two efforts will be combined as *Standing in the Dark: A Series of Conversations with Prominent Stage Managers*. Last spring, Zucker contacted the SMA to see if there was interest and support for the continuation of her undertaking beyond graduation and the board of the Stage Managers' Association has given its full support to the collaboration.

"One would think that stage managers, who are the backbone of the theatre industry, on Broadway and beyond, would have a rich written and/or oral history devoted to their work but unfortunately very little exists," according to Zucker. "That's what really inspired me to propose this as a thesis project, which eventually became *Standing in the Dark*. I believe it is important to hear their own words and voices, how these stage managers got to be where they are today."

Michael J. Passaro, Associate Professor of Professional Practice (and Rachel's advisor) at Columbia University, was supportive of Rachel's concept from the start. "When I begin to advise my students on their thesis projects, I ask them a few questions to focus their thinking: What's missing? What isn't available to them, or doesn't currently exist, in the world of stage management theory or practice? What do they wish they had in terms of a resource that will help them – and future stage managers – be better at what they do? Rachel's proposal crossed my desk and I wrote one word on it: YES!"

In the next few weeks, ten audio podcasts compiled by Zucker will be rolled out on the SMA website along with the first video podcast. According to Hope Rose Kelly, the Stage Managers' Association Website Editor in Chief, the podcasts will feature conversations with Bonnie Panson, Michael Passaro, Buzz Cohen and Arturo Porazzi, among others. The first video podcast will feature premiere Broadway stage manager and mountain climber, Bob Bennett.

"I speak for many of us I'm sure" continued Passaro, "when I wish that legendary voices such as Ruthie Mitchell, Biff Liff, Beverley Randolph and many others were part of this series [who are no longer with us]. There's no better organization than the SMA to foster the continuation of Rachel's work and to ensure this incredible history is available to future generations of stage managers." Speaking for the SMA, Kazle says, "By working together, we can create a cohesive history for our profession. It is our hope to make this available through our network to future generations of stage managers." Stage managers across the United States will be part of this project. To nominate a stage manager, go to [stagemanagers.org](http://stagemanagers.org) and click select I WANT TO and click on Nominate a stage manager. For information please contact Elynmarie by email at [stagemanagerassocpr@gmail.com](mailto:stagemanagerassocpr@gmail.com).

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