



A Letter From Artistic Director **Kori Rushton**

Young Jean Lee's
THE SHIPMENT



Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to be writing the initial greeting for our annual report. I am so incredibly fortunate to be at the helm of this company as we move into a remarkable new phase of our story.

There is so much to tell you about that I hardly know where to begin. I suppose our new name is as good a place as any.

We've officially abandoned Interborough Repertory Theater in favor of the more concise and commonly used "IRT Theater". Our aim was to honor our past while sharpening the focus of our future.

Under our new company name, we have created three distinct programs- the 3B Development Series, ASL Creative and TYA (Theater for Young Audiences).

Continuing our dedication to young people, we will present our newest touring version of *Roots of Rap* this February through our TYA program.

This year, a new group of artists are developing a reworked and updated version of this successful show that will be

presented to over 20,000 students in the New York/Tri-State area.

ASL Creative seeks to provide common ground for Deaf and hearing audiences by supporting the development of new theater for and by Deaf artists. So, our history of work with Deaf artists continues this season with our fifth D.E.A.F (Deaf Emerging Artists Festival). Last year's festival was quite successful, and for this year's festival we have several new and exciting companies presenting their work- including film, music, and our first international artists.

Finally, our newest programming department- the 3B Development Series- is already in full swing in helping artists to further develop and produce their work. We are incredibly proud that we are able to offer radically affordable rehearsal space for the development of new theater and performance works.

We were thrilled to host Young Jean Lee's workshop of her critically acclaimed piece, *The Shipment*, last year along with Thomas Bradshaw's *Southern Promises*- among many others.

Along with all of the exciting work going on in the IRT Theater, we are thrilled to have some incredibly talented and dedicated people join our staff. Ben Vershbow joined us in April '09 as our Associate Artistic Director and Stacy Donovan, who has been with IRT for several years working on development, has moved back to NYC and is now our Development Director.

Additionally, we have several new board members, a whole new crew of volunteers, and a couple of interns. IRT is growing and as a result becoming an even more remarkable company.

To all of you who have long supported IRT, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. To all of you who are new to the company and the work we are doing, I say welcome and thank you for joining us. I hope all of you will come often to this wonderful enclave we are creating for artists and see all that your support has helped to create.

Once again, thank you for your continued belief in all that we do.

Kori

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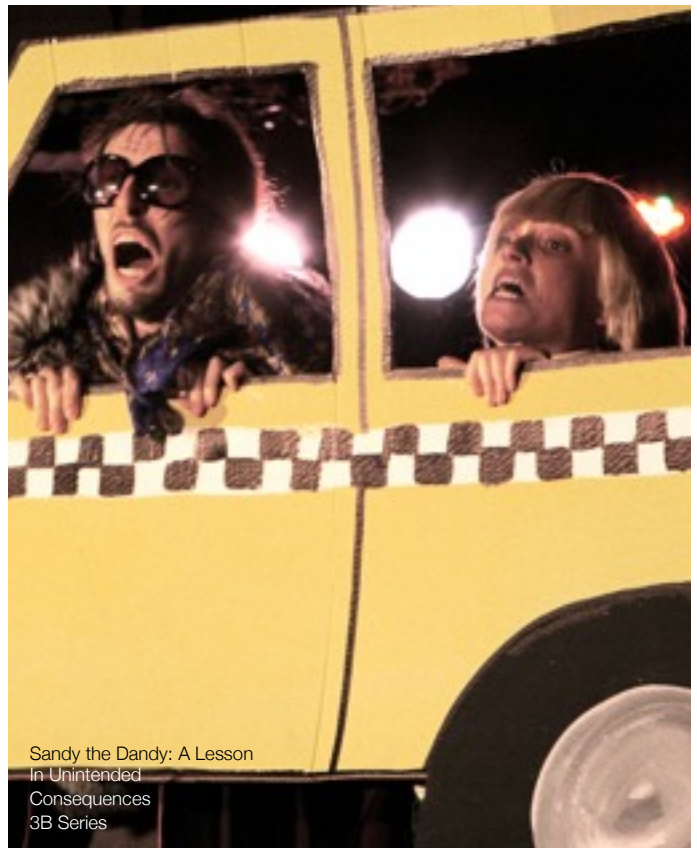
**Donations and Thank You's
Financials**

"If you ever want me to rave about you guys to anyone, let me know and I'll be happy to do it. This is the best thing EVER. I cannot begin to tell you how psyched and grateful I am."

