

FRINGE ARTS

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Introducing FringeArts, a new name and a new era for the former Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe *New brand identity announced at groundbreaking for dynamic waterfront home*

PHILADELPHIA – Feb. 25, 2013 – This morning, the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe marked the beginning of a new era: The 17-year-old contemporary arts organization has officially changed its name to **FringeArts**. The new name, announced in conjunction with breaking ground on a versatile permanent home on Philadelphia’s burgeoning waterfront, reflects the organization’s mission to bring the world’s newest and most cutting-edge cultural experiences to the City of Brotherly Love.

“We are an institution on a mission to explore the boundaries of art, to reveal what is yet to be discovered, to present high-quality new work that compels and challenges expectation, and to support the artists who create it,” says President and Producing Director **Nick Stuccio**. “FringeArts defines the bold innovation that characterizes the art we pride ourselves in pursuing.”



FringeArts will be permanently located across the street from Race Street Pier at the corner of Race Street and Columbus Boulevard. The 1903 historic former pumping station will be transformed into a year-round center for contemporary performing and visual arts; the 10,000-square-foot building will feature a 240-seat theater, rehearsal and creation studio,

permanent festival hub, outdoor events plaza, restaurant/bar and administrative offices.

Programming under the new FringeArts banner will expand to include not only the annual 16-day Festival but also a year-round series of high-quality contemporary dance, theater and music performances both local and international; commissioned public art installations; and a residency program that continues to expand and grow as a state-of-the-art incubator for artists.

The organization plans to open the building to the public in time for the 2013 Festival (Sept. 6-21), serving as FringeArts' festival hub and housing performances, the box office and the Festival bar.

Stuccio joined **Mayor Michael A. Nutter**, former Gov. **Ed Rendell**, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Director of Commerce **Alan Greenberger**, philanthropist **Leonard C. Haas** and columnist/philly.com's "Out and About" host **Maria Papadakis** on Monday, along with members of Philadelphia's cultural community, to celebrate the organization's expanded scope.

According to Mayor **Nutter**, the move is significant not only for the organization but for the future of the waterfront: "This innovative new arts center solidifies FringeArts as an integral part of the city's goal to develop the waterfront, providing a much-needed hub for culture and creativity on the Delaware River."

Adds **Tom Corcoran**, president of the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation: "We are thrilled that such a thriving arts organization has chosen the waterfront for its new headquarters, performance space and café. It's exciting to see one of the key principles of the new Master Plan for the Central Delaware in action, as strategic public investments such as the award-winning Race Street Pier and the vibrant streetscape of the Race Street Connector continue to catalyze private development. We look forward to continuing this synergistic partnership with FringeArts, and we hope to work together to even further expand opportunities for the arts on the waterfront."

The organization purchased the High Pressure Fire Service (HPFS) building in June 2012 for \$750,000. Total cost of the renovation, headed by Philadelphia architecture firm **Wallace Roberts & Todd**, is \$7 million. With grant funding and support from group and individual leadership donors, the Festival is now only \$600,000 away from its financial goal.

"Just as our impact on the artistic community is great, our economic impact on the community is immense," said Stuccio. "According to a 2010 Economic Impact Study by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, our organization generated nearly \$8 million in local economic impact that year alone. Now we're poised to do even more. We've always been a dynamic organization, and this building will be the catalyst to bring the excitement and creativity of the Festival to our region, 365 days a year."

To support these initiatives, FringeArts has launched the "Take Your Seat" campaign. Individuals and institutions can become a permanent part of this vital addition to Philadelphia's arts community by making

a donation in exchange for name recognition on one of the new theater's 240 seats. For more information, visit fringearts.com/buyaseat.

About the New Space

Year-round programming will allow the organization to present a greater number of world-class contemporary artists. The 1,600-square-foot theater will feature retractable seating for 240 guests, 30-



foot ceilings and large windows, creating a beautiful backdrop of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. The theater will be designed to embrace a full range of performances, from shows like a reimagined *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will* by Philadelphia's Pig Iron Theatre Company to the miraculous acrobatics of Montreal's 7 Fingers.

The 832-square-foot multipurpose studio space will serve as an incubator for new work by local, national and international artists, expanding the organization's residency program. Movable seats will create an informal space for readings, workshops and works-in-progress.

In addition, the 2,800-square-foot restaurant/bar will serve as an outlet for creative discussion between artists and audiences. Decked out with cast-iron pipes and pressure gauges, the bar design preserves the historic character of the original building. Once completed, the 125-seat space will also host cabaret-style performances, comedy and live music year-round.

The building also will provide FringeArts an opportunity to develop significant new earned-revenue streams through the rental of its various spaces and components, including the theater, studio, restaurant, bar and plaza, as well as from restaurant and bar revenues. New revenues will help the organization to create new programs and services and sustain and expand existing ones, deepening the impact of its mission. New programs already in development include visual arts components that will debut as part of the 2013 Festival. The organization will tap in to international booking networks of touring artists, as well as leverage partnerships with local and national companies. With four seasons of cutting-edge entertainment to complement the annual 16-day festival (Sept. 6-21, 2013), the organization is primed to support more artists, reach more audiences, and make the city an even greater destination for contemporary arts.

Building History

The High Pressure Fire Service (HPFS) building is one of the most important yet underappreciated edifices in Philadelphia. This red brick Victorian structure served the city for 100 years, providing high-pressure water at a moment's notice for use in fighting fires. Along with the high-pressure pipeline system that distributed the water, this small structure is the chief reason why Center City Philadelphia never suffered a catastrophic fire during the 1900s.



Philadelphia's regular-pressure water had become ineffective in fighting fires in increasingly larger and higher buildings in the central business district. Years of prodding by insurance companies and the Philadelphia Fire Department spurred the city to install the world's first high-pressure water service in a major city. Inaugurated in 1901 and completed in 1903, the system delivered water via independent pipes and special red fire hydrants located on

every block between the Delaware River and Broad Street, from Race to Walnut.

Fire losses immediately dropped after the HPFS system was operational. The system's success brought about similar high-pressure water systems in other American cities. Philadelphia's was acknowledged as the best in the world for years and years. The 56-mile system lasted until about 2005, when it was decommissioned after falling into disrepair. (From *Philadelphia's Lost Waterfront*)

Support

Major leadership support for this project has been provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; the Honorable Tom Corbett, Governor; William Penn Foundation; Wyncote Foundation; ArtPlace; Anonymous; Fidelity Foundation; Independence Foundation; H.F. & Marguerite Lenfest; and Andrew & Bryna Scott. Additional leadership support has been provided by: Anton Charitable Trust, Thomas & Carol Beam, Mark & Tobey Dichter, David & Linda Glickstein, David Grasso, Josephine Klein, Tom Lussenhop, Milton Rock, Paul E. Wright & Kerry L. Kennedy, and Lisa Young. Special thanks to architecture firm Wallace Roberts & Todd and lead architect Antonio Fiol-Silva, D3 Real Estate Development and general contractor JMB Associates, and the many additional generous supporters who have made this project possible.

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