

Patrick Kelsey, '94

Midas touch exceeds Broadway

Zionsville native **Patrick Kelsey**, '94, a theatre and entrepreneurial business management graduate, looms large in the international performance arts industry. His immediate domain is New York City.

After formalizing his two Ball State degrees, Kelsey pursued a master of fine arts degree at Columbia University. He anticipated a career in regional theatre. At the end of his second year, through internship opportunities and networking, he found that jobs working for Broadway theatres were plentiful, and not as difficult to acquire as he had previously thought.

Hired later with an introduction and referral to Pace Theatrical Corporation and Pace Theatrical Group, Inc. (PACE) executives, Kelsey became assistant operations director.

Kelsey's feelings about Broadway theatrical opportunities have not changed. But his perspective has. Now as operations director, he works on all productions from the "presentation viewpoint." His purview is the entire theatrical industry which generates \$800 million on-the-road and \$500 million on Broadway.

Today he is responsible for PACE's pricing, budgeting, contracting, and other logistics of presentation during 450 playing weeks in 38 of the top 50 North American markets. PACE maintains a subscription ticket base of more than 300,000 theatre subscribers on tour.

Theatrical giant PACE is currently producing or co-producing four major musicals in New York. "We are the largest presenter of live theatre in the U.S.," says Kelsey. PACE also conducts business in expanding markets internationally. London, Sydney, and Toronto are current centers of activity.

Headquartered in New York's office of 40 employees, Kelsey and his staff of four travel extensively, as far South as Florida, and North to Ottawa, to execute

pre-arranged performance contracts with theatres and auditorium venues.

Ball State's Emens Auditorium, and Indianapolis' Murat Theatre, and Clowes Hall are regular venues.

Broadway productions occupying Kelsey's weekly schedule of 60-hours-plus include: *Jekyll & Hyde*, featuring Robert Cuccioli, Linda Eder, and Christiane Noll; *Chicago*, with Bebe Neuwirth; *Sound of Music*, starring Rebecca Luker; and *Cabaret*, headlining Natasha Richardson and Alan Cummings.

David Copperfield, a frequent attraction at Emens, starred in *Dreams and Nightmares*.

Kelsey credits the influences of Ball State assistant professor David Shawger, Jr., and professors Mark Hillenbrand and Don LaCasse, chairman of the Theatre and Dance Department, in fulfilling his needs to support his earliest studies. Kelsey also notes the contribution of Donald Kuratko, professor and Jeff and Teri Stoops Distinguished Professor of Business, as a mentor who nurtured his desire to pursue graduate studies. "He pushed me along."

"I don't think that there is anything that is outside a person's reach as long as he can set his mind toward it and take the plunge," Kelsey says.

His reach now includes 14 extra markets represented by his company which, in his words, "grows exponentially," and provides daily challenges to be met.

Evaluating the Broadway experience, Kelsey explains, "Celebrities come to New York because they haven't done it before. They want to be in front of live audiences and feel the applause, to be celebrated, for lack of a better word, to

receive a lot of press, and a lot of attention.

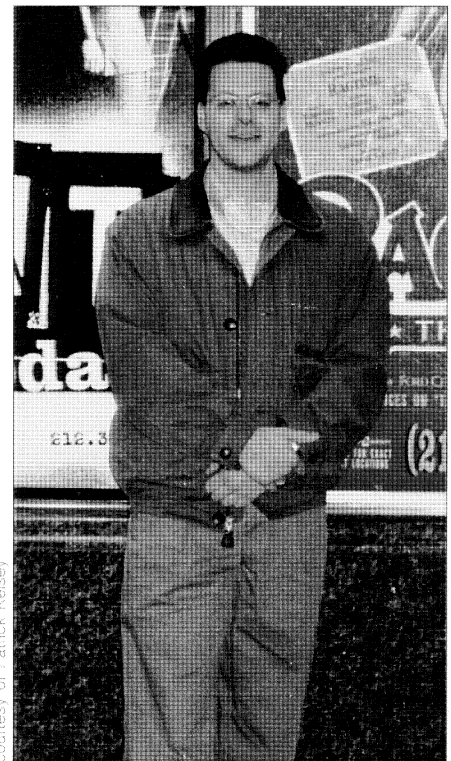
"New York represents markets for the industry to conquer," he continues. That's the way they see it.

He emphasizes, "Upwards of 2,000 people applauding you is hard to ignore."

Kelsey's frequent travels allow him chances to visit family in Indiana. His daughter often shares theatre dates with him during her visits to New York.

With strong connections to Muncie's campus, Kelsey talks with Hillenbrand, Shawger, and LaCasse on a regular basis and is trying to encourage more extensive Broadway internships for theatre and dance students.

His goal is to expose more students to Broadway and to help them break into the industry. Knowing someone is vitally important, he says, noting, "Networking has become a big thing." Talent and skill are not enough.



courtesy of Patrick Kelsey

Operations director **Patrick Kelsey** oversees presentation details for Broadway productions.