

100 Creatives 2013: Buck Ross, Dilettante and Director of Moores Opera Center

By **Brittanie Shey**

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What He Does?

Buck Ross is the director of the Moores Opera Center at the University of Houston. He's the director and producer of the school's productions, and also teaches acting for singers.

Ross, a New Jersey native, got his start studying music and theater as a double major, but never thought of combining the two.

"I had a teacher who said, 'You're going to direct opera.' I'd only seen one opera at that time."

After college he went on to study under H. Wesley Balk, perhaps the most famous person teaching actors to sing at the time. Then he moved to New York, started freelancing across the country and eventually ended up at UH to work with Houston Grand Opera -- the two organizations were closed affiliated at the time.

"I was a little disturbed there wasn't a program for the students," he said. And so he founded the Moores Opera Center. "The program here, in many ways, is one of the best-kept secrets in town."

Why He Likes It?

"My particular job, I like because it's difficult. I like hard, hard it is. It's the perfect job for a dilettante. I get to play in a lot of different sandboxes. You don't get bored. And my threshold for boredom is rather low," said Ross.

"I like teaching. I had great teachers and consequently I was always appreciative of the profession. The teaching part, to me, is more important than the art part."

What Inspires Him?

"I spend all of my time looking at everything as inspiration. Everything around you is potentially useful," he said.

"I was brought up to believe I could do anything. Consequently, everything was interesting."

If Not This, Then What?

"I think I'd be teaching something. I could also see myself doing something using an odd combination of skills. I'm always occupied, always looking for something new. The thought of having a small part in a project was never very interesting."



Courtesy of Moores
Opera Center

If Not Here, Then Where?

"I'm very fond of Italy," he said. "I still take an Italian class once a week. I connect with the country. There's something about the way of life there that appeals to me."

What's Next?

Ross just finished the last show of the season, so his summer is open. He plans to travel to Italy and a few other locales.

"I am teaching in Taos this summer," he said. "Mostly the summer is about regrouping and planning for the fall."

"The thing about this job is that you get closure occasionally. There's a great sense of satisfaction with finishing a project and anticipation with starting a new one, and I think a lot of people don't get that at work," he said.

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