



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2011

No. 225

www.nyc.gov

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARKOWITZ AND THEATRE FOR
A NEW AUDIENCE ANNOUNCE START TO CONSTRUCTION OF THEATER
COMPANY'S NEW HOME IN BROOKLYN'S BAM CULTURAL DISTRICT**

*27,500-Square-Foot Theater Will be First Classical Theater Built in New York City in More than
Four Decades and Theatre for a New Audience's First Permanent Residence*

*Newest Addition to Growing BAM Cultural District, Which Contains 40 Arts and Cultural
Organizations and Already Draws More than 500,000 People a Year*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz and Theatre for a New Audience Chairman Theodore C. Rogers and Founding Artistic Director Jeffrey Horowitz today announced the start to construction of the new, permanent home for Theatre for a New Audience on a City-owned former parking lot in Brooklyn's growing BAM Cultural District. Set to open in April 2013, the Hugh Hardy-designed, 27,500-square-foot building will house a 3-level 299-seat theater, a rehearsal room, public lobby and various supporting spaces, providing a state-of-the-art venue for the theater company's interpretations of Shakespeare and classical drama. It will be the first permanent residence for the theater company, the first classical theater built in New York City in more than four decades and only the second new theater to be built from the ground up in Brooklyn in more than 50 years. First Deputy Mayor Harris, Brooklyn Borough Markowitz and the Theatre for a New Audience team were joined for a ceremonial groundbreaking at the construction site on Ashland Place by Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin, New York City Economic Development Corporation President Seth W. Pinsky, Former Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) President Harvey Lichtenstein whose visionary leadership established the BAM Cultural District, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership President Joe Chan, H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture Partner Geoff Lynch, Tony Award-winning actor Mark Rylance and Tony Award-winning Director Julie Taymor, who has agreed to direct the new theater's inaugural production.

"Theatre for a New Audience's new world-class venue will be the latest addition to Brooklyn's fast-growing BAM Cultural District," said Mayor Bloomberg. "We're investing more than \$100 million over the next several years to expand the area – already home to 40 arts and cultural organizations – and enhance the quality of life in Downtown Brooklyn. For more than 30

(more)

years, Theatre for a New Audience has brought classic drama performances to a wide range of audiences, and its first home will ensure New Yorkers and visitors continue to enjoy its productions for decades to come.”

“It has been more than 40 years since the last classical theater was built in New York City, but that’s about to change,” said First Deputy Mayor Harris. “The BAM Cultural District is an ideal location for the City’s newest theater, and the fact that it will provide a permanent home for the Theatre for a New Audience is good news for New Yorkers and visitors alike.”

“Theatre for a New Audience’s new home will serve as a distinctive destination point that will serve both artists and the community,” said Theodore C. Rogers, Chairman of Theatre for a New Audience and its capital campaign.

“Theatre for a New Audience will contribute to the continuing renaissance of Downtown Brooklyn and the cultural life of the City,” said Jeffrey Horowitz, who founded Theatre for a New Audience more than three decades ago. “This theatre is a dream-come-true for us. When completed, we will not only reach new audiences in Brooklyn, but we will be close enough via public transit for our current audience to visit us with ease.”

The new theater will house Theatre for a New Audience’s three to four annual productions and accompanying education programs, which have drawn more than 25,000 people annually, and it will provide public cultural space for the community. Performance and rehearsal spaces will be made available at affordable rates to other theater groups and community groups. The project is expected to create 175 construction jobs, and it will support the theater company’s 20 full-time and 100 seasonal employees. The theater will employ sustainable, environmentally sensitive design and materials with a goal of attaining LEED Silver certification. Theatre for a New Audience has committed to working with minority and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) and intends to exceed the City’s M/WBE hiring targets.

“Cultural institutions like Theatre for a New Audience not only enrich the fabric of New York City, they also generate economic activity and create jobs,” said Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert K. Steel. “More than 500,000 people already visit the BAM Cultural District every year, and with the magnificent new Theatre for a New Audience venue, we expect even more visitors from around the City and around the world to visit this thriving and exciting part of Brooklyn.”

“To quote *The Merchant of Venice*, one of the plays that make up Theatre for a New Audience’s current season, ‘all that glitters is not gold, all who wander are not lost.’ Theatre for a New Audience may have spent nearly 40 years wandering in the glittering desert known as Manhattan, but you weren’t lost because now you’ve found your way to the ‘big stage’ in Brooklyn, USA,” said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. “I am proud to have been an early financial backer of this project and it couldn’t have reached this day without the unwavering support of Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Harris, President Seth Pinsky of EDC, Commissioner Kate Levin of DCA, Joe Chan head of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, Jeff Lynch of Hardy Collaboration Architecture and of course Theatre for a New Audience. Bravo – you’ve all earned your curtain call.”

