

What's on the SPARK plate for '08!
Monday, January 14 at 7pm
Independence Black Box, Prince Music Theater

I. Erin

- Introductions to Spark program, mission and purpose, and committee members
- The Spark programs ignites dialogue and opportunities for small and developing theatre companies, promotes small theatre in Philadelphia through events, like Spark Showcase.

II. Margie

- Spark includes small, emerging theatres in the greater vision of the Theatre Alliance and is one of the most successful programs.
- Mission: to raise Philadelphia theatre's profile. Our theatre community is so vibrant, with an active dialogue between the theatres and their audiences. There is outstanding quality work being done here. Philadelphia is a dynamic, world class theatre community.
- Initiative – GPCA's portfolio of arts community, economic impact report; arts returns \$5 in tax revenue for every \$1 given as support.
- PACDP – Pennsylvania Cultural Data Project – database that asks organization's details...What can you do to make sure you can be counted?
 - Get your theatre registered, put you info out there, allows you to be counted.
 - (Karen) Go to TA Spark resources website to view PACDP Powerpoint presentation from June 2007.
- Please email Margie with any questions, ideas or invitations/comp tickets to shows

III. 2008 Events

- (Erin) February event: Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (Monday, February 11 at 7pm)
 - Session 1 of 2 with PVLA! What services do they provide and how does a new company get its nonprofit status? Examples: workshops, lawyers, tax prep, 501c3 application, licensing issues, copyright
- April event: Arts & Business Council and PVLA (Monday, April 21 at 7pm)
*Third Monday of the month.
 - The Arts & Business Council "Business on Board" program shows you how to build your Board. Plus, Session 2 with PVLA provides private consultations with volunteer lawyers.
- (Aaron) March events: SPARK Fair (Monday, March 10 at 7pm) *At the Prince Music Theater, 1412 Chestnut St.*
 - Representatives from Spark member companies, each with their own table, will dispense information. Actors, designers, interns, etc. are encouraged to attend to learn more about these companies and how to

work with them. Spark co. reps, come with your next season in mind, have an idea of what kind of people you may be looking for.

- A facilitated discussion on the business of acting in Philadelphia: audition preparedness, headshot tips, and more.
- (Bryan) revisit April event: Building yourself a Better Board. Applicable for those companies with no board to ones with established boards. Examine the best aspects of a board. Where are the weak links?
- (Lane) May event: Paths for Development (Monday, May 12 at 7pm)
 - Representatives from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, and the Independence Foundation help to demystify these foundations and answer: What are the eligibility requirements for funding? Bring questions to ask these representatives.
- (John) June event: Touring (Monday, June 9 at 7pm)
 - Chat with companies with lots of touring experience and learn the pros and cons of taking your theatre on the road. What resources are available? Where to look? Intro to the world of presenters. Plus, end of the season party!

IV. Erin

- You can access Spark resources and notes from past three years on website.
- You need to fill out forms for participation in Spark, showcase, ad-buy and press list co-ops
- 3rd year for the Ad Co-op – Cultural Alliance and City Paper provide discounted rates, pull resources from several companies into 1 ad with several listings, a color ad under “Spark Up Your Night” logo, good placement in publications.
- Press List Co-op – Erin Reilly created a master press contact list through Google. If you have the username and password from before, it still works. More info on how to access this list to come. Looking at how to structure this better.
- Co-op lists? If you are unable to commit tonight, email Karen and she will forward to committee members.
- Advertising in suburban publications? If enough companies are interested, we can look into broadening ad co-op. Contact Erin; she is a great resource. Even non-Spark theatre companies outside of Center City may be interested (BRT, Act 2).

V. Karen

- SPARK Showcase Festival, Painted Bride Arts Center, 230 Vine St.
- Performance dates, July 15-20 (plus load-in dates)
- Broaden what companies can submit to create more artistic possibility - 3-5 minute skit, 10 minute scene, or 30 minute one-act based on a theme, to be announced.
- A sliding scale (more stage time = more money to participate = more return from profit).
- Curator – consultant for directors of individual theatres, decide order of the evening, has ability to give artistic notes to make sure the evening is cohesive, establish a reputation for quality work, opportunity for directors to get feedback

- Not everyone who sends in an application will be chosen. Decisions will be made according to the theme and varying lengths for a 2 hour evening. Curator and non-applying committee members will make the decision.
- Hiring of a curator, establishing a theme, etc. is a part of the Theatre Alliance's mission for Spark. Want to produce a viable, well-attended showcase for the emerging theatre community. Spark Showcase should be THE theatre event of the summer.

VI. Questions and Answers

- Can a company submit multiple proposals? Committee will discuss this. No company will have more than one piece accepted into the showcase.
- Theme will not limit a theatre company's style but help us to create a cohesive evening, something for the audience to hold on to.
- Wouldn't all companies want to submit one-acts for more stage time? Not necessarily. A short piece might fit better for a theatre's style or season.
- March 31 is the submission deadline, information and application will be up on website early February. We want to stick to a more rigid, definite deadline this year. The March 31 deadline allows for us to sort through applications during April. We want to have confirmed participating theatres in time to do cohesive, strong marketing/PR, get more money behind the festival (sponsorship).
- We are asking that you make a summer commitment in March. Application (due March 31) only needs to include a proposal/concept not a full script/production. Once accepted you will receive more information and deadlines.
- Cost for submissions will be similar to last year.
- Spark – investing in a marketing campaign when participating, opportunities for visibility, reviews, cultivation. This year will be an even bigger campaign.
- Choice to hold Spark during the summer? Philadelphia is 'dead' during the summer with schools being out of session and people on vacation. Summer seemed like the only time to hold this festival because the Live Arts/Philly Fringe is in the Fall and there is so much theatre going on in the Spring.
- Producer – will try to hire a local person, but it depends on grant details (last year, needed to hire a grad student)
- Restrictions for set/load-in (especially for one-acts) – limit on set pieces able to bring in. We are able to expand a bit since using the Painted Bride's space. More details will be in the application.