



SPiRAL STAGE THEATRE GROUP

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NEW THEATRE ARTS GROUP SEEKS A HOME AND SUPPORT IN VANCOUVER

Spiral Stage Theatre Group Looks for a Space in Vancouver to Open a Cabaret and Studio Theatre Venues

Spiral Stage Theatre Group is on a quest to find a home. Founded September 9th, 2003, then continuing preparations through to its official non-profit approval with the IRS October 21st 2004, the group is actively searching for a building to house two different theatre venues. Spiral Stage is seriously looking to Vancouver as a possible home-community. Patrick Spike, Spiral Stage's Founding Artistic Director, has been looking in the Portland area casually for some time, but has found Vancouver to be a very receptive community.

"I first contacted the Economic Development Council to inquire about building search assistance. Not only were they incredibly helpful, they also put me in contact with other helpful individuals. Soon I found I was being called by Friends of the Arts, property owners, real estate agents... Everyone I talked to seemed sincerely excited by our project and our intention to consider Vancouver. They understood both the direct and indirect benefits of bringing the arts to their community" says Spike.

Vancouver also has recognized the benefits of bringing more culture and arts to town. The Vancouver Cultural Commission's Cultural Plan sites research stating that respondents ranked music/theater/dance events as being very important locally. Cited key issues for the community include establishing an identity separate from Portland and the redevelopment of downtown. Performing arts are elemental in both regards. Bringing patrons out in the evenings for performances enlivens the community and provides a boost to merchants and the economy.

While some cultural steps have been taken such as the art walk and providing empty spaces to artists downtown, there's still room for tremendous growth and Vancouver still remains underserved where the arts are concerned. At the time of the cultural survey, 39 percent of Clark County residents stated they would like to see more theater performances in the county. This was the top priority in the survey results. Vancouver is ripe for a new performance venue, and the downtown area would be an ideal location with construction of new urban living environments, the new Hilton hotel and the enlivening of Main street.

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WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT

Spiral Stage Theatre Group is endeavoring to bring theatre that is highly entertaining and fun. The Cabaret Club Theater will be filled with musical theatre, hilarious contemporary comedies, hot and jazzy reviews and other lively and hip productions. At the same time the electric experience of the live performance will be combined with the atmosphere of a fun night club by serving a delicious assortment of refreshments and beverages for patrons to enjoy at their private table during the performance. Spike hopes it will be the "in" place to bring a date for a great evening, even if your date is your spouse or your best friend.

The Studio Theater, on the other hand, will be even more intimate with flexible seating arrangements, changing for every production. With shows that are contemporary and thought-provoking, the Studio will explore new works, more cutting edge plays, and also will be available for affordable rental to bring in other performing arts groups to Vancouver.

Other programs including new works, programs for children and families and more are also planned.

The group hopes to partner with local businesses on discount packages for patrons and visitors to avail themselves. The plan is to coordinate efforts with other existing arts presenters to amplify the cultural offerings in the area.

SEEKING A HOME

Ideally, the new home of Spiral Stage Theatre Group will have room for approximately 200 seats in the Cabaret and 80-100 seats in the Studio. Additionally there will be the stage spaces, dressing rooms, public and staff restrooms, offices, shop and storage space. All in all Spiral Stage is looking for a space of approximately 9,000-12,000 sq ft with relatively unencumbered spaces (free of too many support posts, etc.) for the two theaters.

"In Vancouver, it's the downtown area between the waterfront and Fourth Plain that really seems ideal for what we're trying to do. It's the revitalization, the urban feel, the access to freeways and bridges and most importantly the cultural atmosphere that we'd fit right into. Though any location will be considered." says Spike.

While a few spaces have come up for consideration, an ideal location is still being sought. Property owners or anyone with knowledge of a possible space are encouraged to contact Spiral Stage with information. The sooner an adequate space and lease arrangement is put in place, the sooner productions can be mounted for the community.

One obvious consideration in this regard is the cost involved. As a non-profit organization, Spiral Stage Theatre Group has limited start-up private funding. Ideally the group is looking for a lease arrangement with an arts-friendly property owner who might consider a portion of the lease as a tax-deductible donation to the non-profit organization. Additionally property tax abatement is possible due to the non-profit nature of the theatre. Perhaps an investor is looking for a tax shelter opportunity. There are many possibilities. Again, contact Spiral Stage with interest, ideas or opportunities.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT NEEDED

The arts have always been and continue to be a community effort. Most professional performing arts organizations exist on an approximate 50/50 balance of 50% earned revenue of ticket sales and other sources of earned income to 50% contributed income from individuals, businesses and granting organizations such as foundations. Spiral Stage hopes to lean that balance toward the earned income side for its organization, considering the current economic climate and cuts in philanthropy that so many arts organizations are feeling right now. But Spiral Stage hopes that the people and businesses of the Vancouver community, through their expressed desire to increase the cultural offerings (specifically theatre) will go out of their way to help them both get started, and to continue their efforts within the community-family. The organization is able to accept tax-deductible contributions as either a single gift or a recurring monthly contribution. Visit the website at <http://www.spiralstage.org/donate/> and click on "Support Us" for membership and business partner opportunities.

Otherwise, Spiral Stage can use your help in finding our home. Feel free to email info@spiralstage.org if you know of or think you might have a lead on a possible space. Also sign up on the website for our email updates to keep up on news of Spiral Stage.

"What we're trying to do here is really very unique." Says Artistic Director Patrick Spike. "The people of Vancouver would have something for their community that could potentially attract people from all around the area and bring people over from Portland as well. A cabaret style theatre is rare these days. But we think it is something people would really be excited about. Going to a theatrical performance can be exciting and fun, but to be able to enjoy a cocktail, a fine desert or snack, or maybe a warm latte at your private table during the show, that could really make for a fun evening out. Couple that with a nice dinner before hand at a neighboring restaurant and maybe a stroll along the street to browse the local merchant shops and galleries, and suddenly we're really bringing the area to life."

For more information or with questions, comments or interest, contact Spiral Stage Theatre Group or Friends of the Arts. Contact Spiral Stage at info@spiralstage.org or write to Spiral Stage Theatre Group, PO Box 83041, Portland OR 97283. Visit the Spiral Stage website at www.SPIRALSTAGE.org. Friends of the Arts can be reached by email at d_sessions@msn.com or write Friends of the Arts, P.O. Box 184, Vancouver, WA 98665. Visit the Friends of the Arts web site at www.ARTOWNAV.org. Friends of the Arts can be reached at 360/574-9552 or 360/607-2188.

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Patrick Spike is available for interviews. Members of the media are encouraged to email spike@spiralstage.org or leave voicemail at 503-248-1067.