Young Jean Lee

Lee Sunday Evans'

FULL



Sandy the Dandy: A Lesson
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Mission and History

MISSION

IRT is a grassroots laboratory for independent theater and performance in New York City, providing space and support to a new generation of artists. Tucked away in the old Archive Building in Greenwich Village, IRT's mission is to build a community of emerging and established artists by creating a home for the development and presentation of new work.

HISTORY

Established in 1986 as Interborough Repertory Theater by Luane Davis and Jonathan Fluck, IRT has a proud history of nurturing artistic freedom and career development for a wide-ranging community, providing over 200 first-time professional NYC creative jobs while producing over sixty-eight original scripts in forms ranging from staged readings to full off-Broadway productions.

In 2007, with the founding directors ready to step down, Kori Rushton was selected as the new Artistic Director. Under her leadership, 'Interborough Repertory Theater' has pared down its name to simply 'IRT' and adjusted its mission to move the company forward in a bold new direction. The task of honoring IRT's history, while adapting to the new realities of producing and developing work in NYC, has been a daunting but welcome challenge.

The new IRT has remained dedicated to its past by maintaining its Theater for Young Audiences program, preserving and adapting its programs for the Deaf community (ASL Creative), while establishing new areas of focus like the 3B Development Series, which addresses the dire scarcity of affordable creative space in today's New York.

Archive Building photo by wallyg via Flickr



Programming

3B Series

Provides radically affordable space rental for the development of new theater and performance works. 3B's aim is to help fill the gap in New York's theater ecology between readings and full productions, offering time and space to explore, experiment and nurture new works from the seed stage. Curated on a rolling basis, 3B welcomes project proposals of all shapes and sizes. Our space can accommodate anything from basic rehearsals to full workshop presentations.



Tommy Smith/
Reggie Watts
DUTCH/AV
3B Series

ASL Creative

ASL Creative seeks to provide common ground for Deaf and hearing audiences by supporting the development of new theater for and by Deaf artists. ASL Creative uses the IRT workspace as an incubator, hosting workshop presentations and festivals dedicated to unique new works that encourage the free flow of communication and perspective. Currently, IRT: ASL Creative is developing *Stepchild*, a radical new ASL interpretation of the timeless Grimm's fairytale "Cinderella," and will continue to host the annual Emerging Deaf Artists Festival in Spring/Summer '10.



D.E.A.F.
ASL Creative

Theater for Young Audiences

IRT's Theater for Young Audiences program has a 23-year tradition of developing touring presentations that engage and challenge young spectators, bringing its work to over 20,000 students in the New York/Tri-State area and surrounding states. Currently, IRT is updating one of its classic shows, *The Roots of Rap: Poetry*, a performance for teaching literacy, poetry, history and culture, for tours in the coming year and beyond.



The Roots of
Rap:Poetry
TYA

Meet the Staff of the new IRT!

Kori Rushton Artistic Director

Kori is currently the Artistic Director of IRT and Co-Curator of the 3B Development Series. She was a founding member of Short Fuse Theater, based in LA, blending former student of the Atlantic Theater School with graduates of the Warner Brothers Writers Workshop in which she produced and acted in performances at the Egyptian Arena Theater in Hollywood and in NOHO, LA. She was the Producing Director of The Production Company, which exchanges challenging new theatrical work between Australia and the United States. Kori received her BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, with her primary training at the Atlantic Theater Company Acting School and additionally with the Experimental Theater



Benjamin Vershbow Associate Artistic Director

Ben is delighted to be working with Kori Rushton as Associate Artistic Director and Co-Curator of the 3B Development Series, running the website, and helping to build the IRT community. Ben is also a director and actor active throughout the city, and has continued to develop his own work at IRT. Most recently as an IRT artist, he workshopped his adaptation of Herman Melville's BARTLEBY, which is now performing periodically at various site-specific locations in New York. During days, Ben is a digital producer at the New York Public Library, where, among other things, he is working on the Performing Arts Database, an IMDb for theater, dance and inter-disciplinary performance.

