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TICKER STAGE NOTES

TheaterWorks Ready To Put On A New Face

Frank Rizzo | TICKER
July 10, 2008

[TheaterWorks](#) is putting its best face forward — and so is Pearl Street.

After years of renovating its building in downtown Hartford, the time has finally come to put on fresh exterior look for the city's "off-Broadway" theater.

But Steve Campo, founder and executive director of the theater which owns the four-story building it inhabits at 233 Pearl St., is also rethinking how it uses its space in the art deco building which boasts one of the most splendid lobbies in town.

TheaterWorks has entered into an arrangement with one of its first-floor tenants, Artworks, to use its gallery space as the theater's new pre-show focal point: box office area and meeting place.



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Beyond that, Campo also envisions use of the gallery space as a free, multifunction resource for arts organizations and community groups. It would become a groovy hangout with free Internet access, cafe seating, refreshments — and even loaner umbrellas with the TheaterWorks logo if it's raining, says Campo. New mid-afternoon-to-early-evening hours at the gallery will also allow it to be more appealing to Hartford's changing downtown dynamic.

New signage, awnings, lightings and landscaping will also enliven the facade of the building, which houses the 200-seat theater in the basement, several arts organizations and military recruiting offices.

TheaterWorks is partnering with the Hartford Business Improvement District and the Knox Parks Foundation for such area improvements as new lamp posts, sidewalks, banners, landscaping, rodent extermination and upkeep of the former Ados Israel Synagogue, currently unused and privately owned. An empty lot next to TheaterWorks is also eyed as a

future mini-park, says Campo.

"Rabbit Hole" is playing at the theater through July 20.

Two-time Tony Award winner *Judith Ivey* will play Amanda in [Long Wharf Theatre's](#)

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spring production of [Tennessee Williams'](#) "The Glass Menagerie." Artistic director [Gordon Edelstein](#) will stage the season-ender, which runs May 13 to June 7.

Ivey, whose TV credits include a stint in "Designing Women," will play the Williams' matriarch. Ivey, who won her Tonys for Broadway's "Steaming" and "Hurlyburly," is also a director, staging such works as "Southern Comforts," "Fugue," "Secrets of a Soccer Mom" and the New York-bound musical "Vanities," which opens August at the Pasadena Playhouse. [Sue Frost](#), formerly of Connecticut's [Goodspeed Musicals](#), is producing "Vanities."

[Johanna Day](#) ([Hartford Stage](#) and off-Broadway's "Peter and Jerry"), [Euan Morton](#) (Broadway's "Taboo") and [Everett Quinton](#) (Ridiculous Theatrical Company) will be featured in the Hartford Stage season opener of [William Shakespeare's](#) "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Day plays Hippolyta/Titania; Morton is Philostrate/Puck and Quinton is Egeus/Quince.

Also featured are [David Andrew MacDonald](#) as Theseus/Oberon, [Christina Pumariega](#) as Hermia, [Sanjit DeSilva](#) as Lysander, [Jake Lacy](#) as Demetrius, [Susannah Flood](#) as Helena, [Lucas Caleb Rooney](#) as Bottom and [Steven Boyer](#) as Flute. Also featured are [Hart School](#) students [Nathan Johnson](#), [Robert Patrick Sheire](#), [Chelsea Farthing](#), [Shaylan Glejzer](#), [April Glick](#), [Sal Mitsou](#) and [Alec Shamas](#). [Delaney Jordan](#), [Summer Rain Martin](#), [Jordan Cyr](#) and [Andrew Shipman](#) are double-cast as the fairy girl and boy.

The show, staged by [Lisa Peterson](#), will run Aug. 28 to Oct. 5.

[Craig Wright's](#) play "Mistakes Were Made" is out; [Neena Beber's](#) "Italian Sojourn" is in at the National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford. The new play, directed by [Wendy C. Goldberg](#) who is also director of the conference, will receive staged readings July 18 at 8:15 p.m. and July 20 at 5:15 p.m.

This week's staged readings at the O'Neill include new works from the playwrights conference and the National Music Theater Conference.

The works are: [Rachel Axler's](#) play "Smudge," directed by [Daniel Aukin](#) (tonight at 8:15 p.m.; Saturday at 8:15 p.m.); "Max Understood," music by [Michael Rasbury](#), book by [Nancy Carlin](#), lyrics by Carlin and Rasbury, directed by [Jack Cumming](#) (Friday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m.); [Regina Taylor's](#) play "Magnolia," directed by Taylor (Friday at 8:15 p.m. and Sunday at 5:15 p.m.); "Iron Curtain," music by [Stephen Weiner](#), book by [Susan DeLallo](#) and lyrics by [Peter Mills](#), directed by [Cara Reichel](#) (Saturday at 8 p.m.), Wednesday at 8 p.m., July 18 at 8 p.m. and July 19 at

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3 p.m.).

The O'Neill's summer gala will be July 19 at 6:30 p.m. and will honor the 30 years of the Music Theater Conference and its founding director *Paulette Haupt*. Musicals developed at the O'Neill under Haupt include this year's Tony Award winner for best musical "In the Heights," "Nine," "Avenue Q," Andrew Lippa's "The Wild Party" "The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin," "Violet" and the upcoming Broadway musical "[title of show]." Tickets and information: 860-443-5378, ext. 217 and www.theoneill.org.

"Word of Mouth," a solo show written and performed by *James Lecesne* (actor in Hartford Stage's "The Mystery of Irma Vep" and "I Am My Own Wife"), will be presented at Wesleyan's Center for the Arts in Middletown July 17 at 8 p.m. The work, originally directed by *Eve Ensler*, won numerous awards, including the Outer Critics Circle Award and Drama Desk Award for best solo performance. Tickets and information: 860-685-3355.

[Bebe Neuwirth](#) and [Nathan Lane](#) will be Morticia and Gomez in a closed reading in New York of a musical version of "The Addams Family" next month. The show is the next project for the Chicago's Elephant Eye Theatrical in which Hartford's Bushnell Center for the Arts is an investor. The book is by the "Jersey Boys" team of *Marshall Brickman* and *Rick Elice*. Music is by *Andrew Lippa*. A Broadway run in 2009-10 is eyed, after an out-of-town tryout.

Marsha Mason, four-time Oscar nominee ("The Goodbye Girl"), is conducting a four-week residential program for young actors at [Wesleyan University](#) in Middletown through July 26. The Flying Swan Acting Program was established as a high school summer program for promising teens and young adults interested in comprehensive acting training. Guests for the program include actors *Henry Goodman*, [Brian Cox](#), *Michael Christofer*, *Mamie Gummer* and TV director *John Erman*.

OCD/Dance of San Francisco will perform four pieces set to music by [Laurie Anderson](#), [Brian Eno](#) and [David Byrne](#) tonight and Friday at 8 p.m. at CFA Theater on the Wesleyan University campus in Middletown.

Contact Frank Rizzo at rizzo@courant.com.

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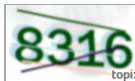
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