



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



allison cohn **boardmember**

Allison Cohn is a New York City based independent casting director with over a decade of experience casting talent for major television networks and shows. Allison specializes in comedy and in finding up and coming talent, personalities and hosts. Allison has deep roots in the comedy community and is constantly scouting for new faces and tracking more established talent.

Allison got her start at Comedy Central's Talent Department, where she discovered and booked comedians for stand-up shows, pilots, series and specials. Subsequently, she worked as an executive at MTV in both Los Angeles and New York, where she cast scripted and unscripted pilots, series, specials, and animated programs. While at MTV, Allison scouted talent at comedy festivals across the country, produced comedy showcases, and worked alongside celebrity producers such as Ashton Kutcher, Nick Cannon and Wilmer Valderrama. Following her experience at MTV, Allison made the move to network TV and ABC Primetime in New York, where she cast actors for scripted primetime pilots and series. As an independent casting director, she has cast projects for Comedy Central, TV Land, ABC, Discovery, MTV and numerous production companies.

"b" **secretary**

Andrew Bencina aka "b" is a Melbourne-based producer/composer and performer (vocalist/percussionist/electronic and computer musician) with many years of experience on the stage and in the studio. He is the proprietor of Winter Hill Music studios (winterhillmusic.com.au) and the Taurean Blacque production collective. For the last 10 years he has performed regularly with a number of Australian music artists and, in addition, has worked as producer and session performer with Tobias Hengeveld, Rae Howell, Nick Murphy and others. Andrew has composed and coordinated music for the Melbourne Fashion Incubator's Fashion Week show and contributed compositions to Loreal's New Designer (Independents Day) showcase.



Andrew has worked within the local hip hop scene and a short piece of Andrew's produced under the pseudonym "Plan B" was selected for use as the theme to the nationally broadcast Triple J Hip Hop Show featured weekly on the ABC's youth station. He has also become a regular contributor to Australasia's premiere pro-audio magazine AudioTechnology.

From 2007, Andrew has been involved in the creation and evolution of NYLaughs. He has been responsible for much of the branding and graphic identity development of the organization and continues to design their yearly calendar of events and other promotional materials.



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jeremy levenbach

boardmember

Jeremy Levenbach has been putting together live stand-up comedy shows in New York for five years. He currently produces the (New York) Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre's weekly stand up show "Whiplash." "Whiplash" is wildly popular among comedy enthusiasts and highly acclaimed by comedy literati. Jeremy has also consulted with music festivals featuring comedy in both Los Angeles, CA and Austin, TX as well as a music tour that made use of a bus that ran primarily on used vegetable oil. Though there was no working air conditioner on the bus that traveled through the south during a particularly sweltering summer Jeremy still remains friends with the comedians he booked for the tour.



jane shields

treasurer

Jane Shields has been writing since she was 7, when she co-wrote a musical called, "I like you just the way you are" with musician Myndy K and her mother, Alice Damon. Jane graduated with a BA in Playwriting and Screenwriting from NYU's Department of Dramatic Writing where she was awarded the Rita and Burton Goldberg Award for her play "The Iceberg". Her plays have been seen off-off Broadway at Expanded Arts Center, at the Rita and Burton Goldberg Theatre, and have been workshopped at Toronto's Zed House. In addition to her book of plays, Jane has completed three screenplays and written many jokes--some of which are actually funny. She has worked in the financial services industry since 1995. She has experience with investments, bookkeeping and operations.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

