



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020
JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

A MESSAGE FROM A.B.L.E.

Well, this certainly wasn't the year we expected.

It's hard sometimes to remember the first half of FY20 because the second half was so full of surprises. **A.B.L.E. has made plans, changed plans, and then changed them again.** And we're not alone. COVID19 and the unrest around the country threw us all for a loop....or many loops.

Frustrations and fears have swirled over the past several months. **It has never been more important to have a safe space for creative exploration and social connection.**

A.B.L.E.'s ability to navigate this year is a testament to what quality arts education can teach us - problem solving, emotional literacy, teamwork, communication, adaptability, among so many more lifelong skills. **It's also a testament to the power of our community we have built over the past 4 years.** We had a solid foundation that provided the security to make a leap into the brave new world of virtual programming.

At a time when so many businesses have shuttered, A.B.L.E. has kept all of our staff. We honored our contracts with Teaching Artists and Guest Artists. **And we have worked tirelessly to provide a sense of normalcy and routine for our ensembles.**

On behalf of our Board, Staff, Volunteers, and Actors, thank you for your continued support. We hope you and yours stay well. Stay safe. And stay with us. **Whether in person or online, there's still a lot to look forward to.**

KATIE YOHE
EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR





DECEMBER 14, 2019
11:30AM
THE WATTS

THE THEATRE SCHOOL AT DEPAUL
2350 N. RACINE AVE. CHICAGO IL 60614
BOX OFFICE: 773.325.7900

MORE INFORMATION AT
WWW.ABLEENSEMBLE.COM



O FOR A MUSE

PART 1

original stories inspired by
Shakespeare's famous props

DECEMBER 13, 2019 • 7 PM
THE WATTS THEATRE
The Theatre School at DePaul
2350 N. Racine Ave. • Chicago 60614
Box office: 773.325.7900

MORE INFO AT WWW.ABLEENSEMBLE.COM



FALL 2019 PRODUCTIONS

3
ensembles

2
unique
performances

318
tickets sold

Over a 10 week rehearsal process, A.B.L.E.'s teen and adult ensembles collaborated with a team of teaching artists and volunteer facilitators to devise two original productions:

Are You Still Watching

A.B.L.E.'s teen ensembles reflected on the many ways our assumptions – both good and bad – inform how we interact with the world. The result was a unique mix of scenes, monologues, and movement pieces inspired by the lives and experiences of the ensemble.

O for a Muse

A.B.L.E.'s adult ensemble remixed some of The Bard's classics in a unique evening of storytelling. Featuring brand new tales written by the ensemble, interwoven with text from *Romeo & Juliet*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, and other Shakespearean classics, *O for a Muse* celebrates the magic of everyday objects.

Both shows were staged in partnership with The Theatre School at DePaul University.



Shakespeare's
COMEDY OF ERRORS
 the webseries
 adapted by Braden Cleary

5 episodes
 starting Monday May 18th
 tune in on YouTube at
bit.ly/abletube



O FOR A MUSE

original stories inspired by
 Shakespeare's famous props

NEW STORIES AVAILABLE EVERY WEEK
STARTING FRIDAY MAY 22ND

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ABLEENSEMBLE.COM/MUSE



SPRING 2020 PRODUCTIONS

8000+

video views on Facebook and
 YouTube

200+

story downloads

6

livestream events
 with audiences tuning in from
 around the country, and as far
 away as Canada, Scotland, and
 New Zealand.

A.B.L.E.'s ensembles were 3 weeks into rehearsals for their spring projects when the COVID19 pandemic forced us to reimagine how we work. We shifted quickly to offer virtual sessions via Zoom. Our teaching teams learned new technology on the fly, and together, we improvised a new way of working together.

Ensembles collaborated on two innovative digital projects:

