

My Kingdom for a Space - Discussion about the future of The Playground

Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia's May Spark Event of 2006

May 8th @ 2nd Stage (2030 Sansom Street)

***Remember the second Monday of every month is a new Spark event hosted by the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Individual & Organizational members attend free, all others are charged \$10 per person. (This money may be applied towards membership dues!)

Special Guests:

James Haskins – Executive Director, Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia (moderator)

John Ciccone – Landlord, The Adrienne Theatre (2030 Sansom Street)

Seth Rozin – Artistic Director, InterAct Theatre Company, residing main floor 2030 Sansom Street

Future Spark Event and Theatre Alliance Announcements:

- **Whole Foods Costume Contest**
 - Whole Foods will provide a \$250 gift certificate to any costume designer/theatre company who designs and builds an outfit made from the Whole Foods bags (Potato, Apple, and now Coffee). They will supply you with however many bags you need for your build. Best Design wins \$250 in Whole Foods bucks! Contact Brett Mapp at Whole Foods for more details.
Brett.Mapp@wholefoods.com
- **June 12th - Spark Hootenanny - Time and Location TBD - watch for information on our listserv and website!**

Other Space Interests

- The William Penn Foundation in conjunction with Artspace is working on developing three new living / rehearsal / performing spaces in the Philadelphia area.
 - These are a good two to three years in the future.
- The Playground is currently a viable space which Theater Catalyst will no longer be administering for the community as of July 1, 2006.

General notes from our conversations about The Playground & John Ciccone's thoughts

- Would like to call on board a theatre company to reinforce InterAct's presence in the building.
- Joe Koroly and Theater Catalyst took over The Playground years ago (approximately 2000) and Joe contracted Comedy Sportz as an anchor for the space and the rest was scheduled in as the year progressed.
- John Ciccone could go to a private renter but he would prefer a theatre move into the space.
 - He knows he can get about \$6500 a month from a private renter, but he would lower rents to accommodate the theatre community.
 - One option is to find a replacement conduit for Joe Koroly and set up a similar system to the current model.
 - As of right now, John Ciccone has no plans for the space after June 30th.
- Comedy Sportz has been the most reliable renter and generally they pay the most in rent.
 - While there is somewhat of a commitment to them, he is also keeping his options open to other ideas.
- According to Ciccone, the lights and sound equipment will remain in the space beyond June 30th.
- InterAct is really looking for a partner in the building and someone who can keep up a high standard in the building.
- If a group of theatre companies were to try and run The Playground together; however, with the realization that ALL ARE RESPONSIBLE financially for the upkeep and utilities and rent for the space.
 - It would be difficult for any company comparable in size to Theater Catalyst, which is why they had to give up care of the space.

- Ideally, a larger organization would be better - one with more resources and people.
- Money is not a prime factor for Ciccone and he would actually like to see the space improved technically.
 - Any serious well thought out proposals may be sent to the Theatre Alliance. Email Karen DiLossi: karen@theatrealliance.org
 - A real proposal would also be necessary to even think of bringing this project to any funders for assistance
 - It will be more difficult, but the theatre companies will not own the space.
 - A production manager/facilities manager would have to be hired on at least a part time basis to care for and administrate the space. (Ideally, someone more interested in management, preferably not an artist.)
 - Theatre Alliance can inform the funders of the situation with The Playground and how much it is currently used and the possible impact of the loss of the space.
 - InterAct would help mentor the company moving into The Playground.
- Ciccone would extend the lease to Comedy Sportz through the summer, through the rest of 2006 or even to spring of 2007 if he felt there was an earnest effort on the part of the small theatres to help keep the space.
- The Theatre Alliance would copy John Ciccone on any real efforts or plans to keep The Playground. The Alliance will also meet with the Spark committee and see what is their role in regards to The Playground.
- Let's get a few great plans out there and submit them to Karen DiLossi:
[mailto:karen@theatrealliance.org?subject=Save the Playground Proposal](mailto:karen@theatrealliance.org?subject=Save%20the%20Playground%20Proposal)

Notes prepared by Karen DiLossi, Director of Programs & Services for the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia.