

ARTISTS REP 17/18

Dear Loyal Supporter,

Thank you for being an important part of Artists Repertory Theatre's community. Great theatre doesn't get made in a vacuum and we are grateful to call Portland home.

I am writing to address your concerns, questions and hopes for Artists Rep and the ArtsHub. Many of you have reached out following news articles in The Willamette Week, OPB and The Oregonian. These articles focused on a leadership transition, financial challenges and the possibility of Artists Rep selling half our block to create a sustainable home and operating model for our organization. The feedback we have received from you has been deeply appreciated, and the genuine concern for our well-being as a highly valued arts organization is clear. The conversations that ensued have been honest and eye-opening. Your engagement has been heartening, and to that end, I have inspiring news to share:

Last week, Artists Rep received an anonymous donation of \$7 million, the largest single donation in our history.

We feel the immense responsibility of this enormous act of generosity and trust. We hope you also share our elation and gratitude.

So, what does this mean? Most importantly, it means that Artists Rep is in control of our own destiny and can vigorously pursue what is best for our artists, audiences, the Resident Companies of the ArtsHub and our neighborhood. This transformational gift marks a turning point in our history. We are committed to operating sustainably and must work harder than ever to increase our ticket sales, engage new audiences and expand our fundraising efforts in support of dynamic and meaningful theatre.

Here are some answers to questions we have heard and that you may have:

Are you still selling half the building?

Yes, we plan to continue with the sale of the building. This gift gives us the stability to examine and consider this project from all angles and make the best decisions for Artists Rep throughout the process.

Our beautiful lobbies and high production values mask a long list of expensive "must-do" projects behind the scenes that range from seismic upgrades and a new roof, mandatory electrical upgrades and better accessibility, to comfortable theatre seats and the replacement of outdated technology. This exceptional contribution means that Artists Rep has paid off our mortgage and other debt, and the proceeds from a half-block sale can instead be used to address our list of "must-do" projects, launch a capital campaign and establish an operating reserve. This plan empowers us to remodel the south half of our block in a way that rightsizes our building and creates two modern theatres, multiple rehearsal spaces and offices that will elevate the experience of making and attending theatre at Artists Rep.

With all that said, this amazing gift has ensured that Artists Rep will continue to exist and operate even if the sale does not ultimately work out. We look forward to working with the buyer Wood Partners, the City of Portland and our audiences and neighborhood in this process.

Will there be a full 2018/19 season?

Yes. Producing intimate, provocative theatre is our passion and it's what we do best. We are finalizing our season choices and intend to share them with you as soon as we can. There will be a full season of dynamic work – some titles that you may have heard of and at least one World Premiere.

One of the reasons the season announcement will come a bit later than usual is to make sure we have all the information we need, and to identify what scripts, if any, will work in a different theatre space if we need to produce off-site for one or two productions.

Where will I park?

We know that on-site parking is important to you. We are pretty fond of it too. In the event that we have limited access to parking for a period during construction, we will do our best to explore convenient options here in Goose Hollow. We have heard your concerns about accessibility and I want to assure you this is high on our list of priorities for the building.

Once all the dust settles, Artists Rep will have just about the same number of on-site parking spaces that we have now. It's a little complicated, but there is more parking under the building than we can currently access, and an overdue move of our scene shop will reclaim those spots. While we may lose our outdoor parking, the building remodel would maintain the underground lot, including a mandatory elevator.

What will happen to Resident Companies like Profile Theatre, Portland Shakespeare Project and Portland Actors Conservatory?

Two years ago, Artists Rep updated our mission:

Artists Repertory Theatre's mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for artists and audiences to take creative risks.

For us, this means remaining committed to the ArtsHub and making affordable art-making space available for our community to access and enjoy. With 51 organizations producing, rehearsing and creating in our building in the last 12 months, hosting more than 600 events, the need for such space is clear. We believe that a thoughtfully redesigned Artists Rep frees up more rehearsal and stage time for classes, readings, workshops, poetry slams, gallery presentations and yes, plays.

While there might be a disruption to our use of the building for a time, our Board of Directors has made a formal commitment to seeking space solutions as a collective. We look forward to continued collaboration and to the sharing of ideas and resources that make this place special.

I read in the paper that Artists Rep has a lien on its building from the IRS, what does this mean?

The good news is that, even at the time the news articles were published in early January, Artists Rep had already paid its bill to the IRS in full. I want to assure you that we are committed to making sure that nothing like this will happen again. Our Board of Directors has taken swift action to put financial controls in place that ensure transparency and accountability, including engaging a consulting CFO who has already greatly improved our internal processes and communication.

Why are you telling me this?

Because being a non-profit means that this organization owes a debt of gratitude to our community and we consider you our partners.

As we wrestle with the questions surrounding the future of Artists Rep, it is clearer to me than ever that our greatest asset isn't our building: it's our family of subscribers, supporters, volunteers, artists and audience members. Thank you for your belief that together we can achieve more than we ever thought possible.

Sincerely,

Dámaso Rodríguez

Artistic Director/Interim Managing Director

drodriguez@artistsrep.org

P.S. - We value your feedback. Please don't hesitate to reach out:

Development Director Sarah Taylor, staylor@artistsrep.org, 503.972.3017
Marketing Director Kisha Jarrett, kjarrett@artistsrep.org, 503.241.9807 x112
Assistant to the Artistic Director Allie Rangel, arangel@artistsrep.org,
503.241.9807 x169

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Artists Repertory Theatre 1515 SW Morrison St. Portland, Oregon 97205 503.241.1278