Comedy of Errors: The Webseries

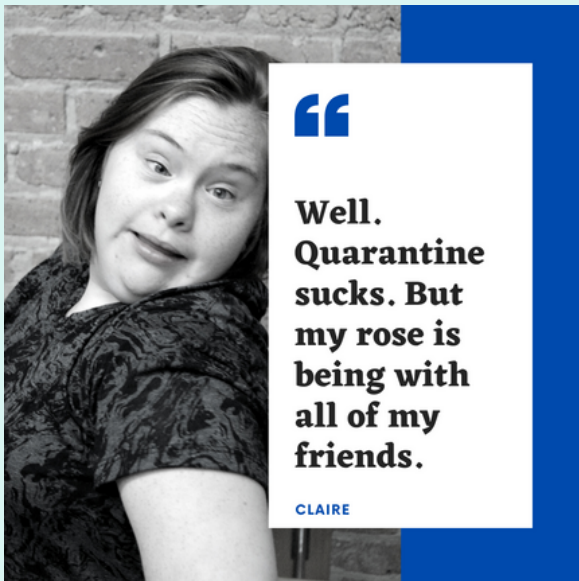
The 20 actors of A.B.L.E.'s teen ensembles brought Shakespeare's tale of mistaken identity to the screen in a 5-episode webseries. Filmed entirely on Zoom, actors created their own costumes, props and sound effects using items found in their homes

O for a Muse: The Short Story Collection

The adult ensemble imagined 5 original tales inspired by objects from Shakespeare such as a crown, a ring and a handkerchief. These were turned into a series of downloadable stories featuring illustrations by the cast, accompanied by Shakespeare-inspired videos.

Praise for A.B.L.E.'s first Virtual Semester

"We all really needed this kind of joy and creativity in our lives during these wild, anxiety-inducing times. Thank you for making it all possible, and for finding a way to keep us all involved."



"Your work pivoting so quickly to online content is nothing short of amazing. You should be super proud of this semester. As always, you're organized, have a plan, anticipate potential bumps in the road, and are focused on caring for your people. This is a great, great, great place to volunteer."



"We love ABLE! It has been an outlet for his imagination and an opportunity to see his friends over Zoom! The highlight of the WHOLE week."





OTHER SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- In October, we forged a new outreach partnership with the **Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association**.
- For the 3rd year in a row, A.B.L.E. welcomed guest artists from the internationally acclaimed physical theatre company, **Frantic Assembly** to lead workshops for our ensemble and teaching team
- We shared A.B.L.E.'s methodology and mission with other educators and performers at **Northwestern University's Inclusive Theatre Festival** and the **Mid-America Theatre Conference**, and through accessibility consulting for The House Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theater.
- Ensembles took **5 Field Trips** to professional productions including an advanced screening of *The Peanut Butter Falcon* and backstage tour of The Goodman Theatre.
- We invested in our teaching artists and facilitators by offering **5 Professional Development Trainings** including behavior management for the arts classroom with Becky Leifman from CO/LAB Theater Group, and a virtual session with Flute Theatre from the U.K.
- We launched **A.B.L.E. At Home** which featured a video series of theatre games and activities, and several productions from A.B.L.E.'s archive, all available to stream free of charge.

FY20 by the Numbers



50

individuals with varying disabilities served through all of A.B.L.E.'s programs, including 6 new ensemble members.



44%

of all participants received free or reduced-rate registration



17

Chicago wards, 12 surrounding suburbs, and 2 states represented by our participants