suzette simon

chairman + founder

Suzette Simon is a TV producer and casting director who has cast projects for the development departments of BET, mtvU, MTV, MTV2 and Discovery. Currently, she is a producer on the FUSE TV show "Hoppus on Music" hosted by Blink 182's Mark Hoppus with comedian Amy Schumer. Additionally, she serves a talent / new faces consultant for BET and produces comedy / new music showcases for industry. Some of her network TV comedy-related projects are casting for Jerry Seinfeld's "Marriage Ref" and producing the Emmy nominated Season 4 of "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List." Additionally, she was a producer on the 2nd season of the fashionably funny "Isaac" show on Style. She is a member of the Producers Guild of America and serves as a delegate to the AP Council. Her comic demons were unleashed while writing for "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" which led her to start doing stand-up in the subways of NYC. She soon graduated to the parks with the founding of NYLaughs. Now her mission is two-fold in comedy: 1) to use it for good by ensuring that laughter becomes a free and accessible part of the daily urban experience of every New Yorker and 2) to use it to mask a more sinister and mercenary plot to acquire a shoe collection that even Oprah would envy.





ADVISORY BOARD



STEPHEN G. HILL

President of Music Programming & Specials, BET Networks

Named #1 on *The Source* magazine's 2006 list of most influential executives in the music industry, Stephen Hill has been President of Music Programming & Specials for BET Networks since November 2008. His responsibilities include managing and directing the creation, development and production of all music programming and specials at BET Networks, including **106 & PARK**, **THE BET HONORS**, **SPRING BLING** and **RIP THE RUNWAY**. Hill also serves as Executive Producer for the **BET AWARDS** (2002-present) and the **BET HIP HOP AWARDS**.

Previously, Hill was Executive Vice President of Entertainment and Music Programming for BET. Prior to joining BET in 1999, Hill worked for four years at MTV in New York City as Director of Music Programming. As Director, Hill was responsible for selecting and programming all genres of videos for airplay, working with talent and supervising the network's standards processes.



CHRIS RANTAMAKI

Vice President of Original Series, Spike TV

Production, Discovery Channel

Chris Rantamaki has recently been hired for the newly created position of VP of original series at Spike TV. Rantamaki oversaw the start-up and production of new series and specials for the Discovery Channel out of their West Coast office. His slate included 150 hours of mostly new projects, all in various stages of production. Known for his ability to work across all genres and both prime time and day parts, Rantamaki produced and developed a broad range of programming for Discovery including: "Auction Kings," "Cook County Jail," "Exorcist Files," "Black Ops Brothers," "Wild Animal Repo," "Expedition Alaska" and several docu-dramas and new reality formats utilizing simulated environments.

Rantamaki joined The Discovery Channel in August of '07 after spending seventeen years making his mark at various production companies in Canada and the U.S. His showrunner credits include: TLC's tattoo docu-drama, 'Miami Ink', E's docu-soap 'Single', which followed singer Lisa Loeb's search for Mr. Right, Fox's daily reality strip, 'Ambush Makeover' and TLC's, 'A Dating Story.'





ADVISORY BOARD



MTV NETWORKS
A VIACOM COMPANY



SANDRA PHILIPPEAUX

Supervising Producer and Casting Director, NBC's "The Marriage Ref"

Casting Director, MTV's "16 & Pregnant"

Chairperson, NYLaughs Inc. Advisory Board

Sandra Philippeaux is a television producer and casting director with her own company, 3PX Productions. Sandra attended Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Public Communications and graduated with a Bachelors of Science. After two years of working in corporate communications she decided to pursue her graduate studies in film at Columbia University. Sandra earned her MFA from Columbia where she majored in screenwriting. Upon graduation she worked in film development then eventually found herself in the fast-paced and unpredictable world of television production. Sandra worked in development, field production, and post-production at various networks, with a focus on unscripted, reality programs. Ultimately, she earned a fantastic reputation for casting unique characters from the compelling families on ABC's "Wife Swap" to the thought-provoking young women on MTV's "16 and Pregnant." And now she is a supervising producer and head of casting for Jerry Seinfeld's newest television venture, "The Marriage Ref", which airs on NBC.

Her company 3PX Productions specializes in the casting and development of original programming for television. 3PX Productions has been instrumental in casting and developing successful, unscripted productions for various networks including ABC, NBC, FOX, MTV, VH1 and The Discovery Channel.

Currently, Sandra is in the process of developing and executive producing her own television and film projects.