The City is contributing \$34 million to the project, including \$1.5 million allocated by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, and has provided the theater company with extensive technical assistance for the design and construction of the building. Theatre for a New Audience, which will have a long-term lease on the City-owned site with an option to purchase the building and land after 30 years, will be responsible for its operation and maintenance. Funding for the nearly \$48 million theater is in place, and the theater company is in the midst of an aggressive capital campaign to ensure its long-term success.

“Over the past three decades, Theatre for a New Audience has become one of the most dynamic producers of Shakespeare and classical drama in New York City, and served more than 100,000 students through its school-based residency programs,” said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Levin. “This important public-private partnership will create a new destination in downtown Brooklyn’s vibrant cultural district, and provide the Theatre with a permanent home for its extraordinary work.”

“The new facility that is being developed for the Theatre for a New Audience will provide a unique venue, offering both world-class theater and educational programming, in what is emerging as one of the premier arts and cultural districts in the United States,” said NYCEDC President Seth W. Pinsky. “The BAM Cultural District is another example of how a coordinated interagency approach, together with partnerships between the public and private sectors, can have a tremendous economic impact on communities, boroughs and the City as a whole. We are thrilled to be assisting Theatre for a New Audience in the creation of a permanent home in which they will be able to expose a new generation of New Yorkers to the wonders of classical theater.”

Coinciding with the construction of the theater will be a new Arts Plaza on Ashland Place. The 8,000 square-foot public plaza will be constructed by New York City Economic Development Corporation to provide open space, lighting, and trees in the heart of the BAM Cultural District. Construction is expected to begin this summer and will be complete with the opening of the theater.

“Every downtown in America – already being outpaced by the resurgence of Downtown Brooklyn – covets the cultural and entertainment amenities we have here,” said Downtown Brooklyn Partnership President Joe Chan. “Theatre for a New Audience’s spectacular new facility, and their commitment to enriching the lives of the area’s young people through in-school educational programming, are great additions to Downtown Brooklyn.”

The development of the BAM Cultural District, a vibrant, multicultural arts district in the neighborhood surrounding the Brooklyn Academy of Music, is now coordinated by the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership. The expansion of the district involves the conversion of underutilized, city-owned properties into affordable performance and rehearsal space for a diverse array of non-profit visual, performing, and media arts groups. Already a destination for avant-garde arts and culture, the BAM Cultural District will also be a dynamic commercial and residential center, featuring innovative architecture linked by a series of distinctive public open spaces. Amenities including restaurants, cafes, retail and parking will make the neighborhood a true 24/7 urban and cultural center.

The City has committed \$100 million in capital funding to further enliven an already vibrant neighborhood of arts organizations and support the development of the downtown Brooklyn area as a whole. In addition to Theatre for a New Audience, the City is also funding ongoing construction of the BAM Fisher Theater on the site of the former Salvation Army complex on Ashland Place and the soon to begin renovations of the former Strand Theater for use by BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn and UrbanGlass on Fulton Street. These improvements are part of the City’s commitment to support the existing concentration of established and emerging arts organizations in Downtown Brooklyn. There are 40 arts and cultural organizations based in the BAM Cultural District within six blocks of Theatre for a New Audience site, and the district already draws more than 500,000 visitors per year.

Downtown Brooklyn was rezoned in 2004 in part to help facilitate the growth of the new BAM cultural district centered around the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since the rezoning other cultural, residential and commercial projects involving a cross-section of the surrounding community have been planned or built in Downtown Brooklyn. These new projects, along with other City investments, have improved the street-level experience in the district while serving to further integrate cultural organizations, residents and businesses in Downtown Brooklyn.

Founded in 1979 by Jeffrey Horowitz, the mission of Theatre for a New Audience is to develop and vitalize the performance and study of Shakespeare and classic drama. Theatre for a New Audience produces for audiences Off-Broadway and has also toured nationally, internationally and to Broadway. The organization serves 2,000 children each year through its school-based residency programs – the largest program in New York City Public Schools to introduce Shakespeare and the classics. Since its inception, the programs have served more than 123,000 schoolchildren. The theater company is also the Department of Education’s long-term drama studio partner for its Summer Arts Institute, the summer program for exceptional students in the arts. Earlier this year, the theater company had its first national tour; *The Merchant of Venice* played to capacity crowds and critical acclaim in New York, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles. Each of the theater company’s four productions exceeded box office projections, and this year the Theatre’s productions were seen by more than 62,000 people nationwide.

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