

Live Theater Week 2007

featuring Free Night of Theater

The Arts Alliance of Downtown Olympia (AADO) is pleased to announce the second annual Live Theater Week/Free Night of Theater for our community. Our initial participation in October 2006 proved to be very successful, with approximately \$3,000 of free admission (150 free tickets at an average value of about \$20 per ticket) distributed to patrons who previously had no or little exposure to live theater.

We also received an official proclamation for Live Theater Week by the Olympia City Council to help promote the event. We were especially surprised and pleased with the positive response to our presentation from people who watch the city council broadcasts on TCTV. The support from the Olympia City Council enabled us to reach more people about the Free Night of Theater program.

We are expanding the programs and opportunities to make this year's activities even more accessible and to focus on collaborative efforts to promote and enhance the future of live theater in our community. Additionally, we have our first corporate sponsor in Venture Bank. Their support will allow us to increase marketing and promotion to expand community participation.

Live Theater Week will run October 15 through 21 with Free Night of Theater scheduled for Thursday, October 18. Free Night of Theater is focused on providing people who have never been to a live theater performance with an opportunity to attend. We are developing new marketing and promotional materials and have begun discussions with the Visitors and Convention Bureau to explore mutual opportunities. We also partner with Olympia Parks and Recreation and together we will be approaching Olympia City Council for another proclamation.

Participants to date for Free Night of Theater 2007 include Capital Playhouse, Harlequin Productions, Olympia Little Theater, Olympia Arts Commission and Patrons of South Sound Culture Activities (POSSCA). Note that other theaters may not participate due to scheduling (no production on their stage that week) or to the nature of the theater (Washington Center is not a theater production company but a booking facility). Several organizations are offering free tickets for performances and others are sponsoring forums on the performing arts. Check our website at OlympiaPerforms.com for updated information and a link to order free tickets.

The Origins of Live Theater Week

Live Theater Week is a project of Theater Communications Group (TCG), a national organization that promotes live performance theaters. Theater Puget Sound (TPS), the Northwest's premier arts advocacy and leadership organization, is coordinating the event for theaters in this area and is the originator of Live Theater Week.

At the 2003 TCG National Conference a conversation began to discuss how the national theater community might better work together –not one theater at a time, but as an entire theater community – to reach new audiences. The goal was to put aside the inevitable competitions and work together to overcome the perceived barriers of price and time that discourage many potential patrons from attending the theater.

A call for partners to participate in a pilot program was issued to local and regional service organizations across the country. TCG targeted three cities (Austin, Philadelphia and San Francisco) that represented geographic diversity, offered a wide variety of theaters and clearly reflected a high standard of theater quality.

The concept of this new audience development pilot project was simple: theaters in local markets would offer an extraordinary opportunity. Anyone could, for free, visit a participating theater they had never attended before. The program would enable theaters to not only embrace true "first-timers," but encourage existing audiences to broaden their theater experience.

The pilot project was a resounding success. Over 150 theater companies – large and small – in the three target cities participated with free performances. Reports revealed attendance of nearly 8,000. The 2006 program expanded to include Seattle, Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Eugene, Los Angeles, New Haven and Washington D.C. as well as the entire states of New Jersey, North Carolina and Wisconsin.

The Olympia Connection

Olympia's live performance theaters have steadily gained a solid foothold as respected regional theater venues. Additionally, for a community its size, Olympia boasts a larger than normal number of successful theater groups with significant longevity. In recognition of the quality and diversity of our live performance theaters, TPS has invited Olympia's theaters to participate in the 2007 Live Theater Week and Free Night of Theater. AADO has agreed to coordinate Olympia's events.



The Arts Alliance of Downtown Olympia is a not-for-profit association that works on behalf of the performing arts venues to enhance the Olympia downtown area using the arts as a catalyst for growth, change and enrichment. To that end, the organization works at the local level to raise awareness about the performing art's social, cultural and economic contributions through a collective voice.

www.olympiaperforms.com