

Richard Edelman (March 28, 1926-December 4, 2019)

Richard Edelman's long career as a stage director encompassed the full spectrum of live performance. He directed stand-up comedy, burlesque, reviews, musicals, opera, "legit", as well as off-Broadway experimental theatre.

A graduate of St. John's College, Annapolis, and Columbia University, he directed opera extensively in New York and acted and directed off-Broadway. He produced, directed and acted with the controversial Living Theatre, was a member of Orson Welles' Company and acted at the San Diego Shakespeare Festival and the Williamstown Theatre. Early in his career he worked at the Mermaid Theatre in London and studied mime in France.

As a producer he headed the theatre program at Green Mansion Summer Resort in Warrensburg, NY during the 1960s. The theatre had an illustrious history, in previous decades being home to the Group Theatre. He hired Bruce Trinkley as music director and thus began a five-decades long collaboration on musicals and original works.

A well-known acting teacher and coach, he taught for seven years at New York's Neighborhood Playhouse where he was an assistant to the legendary Sanford Meisner. He also taught at Sarah Lawrence College and Juilliard and was Head of Drama at the 92nd Street "Y."

He first came to Penn State as a guest artist, directing Puccini's comic opera *Gianni Schicchi* with Raymond Brown, faculty baritone. As an acting teacher he developed the professional training program at Penn State, teaching alongside Broadway actor Archie Smith, and renowned acting coach Manuel Duque. They created the leading graduate acting program in the country in the 1970s. He also served as Artistic Director for Penn State's Festival of American Theatre, the summer program at Penn State. He directed productions of *You Can't Take It with You*, *Indians*, *The Little Foxes*, *The Homecoming* and *The House of Blue Leaves*. His collaborations with Bruce Trinkley included productions of *Carousel*, *Anything Goes*, and *Damn Yankees*. For the University Theatre he directed *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Medea*, *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Three Sisters*. His production of *The Miser* traveled to the Kennedy Center where it won the American College Theatre Festival Award.

Later in his career Richard chaired the department of theatre arts at Amherst College and then taught at Boston University. He also taught acting in his private studio in New York. In the 1980s he worked in Germany with Eric Bass where Richard's "actors" were the puppets of the internationally famous Sandglass Theatre now based in Putney, Vermont.

Richard collaborated with Bruce Trinkley and Jason Charnesky on the production of *Confess\Confuse*, an evening of three opera monodramas and a chamber opera. The program premiered at the legendary Cornelia Street Café in Greenwich Village, and then traveled to the Philadelphia Fringe Festival and the Penn State Downtown Theatre.

Richard's final production was the world premiere of Trinkley and Charnesky's opera *Lorenzo's Ashes* at the Harwood Museum in Taos, New Mexico in 2012.

Richard was always at his best directing musicals and operas and helping singers achieve subtleties and substance in their acting.

One of Richard's great pleasures was what he called "collaborating with Shakespeare." He studied the works of the Bard; and ten days before his death he was teaching a class of retirees who were studying the works of Shakespeare.