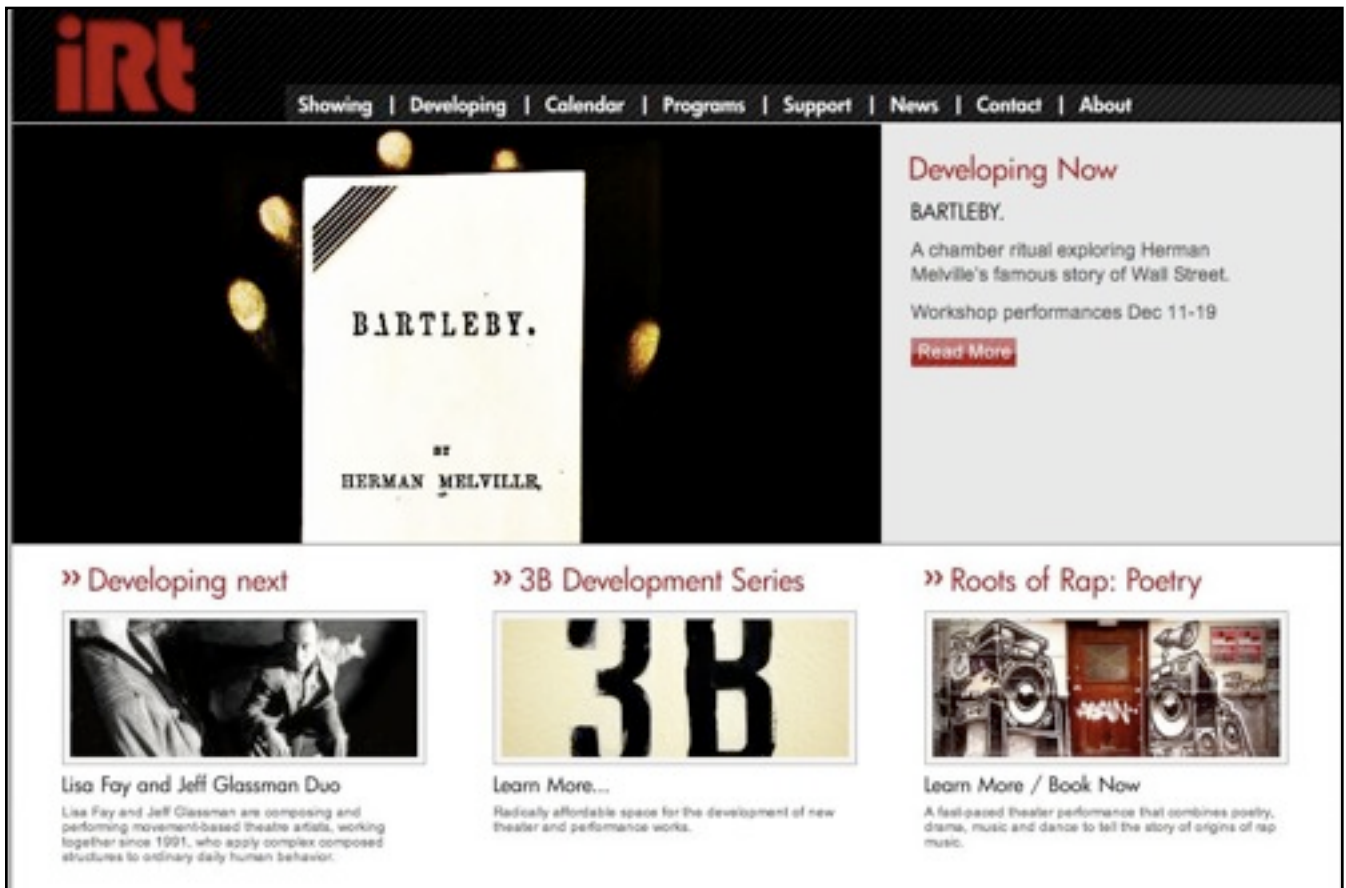


Stacy Donovan Development Director

Stacy is the Artistic Director of the Improbable Stage Company. A teacher and an artist, some of her professional directorial credits include: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Arcadia, Buried Child, and Shakespeare's R & J. Stacy holds a BA in Theatre and an MA in English Education with a concentration in Dramatic Literature and Shakespeare, both from Columbia University. Currently, Stacy is working on a series of adaptations of several of Shakespeare's plays and preparing for the U.S. premiere of BOX, an original theatre piece that premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last summer, which will have the opportunity to be further developed in May at IRT Theater.



Welcome to the new IRT!



In the late summer of '09 IRT unveiled a brand new yet familiar feeling identity. After years of being officially known as Interborough Repertory Theater, a decision was made to shorten the name to it's essentials- the letters IRT.

