



The A.C.T. For Youth Story



The Atlantic Coast Theatre (A.C.T.) For Youth began in the Summer of 1995 in the parking lot of the outdoor drama TECUMSEH in Chillicothe, OH when actors Noel Holland & Don Gruel first met.

Though they didn't yet realize it, they would soon bond together in life, in art, & in business.

Don had received his B.A. in Theatre from the University of South Carolina in 1993. Noel would graduate from the University of Montevallo in Alabama with a degree in Music Education in 1996.

The couple married in 1997 & continued to work together for theatres across the United States.

After developing successful Summer Theatre Education programs for the Self Family Arts Center on Hilton Head Island, SC in 1997 & 1998, Don & Noel produced their first touring show as A.C.T. For Youth in 1999. OUR AMERICA, a multicultural American folktales show was an immediate success. Initially, A.C.T. For Youth shows were used to fill in the gaps between their acting contracts.

Over time, a few days of shows each year turned into a few weeks, then into a few months.

Don & Noel moved to Orlando, FL in 2000 after spending a season with The San Francisco Bay Area's California Theatre Center. In 2001, Don went to work for Actors' Equity Association negotiating on behalf of all Actors employed at Walt Disney World. Noel continued to work for theatres throughout Florida. Though very successful in their independent ventures, Noel & Don felt that their true calling was to create theatre for children & families together.

In 2003, they returned to A.C.T. For Youth full-time, producing a 5 show touring season. Along with their "Tour Manager", Dijon (their Bichon Frise dog), Don & Noel now tour throughout the U.S. bringing their creativity & commitment to the art of Theatre For Young Audiences to Performing Arts Centers, Schools, Libraries, Museums & Festivals. Each season, A.C.T. For Youth produces 5-7 shows...all written by Don & Noel, who give hundreds of performances for more than 70,000 audience members annually.

The couple often remark that they "Have the best job in the world"... because no matter what happens in life, making children smile, laugh, & learn is a tremendous joy!



www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com