1420+

Hours volunteered across all programs and events by 29 volunteers



83

dance parties kicking off various rehearsals and workshops



17%

of individual donations through fundraisers organized by Facebook fans

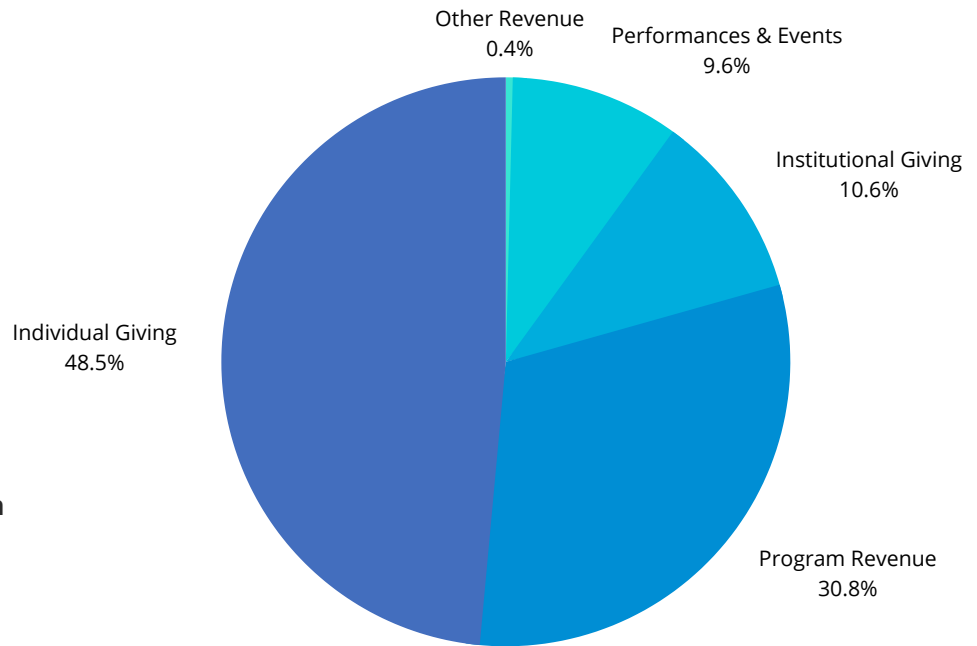
FY20 Income

\$94,919

In the midst of the COVID19 pandemic and the ensuing economic uncertainty, A.B.L.E. supporters **increased individual giving by more than 74% compared to FY19.**

We also won our first major **grants to support operations.**

Longterm, we hope to **decrease our reliance on program registration fees** and ease the financial burden placed on participants.

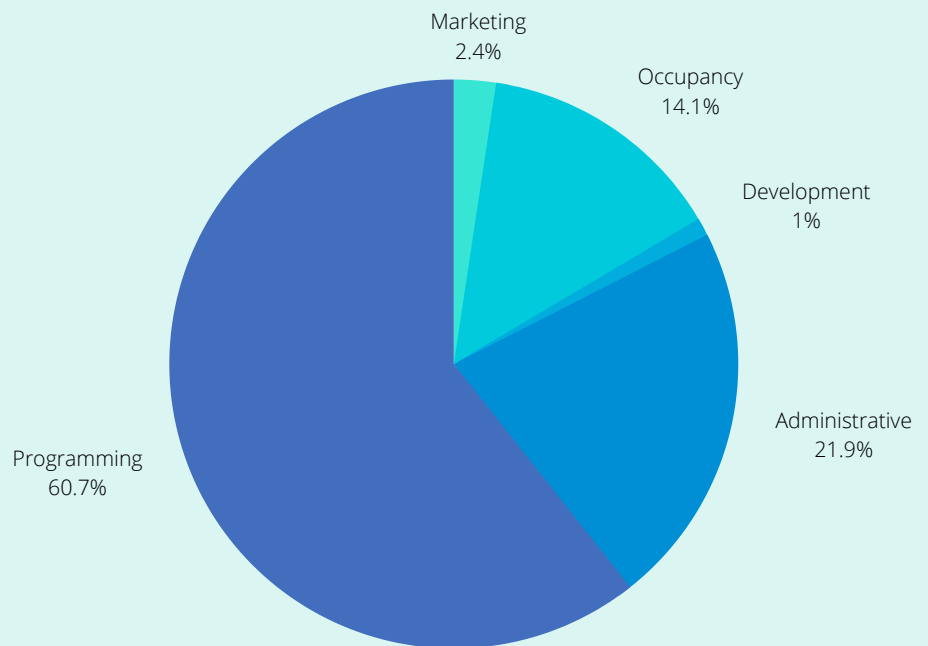


FY20 Expenses

\$67,440

COVID19 meant incurring **new expenses for technology and remote work**, but also a decrease in many of the costs associated with live performances such as studio and theatre rental fees.

These savings have allowed us to **build cash reserves** that will support increased staffing levels and programs, and provide a much needed safety net.



LOOKING FORWARD

We will continue to do our best to ensure everyone is A.B.L.E. to connect, contribute and create - whatever the future holds.

FY21 will bring A.B.L.E.'s 5th birthday as a 501c3 organization. It will also undoubtedly bring more unknowns and surprises. Still, we are committed to continuing our growth with a few key strategic goals:

- Adding a **4th ensemble** to accommodate participants from our program waitlist.
- **Doubling our workshop offerings** throughout the year - online, and in-person if allowed.
- Packaging **A.B.L.E. curricula for licensing** by other organizations that serve individuals with I/DD.
- Creating a **Diversity Equity & Inclusion** task force that will assess and encourage greater diversity across the organization.
- Adhering to a new matrix for **Board recruitment** that ensures a range of backgrounds are included in organizational leadership, and recruit at least 1 new member into the Board of Directors under these guidelines.
- **Increase individual giving by 10%** with a focus on growing monthly donations. These will provide a predictable revenue stream that will allow us to plan ahead.