In a sense, this change reflected an internal drive to focus on the basic elements of what made IRT, well... IRT. A scaling back and re-examination of core mission, philosophy and production model was already taking place and the name change, new logo and website needed to reflect these shifts in thinking.

The last website to feature the work and message of IRT just wasn't in step with current communication capabilities. Under the stewardship of Ben Vershbow and Steve Armstrong, the new website is easily administered

and has the ability to post all manner of media- from pictures to audio to streaming video. It even has the ability to host a developer's blog and real time news updates.

The logo design by Kevin Kim and Eric Hollender also conveys the newfound freedom and appeal of simplicity and directness. It sets the letters of IRT in the bold colors of red and black, while it's curving font conveys the loose manner and plasticity of a child's first lettering.

All in all, IRT has attempted to reposition itself as a clean and contemporary model of development serving today's artistic community. Ease of use, clear presentation aesthetic and modular process will be as much a part of our communication efforts as our artistic mission going forward.

Artist Highlights

3B Development Series



Young Jean Lee's THE SHIPMENT

Young Jean Lee applies her signature style and acid wit to hip-hop culture and African American identity politics. *The Shipment* is an extremely awkward exploration of the experience of being black in America—an uneasy juxtaposition of hip-hop virtuosity and cultural cluelessness that raises pointed questions about ethnic appropriation and race relations that will leave people reeling.

The Shipment was presented at The Kitchen, January 2009 and has since toured internationally.

The Nonsense Company's GREAT HYMN OF THANKSGIVING/ CONVERSATION STORM

Around a dinner table, three actor/musicians sing, pray, beat forks, deliver the news, and snap between scenes in mid-sentence in *Great Hymn of Thanksgiving*, a brutal deconstruction of War-on-Terror-speak. In *Conversation Storm*, three friends from three sides of the political spectrum argue their way through a ticking time bomb scenario, brutalizing their own positions, destroying the lines between real and hypothetical, past and future, day and night.

Great Hymn of Thanksgiving/Conversation Storm was awarded "Best New Play" at the 2007 San Francisco Fringe and "Best of the Fest" at the 2008 NYC FRIGID Fest. *Conversation Storm* has also been selected for publication in the anthology *Plays and Playwrights 2009*.



Thomas Bradshaw's SOUTHERN PROMISES

When the master of the plantation dies, he wills his slaves to be freed, but his wife doesn't think that good property should be squandered. Pandemonium ensues. The play is inspired by the true story of Henry Box Brown who escaped to the north by mailing himself in a box. *Southern Promises* provides a unique portrait of the old south.

'(a) deeply twisted, coolly brutal period drama...Bradshaw strings a daisy chain of striking moments: ...these tableaux approach the evocative, multivalenced power of Kara Walker's disturbingly decorative silhouettes of antebellum horror. '- *Village Voice*

Artist Highlights Continued



Toomuchery Productions SANDY THE DANDY

Inspired by a hilarious controversy comes an even more hilarious new comedy adventure. Set against the backdrop of a whimsical New York City, this new-fangled vaudeville chronicles the adventures of Sandy—a self-proclaimed star-to-be with dreams as big as his debts, and Charlie—his hopelessly optimistic and slightly peculiar companion. Witness their rise to the top as they softshoe through a world of corporate corrupt children’s theatre, big-apple ambitions and menacing leather daddies. By weaving together fanciful satire and real life events this stylish and irreverent comedy begs the question,

“How much of my soul must I sell to make it to the top?”

Immediate Medium

CHUCK.CHUCK.CHUCK

Chuck. Chuck. Chuck. is a collage of performance, video, music, and dance that uses William Faulkner’s novel *As I Lay Dying* as a departure point for a broader examination of failure, secular faith and family. The subject of the piece, and of the novel, is a family’s arduous attempt to return their dead mother to her birthplace for burial. Failure follows the Bundren family throughout— these failures are consumptive and spectacular, upending the already delicate balance that has allowed this family to survive.

