

DEFINITIONS

gathered by Conrad Bishop of Independent Eye

Here are some composites of definitions of ensemble. I think the purpose here is simply knowing what we mean by the term. It's not necessarily stuff to be included in a grant application, or to exclude someone who really wants to be part of the stir. Debating terminology isn't the most important thing we have to do right now, but I feel we should have some sort of common understanding. So here's mine:

A theatre company that maintains a bond with a number of artists who are committed to working with and for each other, over a span of projects, to create performances uniquely characteristic of that ensemble and flowing from the strong personal stake of the artists.

And the corollaries of this:

- * Whether supporting a permanent group or simply providing a network structure, there is a commitment among individuals to work together.
- * Whether managed collectively or hierarchically, and whether the artistic mission is defined by the group or a leader, the artists have a significant degree of impact on the definition of the ensemble's mission.
- * Whether focused on new work or revivals, the theatrical event is strongly affected by the individual contributions of the artists.
- * While artists have distinct specialties and responsibilities within a production, their personal stake allows them - and obligates them - to interact to some degree in all aspects of the theatrical event.
- * While the ensemble may be large or small, the demand for close personal connection between artists implies an organic limitation on size.
- * Because the artists' stake is personal, the connection of the art with the larger community of which the artists are members is likely to be central to the ensemble's work.

And a last thought, from Bob Leonard and The Road Company.

An ensemble is a group of theater artists who are committed to working together over the years and who look to each other to develop a style of performance that is specific to the group regardless of the choice of dramaturgical styles of production. An ensemble is distinct from a company when the group is empowered to shape the artistic direction through a structure of function, collective or otherwise, which is inclusive of all members of the group.