Thank you to our FY20 Supporters

Individual Support

\$5000+

The Butler Family
The Phillips Family

\$1000+

The Buchanan Family
Greg Desmond & Michael Segobiano
Jenny Fisher
Dana LaChapelle
The Lavin Family
Mizuho Corporate Giving
Dennis Rossow
Marcela Sarmiento
Carly & Ben Settle
Patrice Tuohy
Daniel Weiland

\$500+

Colette & Tim Diegel
Jennifer Kramer
The Luzadder Family
Mollyanne Margolis
The Perez Family
Tom & Maria Yohe

\$250+

Susan Benner
Justin Bodary
Parvesh Cheena
The Conway Family
Dennis Daughtridge
Jennifer Earvolino
Catherine Kosnik
Robert Mardirossian & Mary Alice Lavin
Katherine Magon
Charene Nagel
Jennifer Peters
Range Restaurant
Breanna Rollings & Jon Stokes
Jared Sabater
Ruth Sharps
The Walsh Family

\$100+

Anonymous (2)
Neal Bader
Anna Boone
Tina Carlson & Thom Boyd
Dominic Cianciolo
Braden Cleary
Cynthia Cleary
The Collins Family
Mary Cooke
Mary Ann Daly
Jeffrey David
Ryno Erasmus
Bill Fitzgerald
Sharon Flanagan
Nicole Frangakis
Bryan Gray
Malcolm Greenstein
Valerie Guerrera
The Janik Family
Katherine Kennedy-Kartheiser

Suzette Kern
Mindy Kisner
Cathy Leonis
Thomas McGuire
Joseph Marren
Gordo Medina
The Miezal Family
Mary Claire Moll
Michelle Novick
Sean O'Brien
Sean Okerberg
The O'Leary Family
Caryn Palewski
Clare Sobotta
Deniz Solworth
Julie-Ann Toll
Kunur Tucker
Nancy Tuohy
Sarah Tuohy
Terry Tuohy
Emily Weiland
Hannah Wichmann
Mike Yohe

\$25+

Anonymous
Ines Grzeslo
Cathy Guinan
Hillary Hansen
Janean Henderson
Scott Henderson
Scott Hildebrand
Joyce Hilow
Clare Hollander
Crystal Honkala
Courtney Rioux Hubbard
Jennifer Jacobs
Vera Jimenez
Karen Jones
Leona Kelley
Kurt & Elsa Kern
Caryn Kingseed
Kate Lacey
Kristen McKenny Lee
Jim Lifton
Michelle Ludwig
Lauren Lynch
Josh Mabry
Tara Majeed
Kyle Manuel
Michelle Ann Marie
The Marren Family
Maria McCann
Tara McKee
Susan Meier
Deena Mitchell
Jenny Noriega
Walter Nyziak
Brooke Ohnmeis
Barbara Okerberg
David Okerberg
Alex Onion
Sam Ostrowski
Sarah Ostrowski
Amos Otis
Yurany Arboleda Palacio
Deborah L Paton

Sandra Patricia
Kevin Patrick
Isaac Alarid Pease
Dennis Petrone
Deb Piscola
Derrick Quijano
Joshua Quinn
Thanmayi Reddy Rapolu
Joseph Reeder
Rhoda Reeling
Dlance Rogers
Dave Rossow
Andy Sac
Erica Santiago
Esperanza Santiago
Doreen Sayegh
Wende Schott
Lauren Secrist
Cindy Sherwood
Hank Snedeker
Mike Spear
Angela Sprinkle
Kori Stoll
Carole Szymanski
Rob Tait
Algis Tamosiunas
Bryce Terwelp
Tina Thomas
Patrick Trettenero
Susy Solis Vasquez
Faneequa Vazquez
Allison Walker
Warner Bros. Entertainment
Drew Weaver
Erin Weibel
Cassandra Westover
Ben Wiebers
Don Wiener
Tom Wiener
Shirley Wilson
Windy City Fencing
Brian Wrenn
Charles Wright
Katie Yohe
David Ziegler
Scott Ziemba
Sabrina Zoppa

Under \$25

Jonathan Andersen
Allen Arthur
Tom Bacon
Laury Barella
Carolyn Barrett
Brianna Bussell
Elizabeth Cambray-Engstrom
Meg Chalmers
Mark Clemens
Liza Diaz
Caitlin Downer
Nancy Dreyer
Ali Elizabeth
Chris Faye
Jensine Fitzgibbons
Mary Furman
Carly Geer
Jenna Glenna

