

THEATER SUBDISTRICT COUNCIL LDC

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NEW YORK CITY THEATER SUBDISTRICT COUNCIL ANNOUNCES GRANT AWARDS TO SUPPORT THEATER PRODUCTION AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

*Grant Funding Is Facilitated by Theater District Zoning
Sustains New York City's Unrivaled Concentration of Theatrical Excellence*

March 23, 2009 – On behalf of the New York City Theater Subdistrict Council (TSC), City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin announced that 10 organizations will receive grants totaling \$1.26 million for a range of projects that will foster the creation of new work and encourage audience development. The groups are the beneficiary of a zoning initiative that preserves historic theaters, and helps ensure the long term viability of live theater within New York City's Theater District, the world-famous area in midtown Manhattan from 40th to 57th Street. As part of this initiative, the zoning created a fund to seed new theatrical and audience development.

The TSC is a not-for-profit corporation established pursuant to a 1998 zoning rule that allows owners of landmarked Broadway theaters to transfer air rights within the Theater Subdistrict provided the theater is preserved, there is a commitment to use the space for legitimate theater use, and funds are deposited into a Theater Subdistrict Fund. The TSC administers the Theater Subdistrict Fund, to allocate grants with the goal of promoting the production of new theater work, developing new audiences, and showcasing Broadway's singular role in the history of American theater. The TSC consists of the Mayor, four representatives appointed by the Mayor and the City Council Speaker from the performing arts, theatrical and related industries, the Speaker, the Manhattan Borough President, and the Director of the Department of City Planning. The TSC is chaired by Commissioner Levin, on behalf of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. Approximately \$5.5 million has been paid into the fund to date. Another round of grants is expected next year.

Commissioner Burden said, "As a result of the innovative zoning that created the Theater Subdistrict Council, the City has successfully leveraged development for important public goals and amenities such as the preservation of theaters and the seeding of new theater works and audience development. These awards not only benefit the arts, but the entire City and those who visit here, and will help the theater district continue to operate as a hub of economic activity, creativity and inspired performances."

Commissioner Levin said, "By supporting the development of new work and diverse voices, and stimulating expanded access to high-quality performance, the Theater Subdistrict Council grants will help build new audiences and reinforce New York City's identity as a creative hub."

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said, "New York City's theater district has been the vibrant heart of the performing arts for generations. By taking such innovative steps today, we will preserve and expand that rich tradition for generations to come."

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer said, "In tough economic times, it is more important than ever to help nonprofits and arts groups pursue their vital missions. That is why I am proud to have been a part of the Theater Subdistrict Council's work harnessing the development energy of Manhattan and using it to bring under-represented audiences and artists to the stage and promote New York's vital theater industry. I congratulate these worthy recipients, and I want to thank Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn, Commissioner Levin, Chair Burden, leaders of New York's theatrical community, and Community Board 5 for all their work on this first round of grants."

The award recipients are:

- Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York
- The Broadway League
- Classical Theatre of Harlem
- The Fund for Public Schools
- The New 42nd Street
- New Dramatists

- **Roundabout Theatre Company**
- **Signature Theatre Company**
- **Theatre Development Fund**
- **Walker International Communications Group**

The Theater Subdistrict covers the area between Sixth and Eighth Avenues from West 40th to West 57th Streets. Within the Theater Subdistrict a unique zoning incentive allows theaters to transfer their unused air rights to development sites that are also within the Subdistrict provided that money is deposited into the Theater Subdistrict Fund for each square foot of floor area transferred. In addition, a legal commitment must be in place requiring the theater to continue to operate as a legitimate theater and a preservation program must be created for the theater if any restoration work is needed. This zoning incentive not only creates money for worthy organizations, but also relieves the development pressures on the theaters by allowing them to transfer their air rights within the Subdistrict.

As specified in the zoning, monies have been deposited into the TSC fund in connection with development projects that would result in the preservation of the landmark theaters. In addition to the deposit of approximately \$5.5 million into the Fund, six theaters have entered into preservation agreements: Martin Beck AKA Hirschfield, St. James, Broadhurst, Majestic, Booth and Shubert.

The transferred air rights from the theaters have facilitated the construction of new hotels on West 44th on 8th Avenue (308 West 44th Street) and on West 45th Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway (131 West 45th Street), and a new residential building on West 46th Street & 8th Avenue (750 8th Avenue).

The representatives of the theater community on the TSC were appointed by Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn. They include Jed Bernstein, George C. Wolfe, Ben Cameron, appointed by the Mayor, and Paige Price, appointed by the Speaker.