

Dear Dish Friends,

These are not formal minutes, my goal is always to capture most of what is said but I don't always attribute the comments to specific speakers. If you'd like to correct or add anything to these minutes, I encourage you to just respond all. Part of what we aim to do at the DISH is to keep the conversations going and include everyone who wants to partake, even if you couldn't attend the meeting. Although I do hope you can make it to the next DISH. Probably sometime in May.

Sincerely,
Amanda

DISH MINUTES

Date & Time: Monday, March 16 @ 7pm

Location: The Players Loft, Rm. 3C

Attendance: Kyle Ancowitz, Blue Coyote Theatre/Access Theatre; Angela Astle, Flux/New Perspectives; Michael Bell, actor; Adam Belvo, Working Mans Clothes; James Comtois & Pete Boisvert, Nosedive; Ianthe Demos, One Year Lease; Tim Errickson (Prez) Boomerang; Amanda Feldman (Secretary), CollaborationTown/LarkPlay Development Center; Jennifer Harder, The Management; John Hurley, Impetuous; Adam Klasfeld, One Armed Man; Aliana Noel, Subjective; Daniel Talbott, Rising Phoenix Rep./Rattlestick (14 total)

TOPIC: Theatre Space & Advocacy

I. We summed up what happened at the Forum for Small to Mid-Size Theatres that Community Boards 1 – 5 hosted on Tuesday, Feb. 17th. Here a few points:

- ☆ THE PANELISTS were... Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President; Anthony Borelli, Director of Land Use for the Manhattan Borough President; Ben Cameron, Program Director of the Doris Duke Foundation; Kevin Cunningham, Executive Artistic Director of 3 Legged Dog; Virginia Loulodes, ART/NY; Judith Malina, Founding Director of the Living Theater; John Clancy the Executive Director of the League of Independent Theatre; Katie Denny, President of SNEAC (Student Network Exploring Arts and Culture) at Wagner NYU; and Paul Nagle, Director of Cultural Policy for Councilmember Alan Gerson.
- ☆ Scott Stringer basically said... come up with a plan and we'll see what we can do.
- ☆ Kevin Cunningham spoke about how effective the coming together of 11 downtown non-profits has been. LOMAC (Lower Manhattan Arts Council) put together a survey to determine their economic impact and it's gotten them huge traction.
- ☆ In Ben Cameron's speech he proposed 4 importation questions that every theatrical organization should ask itself:
 - What is the value of my theatre for my community?
 - What is the value my theatre alone has or my theatre has better than anyone else – because in this economy duplicated and second-rate value is unlikely to stand?
 - How will my community be damaged if I went away tomorrow?
 - How can my organization in my community be optimally structured, managed and behaved to be my community's best conduit to the theatre?
- ☆ Anthony Borelli, the land use guy basically said, properties become available AND it's public information, but we don't post it anywhere.

For further details about this meeting you can read the full transcript of the meeting and watch video and hear sound clips here <http://www.nyitawards.com/oob/cbforum09feb/>. A HUGE thank you to Shay Gines, Nick Micozzi, and the folks at NYIT Foundation for putting this together.

II. The discussion continued...

Kyle continued to talk more about the goal of LOMAC. He said it is to get unrestricted funds for their organizations. It made sense for these companies to come together because they were all affected by being downtown during 9/11 and a good number of them had just gone through large capital campaigns and have significant debts/the cost of running venue costs.

Someone suggested that other *LOMACs* should be created around the city for other groups of theatres. Maybe one for each Community Board worth of theatres?

Perhaps DISH members shouldn't look necessarily to create their own "Arts Council," because they don't necessarily produce in a specific neighborhood of the city. However, we should continue to work with the NYIT Foundation and folks to create our own economic impact survey, if that's even possible.

Amanda will send out a quick survey on the listserve (**check your email after this**) asking a few basic questions that were only covered in part by the NYIT survey. To see the 3 NYIT surveys created to date go to <http://www.nyitawards.com/survey/>.

Paul Nagel is an impressive guy, check out his website artspolicynow.com.

It's wonderful that the Community Boards are putting together Theatre Task forces. Part of what the DISH can do is to get active in the Community Boards. Go to their meetings. It's public info!

What's interesting is that while medium-sized theatres are looking for spaces, indie theatres are more looking for organizations like LMCC and Chashama to step in to help out. Also it would be great if other slightly larger non-profits sponsor indie theatres and give them space.

Can the city incentivize giving up empty spaces to non-profits on a temporary bases? At the moment, landlord can write off unused properties and therefore they're not going to look to "rent" it at a low rate, because they make out better leaving it vacant.

