

Foundry - Performing Arts Space Meeting Notes

September 6th, 2017

Cambridge Trust Company - 10am-12pm

Attendance:

CRA Staff - Kathryn Madden, Tom Evans, Carlos Peralta, Ellen Shore, Alex Levering
Ben Evett – *Poets' Theater* – Relationship between poetry and theater – poetry theater productions – interested in interdisciplinary presentations and incorporation of media and technology

Olivia D'ambrosia – *Bridge Repertory Theater* – At the multi Cultural Center Theater

David Bass – *North Cambridge Family Opera* – Audiences of all ages 7+

Danna Solomon– *Boston Circus Guild* – Booking Manager

Jamie Sabino– *Children's Theater* – Foundry Board

Jason Slavick- *Liars and Believers* – Foundry Board

Taha Jennings – Assistant to the City Manager - *City of Cambridge*

Lace Campbell – *Beyond the 4th Wall* – Theater with youth

Liz Smith – *The Dance Complex* – Teaching background and arts administration

Steve Showalter– *American Repertory Theater*

Purpose of the meeting – To understand design and operation needs of various theater organizations. Learn what holes exist in performing arts, and how the Foundry can fill those needs.

THEATER DESIGN

Back stage needs:

- Two dressing rooms
- Showers – mirrors proper lighting
- Bathrooms back stage
- An area for actors to wait off stage
- Giant doors to the outside without steps to bring in large props and staging.

Union actor requirements:

- o bathrooms
- o shower
- o laundry
- o Cot to lie down

On-Stage needs:

- Sufficient wing area for actors to wait
- “Legs” for a black box i.e. black hanging curtains

Storage Needs:

- Electrical and sound equipment
- Space to store the black “legs”
- Needs to be close to the stage so it can be easily accessed
- Needs to be lockable

Seating:

A glut of theaters with 200 seats or less

Medium sized spaces needed (500- 600 seats)

Community Room and Black Box – Can we put them adjacent to that open it up to get more seating?

Music Needs:

- A good sound system
- Wireless mics essential (though most often separately rented)
- Small space for a pit band 5 -6 people

Light booth:

- Separate room where the stage manager and light operator sits
- Sound-proofed with sound proofed glass
- Has to be above the highest audience member

Clean Up-

- Dumpster onsite

Sharable Elements:

- black legs
- wired microphones
- risers
- Genie lift – a little crows nest that goes up with a mast that extends to the ceiling for light changes etc.

Design elements that allow flexibility

- Grid hung above the whole ceiling theaters you hang drapes and lights throughout
- Modular seating and set design
- Exposed beams to easily find hanging points for circus actors

Theater Design Consultant – knows the needs of theater companies but can speak the language of architects, and sound proofing, light changes.

Build it like an elevator- you need much more electricity than you think you would need. Larger elevator...

-This consultant might not know about circus, show to Danna's crew to review plans.

Charcoal Blue

Theaters Consultant Group (TCG)

PROGRAMMING**Season Schedules**

- Labor Day – Memorial Day is the *normal* season – summer season is in-between.

- Resident companies can have a slot on the spring and fall, and kids camp can take place in the summer – a way to mix adult and child theater.
- If you have two residents – make sure they pair well together.

Performance Timelines

- Children Theater needs 2 weeks to 1 month of rental time.
- Adult Theater - 3-4 weeks for rehearsal (often offsite) – 1 week of tech rehearsing day and night - performance for 2-5 weeks

Rental Theater – accedes control to every group that wants to come in to use that space

→ **Curated performance space** – a version of rental space, but the Foundry would write into the design how the space would be run. Ex: classes from 2-3 and productions on x theme...

Curator reserves theater in blocks – ex: one cast reserves for 3 weeks, others for one weekend, all would be different lengths of time with different rates of pay.

Many would be ok subletting the spaces they rented, as long as they have first right of refusal.

Anchor Tenants:

- Two groups, fall show, spring show, summer kids camp so there is some predictability, and groups in- between that might change.
- It makes it easier for people to find you.

Specific Needs for Art Type:

Opera:

- Rehearsal on Sundays because of kids schedules– shows on two weekends.
- Can share space during weekdays

Circus:

- Ceiling height – 19” to the grid minimum height 30” height would be good
- Exposed beams

Children’s Theater

- kids rehearse after school
- large backstage needed
- Live band – 5 – 6 band members in front of stage

Office Space and Collaboration

- Office space for resident companies
- Balance for-profit company services in the Foundry with ticket subsidies ex
- Foundry staff mentorship with the residence artists
- Internship program → Non profits exist who brings kids into organizations like this
- Combine with a workforce development program – something for all kids.

Foundry Staff

- *Marketing staff person*, info on Foundry website about performances and other scheduling.
- *Curator* - needs to know performing arts – more than just a tenant manager
- *Technical staff person* – full time person responsible for the building – a person people can call – more specialized is a sound engineer and master electrician (ME) and the tech staff person would have specialists they often work with and recommend.

Theaters Examples to look at:

Central Sq Theater – good example of seat rise – no bad seats in theater

Paramount Emerson – good backstage design

Chelsea Theater Works Black Box – good design

Oberon – Seats are removed to become a flat space – example of curated space and program evolution.

59 E 59 in NYC– Look at their programming methods. They curate performances and they staffed PR, tech and specialists in-house – then billed the companies.

BCA – Boston Center for the Arts

Multicultural Arts Center – program evolution

Watertown Theater – good size with 330 seats

Next Steps:

Mission and value clarity

Figure out how the space can evolve over time.

Demand exists – there are many small companies looking for space.

Understand rental costs and fees