



Friends of the Orpheum

6004 Main St. MTA Office

Tannersville, NY 12485

September 2011

Dear Friends,

Those of you who were at the Grand Opening of the Orpheum Theatre on July 16<sup>th</sup> know that we now have a stunningly beautiful new performing arts center on our Mountaintop. The first reaction of those who saw the sweeping design of the auditorium and heard the lively, luscious acoustics was: O WOW!!

Now what?

Well, with the blessing of Peter and Sarah Finn and Chuck and Deborah Royce (who have poured their hearts and souls into conceptualizing, funding and building the O) a group called Friends of the Orpheum (FOTO) is joining in the process of planning for an arts center which will have a vision bold enough to make a real difference to the community — both artistically and economically. FOTO has put together a “dream team” to imagine the future of the Orpheum: **Rebecca Robertson** of Lincoln Center and Park Avenue Armory fame; **Piers Playfair** with a pedigree of programming spanning American Jazz to English Theatre classics; **Elena Patterson** who is out to paint the town again, but this time with performance art; and **Chris Cade** pulling strings to create a puppet theatre sure to engage the imagination of the whole community, young and old. Here’s what they’re thinking:

- The stage of the O, with its sprung dance floor, has exactly the same footprint as the Joyce Theatre in New York. The Joyce presents world-class dance companies in such rapid succession that none have adequate rehearsal time. Now those troupes can rehearse at the O and live in the theatre’s adjoining apartments. And while the companies are in residence, they’ll hold workshops for young, promising dancers and open rehearsals for all of us to enjoy.
- With our proximity to Woodstock, we’re surrounded by jazz and folk artists of world-renown. At our opening concert, **Greg Dayton** (FOTO’s acting program director) engaged Professor Louis, formerly of “The Band,” to be the first such act to grace the O’s stage. And that he did — with a soulful performance that made everyone in the audience realize what this theatre was born for. Even as we speak, jazz critic **Stanley Crouch** is meeting with Piers and Greg to discuss a possible jazz

and blues festival here at the O. And, by the way, Professor Louis and his band staged a moveable feast when they continued their opening act across the street at the Last Chance Cheese. After all, the Orpheum wasn't created to compete with local businesses, but to infuse economic vigor to the town night and day.

- Education: **Chris Cade** has plans to engage students and teachers alike to build puppets and script and stage a series of shows for the community. Chris envisions not only working with local schools, but also with the Greene Room Players and nearby art and dance academies. As you may know, the children of **Jacques d'Amboise's National Dance Institute** opened the first half of the O's debut with a sampling of choreography put together right on stage in front of everyone's eyes. It was fabulous. And there's much more invention to come!
- **Deborah Royce** is imagining a film series focusing on classics as well as new and exciting Indies.
- **Elena Patterson** is dreaming up a series of performance art to tap into the talents of local filmmakers, poets, graphic designers and fine artists.

Suffice it to say, we've been to the mountaintop; and we have a dream. And that dream has sufficiently inspired an anonymous donor to match all funds raised this year by the Catskill Mountain Foundation, up to \$75,000. Your support in meeting the challenge grant will double as a vote of confidence for our new initiative.

We are not asking for your financial support of Friends of the Orpheum — not yet that is. But we hope that once we come back to you with detailed plans for next season and beyond, you'll want to play a role in what we're doing to not only build a renowned arts complex, but also add life and vitality to our town. Stay tuned.

Best wishes,

Michael Magdol and Skip Pratt  
Co-Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Friends of the Orpheum Society  
*a not-for-profit 501C 3 incorporated to raise funds  
for programs at the Orpheum Theatre*