Ironically, with all this talk about money and space. The Astoria Performing Arts Center is sitting on \$2 million to build a venue in Astoria yet they can't find the correct property and therefore may lose the money! The world is a crazy place.

The next question that Alaina posed to Kyle, is how can DISH members help out the folks that control the spaces that do exist for us to use. We don't want to see another venue go under and while we can't pay any money, we can volunteer or help advocate for the spaces that we all use and love. These spaces are our artistic homes and we need to be taking care of them and not assume that they'll always be there because they won't.

Kyle mentioned the best thing that indie theatre companies can for the folks who own the spaces that we use all of the time is to do is to book their shows as far in advance as possible!

Better yet, if you know two other theatre companies that are looking to book space around the same time, you should go in together and rent 3-months and do three shows versus each company renting separately.

Tim talking about Co-Ownning spaces as well. If the city does turn around and say, here is a space that should fit your needs, while no single company may have the resources to pick up a lease, perhaps together as a group we do.

Also if we had a choice what neighborhood would you like to be performing in?

NYC is always going to be the place for young theatre artists to go and do their work. All of those young artists rent apartments here, go to bars, and pay taxes. If indie theatre went away, the City would see a huge loss.

Daniel spoke about rebranding indie theatre. Using indie film and indie music as our models.

It's all about building personal relationships with the real estate developers and the politicians so when something comes up they do think of us. To that aim, Alaina suggested that Justin Creb hosts Drinking Liberally at Rudy's every Thursday and politicians show up because they know it's a chance for them to connect to their constituents. (Alaina, I wasn't sure if I got this correct, please correct me if it's wrong.)

Alaina also suggested we should wear a button that says something to the effect of, I AM A THEATRE PROFESSIONAL, AND I SUPPORT INDIE THEATRE. So we can prove how much impact we have.

We should get NYIT, LIT, DISH, IPA, and all indie theatre organizations to band together to really push for change. It doesn't always have to be the status quo!

III. Equity Update

Michael Bell is a member of the Off-Off Bway Equity Committee. He let us know that a sub committee convened to make suggestions to Equity Showcase Code that will be proposed to a more executive Equity committee (he didn't necessarily know who was going to review their suggestions). He wasn't at liberty to say which white paper requests were a part of those suggestions, but some changes may be in the works. This is good news. However, the work is not completed and he highly encourages all Equity members who work in the indie theatre community to join the Off-Off Bway Committee because otherwise other people are going to be making decisions for you and this group tends to be older and doesn't know a lot about the actualities of our world!!!

IV. Next steps.

1. Pete will create a Dish Facebook Group
2. Amanda will email Shay to get the venue information so we can offer our support.
3. Amanda will also email out the quick survey that we came up with earlier in the meeting to find out more information of the members of the DISH. Coming soon.
4. Everyone should attend Community Board Meetings!! The next Community Board 3 meeting is on:
Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.
at PS 20 at 166 Essex Street (E Houston & Stanton Streets). Sign up to speak at Public Session between 6:00-6:30pm. You will be given approximately 2 minutes in front of the mike.
5. Tim will email out information about our legal representatives (He already did this check your email.)
6. Tim and I will continue to work with other indie theatre organizations and pass along that information to you.
7. If you are a member of Equity (or members of your company are members) encourage them to join the Off-Off Bway Committee.

V. Current & Upcoming...

Rattlestick: go see THAT PRETTY PRETTY

The Pearl: go see TARTUFFE

Boomerang: First Flight Reading Series – March 26th thru 29th

The Management: Salon reading of BABYHEAD on March 29th, Sexybeast Fundraiser on April 1st, and CAITLYN AND THE SWAN opens on April 16th

Rising Phoenix Rep.: BIRTHDAY opens on April 2nd

Lark: THE MOUNTAINTOP opens on April 14th

Flux: PETTY THEFT opens on April 16th

CollaborationTown: Annual Fundraiser on April 24th, THE TRUTH WILL OUT late spring 2009

Impetuous: AFTER DARWIN on May 8th

Subjective: THE THING ITSELF opens mid to late May

Nosedive: lots of burlesque is happening & INFECTIOUS OPPORTUNITY in the Anti-Depressant Festival, June /July

One Armed Man: THE REPORT OF MY DEATH in July/August

WMC: SHE LIKE GIRLS fall 2009

*If you'd like to have a friendly audience there for your final dress before you open contact me or Tim and we'll arrange for DISH First Look night. This way you give your actors an audience but we won't care if you need to stop the show and re do a scene or two.

VI. Next DISH Topic: Performing Overseas & in the University Circuit!

Also if you haven't joined The League of Independent Theatres yet, please do!!! They are the ones doing all of the difficult legwork to advocate on our behalf. Information is on there website www.litny.org.