David Grant
Jean Grenouille
Rebecca Hawkes
Jim Heavey
Maggie Holzrichter
Victoria Huston-Elem
Loren Jones
Lindsay Dane Keeney
Tom Lalonde
Ulku LeBeau
Becky Leifman
Tony Lewis
Ross Mau
Kate McDuffie
Arlene Melo-Colon
Arin Mulvaney
Leslie Nelson
Pauline Moll
Carole Piccirilli
Melody Pitt
Tim Ransberger Sr.
Kim Reed
Lynn Rissman
Caitlin Roberts
Lainee Ropon
Mary Ruppert
Gustavo Sarmiento
Monica Sarmiento
Samantha Gencarello Schwartz
Sally Shockey
Amy Soumar
Richard Starzec
Erica Westrich
Lena Goretsky Winters

In-Kind Support

America's Dog & Burger
Auditorium Theatre
Carol Fox & Associates
Dos Toros
Steppenwolf Theatre
Trattoria Gianni

Institutional Support



A.B.L.E.'s 2019-2020 Season Team

Ensemble Members

Monday Ensemble

Christian Boyd
Sandia Coleman
Sophie Earvolino*
Ryan Foley*
Anna Luzadder
Maggie Marren*
Matthew Marren*
Claire O'Leary
Hannah Vilic
Lucy Walsh

Tuesday Ensemble

Ben Collins
Marty Conway
Matt Danaher*
Peter Grzeslo
Andrew Kosnik
Emily Kwidzinski
Matthew LaChappelle
Emily Lavin
Maddi Perez
Justice Peters Farrell
Sam Radinsky
Jake Solworth

Friday Ensemble

Colin Baar*
Marissa Bloodgood
Alena Counter Brown
Jack Butler
Samuel Floersheimer
Natalia Janik
Mila Medina
Maria Meyer
Lucas Miezal
Sam Petri

Technical Director

Alison Perrone

Lighting Designers

Claire Chrzan
Dan Friedman

Sound Technicians

Kaylie Honkala
Arin Mulvaney

Photography & Video

Brock Alter
Mariana Gongora

Front of House Volunteers

Colleen & Jane Altman
Cheryl & Quincy Bane
Nette Angelini
Megan Gray
Sam Ostrowski
Mary & Sam Petri
Jenna Rapisarda
Maria Yohe

Executive Artistic Director

Katie Yohe

Program Coordinator

Emma MacLean

Teaching Artists

Braden Cleary
Kaylie Honkala
Lawrence Kern
Sean Okerberg

Facilitators

Rosie Bross
Nate Buursma
Shannon Diegel
Mary Fegenbutz
Kiaran Hartnett*
Chelsea Hosler
Lauren Lynch*
Kate McDuffie*
Jenna Rapisarda
Mary Ruppert*
Beth Sherwood
Susan Sjodin
Lindsay Stock
Nette Angelini
Claire Chrzan
Kara Davidson
Aaron Latterell
Arin Mulvaney
Ben Raanan*

Guest Artists

Maggie Bridger & Sydney Erlikh
Frantic Assembly
Paolo Guidi & Richard James Neale
Becky Leifman of CO/LAB Theater Group
Christian Litke
Kelly Hunter & Flute Theatre
Ele Matalan
Katie Mann of 4th Wall Theatre Co.

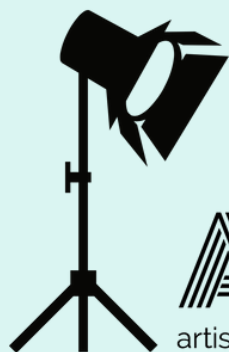
Venue Partners

The Menomonee Club Drucker Center
Ruth Page Center for the Arts
Chicago Shakespeare Theater
The Theatre School at DePaul University

Board of Directors

Nancy Buchanan
Greg Desmond
Jenny Fisher
Matt Maxwell
Marcela Sarmiento*
Dennis Rossow*
Kendra Van Kempen

**denotes first season with A.B.L.E.*



A.B.L.E.
artists breaking limits & expectations

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Chicago IL, 60614

✉ admin@ableensemble.com

🌐 www.ableensemble.com

📱 @ableensemble

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