

From Executive Director Terence McFarland

I've been focused on exuberance lately.

Not only because of the college acceptance and scholarship award letters in our household, but also the can-do/fuck you spirit shared by high school seniors and the Los Angeles performing arts community, young and otherwise. Inspired by the combination this week of the *LA Weekly Awards*, the announcement of a 26 year old taking the baton as conductor of the LA Philharmonic, being middle-aged on MYSPACE and being called out in *Back Stage West* for a workshop I called "Get Your Young On" making a "young" guest writer "want to gag." I want to celebrate the spirit and motivation behind the exuberance demonstrated this week, even when it bristles.

As a note passed to me once said "You have the most incredible, positive, fuck you energy."

I was much younger then and didn't fully appreciate the compliment. Now I seem to have settled nicely into my role as an instigating change agent. I'm beginning to realize as I near 40 that exuberance isn't connected exclusively to age. Exuberance often accompanies beginnings, but circumstance demands it more often than not for those involved in the performing arts.

A few age-neutral instances:

A first show.	A first call time.	A first conference.
A first ensemble.	A first teacher who gets it.	A first transfer.
A first leading role.	A first teacher who gets you.	A first tour.
A first "America voted and you're safe," despite all indications to the contrary.	A first teacher who makes a difference.	A first "there's how many people in the house?"
A first international renowned philharmonic conducting gig.	A first career you thought impossible.	A first "we'll hold the curtain for you"
A first LA Weekly Award for best new musical.	A first teacher who gives you the tools to find your way.	A first "we met in a show."
A first bite of the hand that feeds you.	A first impression.	A first "will you stage manage for me?"
A first season announcement.	A first gifted student.	A first "who got the role?"
A first LA Weekly Award in your middle age.	A first musical.	A first feature in the <i>Times</i> .
A first review.	A first introduction to visual language.	A first revival.
A first good review.	A first movement class.	A first royalty check.
A first grant for funding.	A first voice lesson.	A first cue-to-cue.
A first donor.	A first directing lab.	A first improv.
A first extension.	A first summer theater camp.	A first capital campaign.
A first standing ovation.	A first "will you come see my show?"	A first back stage tour.
A first "a critic is coming."	A first "we're going to see it."	A first retirement.
A first sold out show.	A first cover story.	A first job change.
A first commission.	A first announcement of a \$55 million dollar gift.	A first "Best of" list mention.
A first role written especially for you.	A first "I have to see that show."	A first career change.
A first call back.	A first "do we have to go?"	A first donation.
A first opening night red carpet.	A first "I want to stay?"	A first Ovation Award nomination.
A first board meeting.	A first "when do you close?"	A first Ovation Award win.
A first "you've got the role."	A first "free wine after the show"	A first solo show.
A first Shakespeare.	A first talk back.	A first disgruntled patron.
A first Beckett.	A first stage door.	A first season subscriber.
A first Suzan-Lori Parks.	A first recognition of talent.	A first angel level personalized thank you.
A first forgotten line.	A first dressing room.	A first performing in fight choreography with a broken collarbone with someone your size
A first fundraiser.	A first retiring founder replacement.	A first board meeting
A first press interview.	A first panel review.	A first endowment.
A first paycheck.	A first striking the set.	A first new building.
A first union contract paycheck.	A first missed cue.	A first consultant.
A first company meeting.	A first "Genius grant."	A first cast party.
A first corporate sponsor.	A first tech.	A first Pulitzer Prize.

To Kate Smeal, Gustavo Dudamel, Sanjaya, the creators of *The Beastly Bombing*, Danielle Holland, Will Watkins, Tracy Fair Robertson and all of you who've experienced these and the many other firsts we have the privilege to enjoy: here's to our full life of firsts and the gift of exuberance to carry you on to the next and the next and the next.