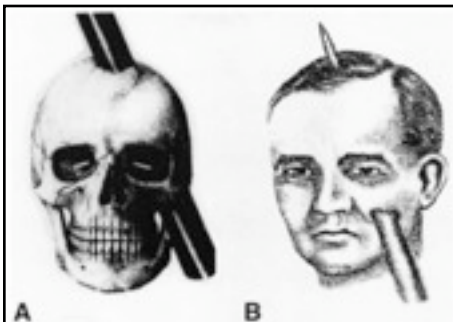
IM did a three-week residency at IRT in May, 2008, which focused on the first half of the novel. A full production ran at The Collapsible Hole, February 2009



Katt Lissard

EXCAVATION

Excavation follows two daughters, each searching for fathers who have lost themselves by losing part of their minds – one, through a bizarre railroad accident in 1848; the other, through the disintegration of dementia. The play jumps back and forth, between America in the mid-1800s and corporate corridors and science labs of today – visiting the 19th century’s fascination with phrenology and the current burgeoning field of neurotheology along the way.



Artist Highlights Continued

Lively Productions/Metropole Ink PAPER DOLLS



Lively Productions and Métropole Ink were proud to present the sold-out PAPER DOLLS as part of the 12th annual New York International Fringe Festival - FringeNYC. In his New York debut, New York Daily News Newsstand Junkie columnist and playwright Patrick Huguenin went behind the scenes of celebrity scandal and brought it to the stage. Gaye Taylor Upchurch directed a cast that won the Fringe award for Outstanding Ensemble which featured Allison Goldberg, Jen Jamula, Billy Magnussen, and Ashley Morris. David Newell served as both costume and scenic designer with Julia Meinwald composing original music. Lucrecia Briceno served as Lighting Designer and Whitney Berry as stage manager. Lisa Siciliano and Shane Marshall Brown of Lively productions and Metropole Ink produced the project.

Immediate Medium

DOESN'T EVERYONE DO IT IN PARIS?

Doesn't Everybody Do It In Paris? is a dance theatre piece inspired by Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and choreographed by IM Managing Director Liz Vacco. An exploration of what happens when our ambitions are thwarted by reality, *Paris?* will reflect upon Emma's fecklessly aspirational worldview and its relationship to the uniquely American culture of ambition, puritanical self-denial and conspicuous consumption. The piece will further underscore these themes by introducing the story of the first English translator of *Madame Bovary*, Eleanor Marx Aveling, whose suicide by cyanide oddly mirrored Emma's suicide at the end of the novel. Featuring a versatile, moveable set of live plants and choreographed specifically for untrained dancers, *Paris?* is a non-narrative collage of movement, live and recorded music, video and spoken text.



Raoul Bhaneja HAMLET SOLO

Hamlet (solo) focuses on the three most essential elements of theatre: The Actor, The Text and The Audience. Bhaneja drew inspiration from Robert Lepage's brilliantly conceived and designed one-man exploration of Hamlet called *Elsinore*, which he saw both in dress rehearsal in Montreal and at the National Theatre in London. However, Bhaneja's production in contrast is a simply designed presentation without the aid of costume, set, and lighting changes. It concentrates on the script with Bhaneja playing seventeen parts in a two-hour version based solely on Shakespeare's text.



STEPCHILD

A Deaf musical? What at first seems oxymoronic is actually an exploration of the musicality of sign language—the fluidity of motion, the visual expression and the interpretation of words set to music is a unique sight for the general theatre-going audience.

Stepchild will undoubtedly be the first of its kind. A handful of musicals have been interpreted through sign-language, but none have yet offered any actual Deaf characters. Taking from the original Brothers Grimm Cinderella tale and utilizing both ASL and a musically scored script, *Stepchild* hopes to write new conceptual rules during its next IRT workshop in 2010.

Music and Lyrics by David Boyd. Script by Bob West and Kori Rushton. Produced by Chad Kessler.

Last workshop Directed by Paul Urcioli and ASL Mastered by Aaron Kubey

D.E.A.F. Deaf Emerging Artists Festival

“We provide an outlet where Deaf and hearing artists can collaborate, creating a dialogue between artists and audiences by presenting their unique and varied works of art.”

The D.E.A.F. Festival has been a fixture at IRT for the past five years featuring the students of National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT. The highlight of last year’s show was a moving performance of *A Raisin In the Sun*, directed by Luanne Haggerty.

Look for exciting new content from the worlds of Deaf film, music and movement for the upcoming 2010 D.E.A.F Festival.



Fundraising and Outreach

All Photos by
COREY WEAVER
PHOTOGRAPHY

Outreach



WANT THE CHANGE

Tony Award Winning Cast of *Spring Awakening* Comes to IRT

Past and present performers of the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Spring Awakening* came together for a night of unique music inspired by the Rainer Maria Rilke poem *Sonnets to Orpheus, Part Two, XII*. Produced by SLIGHTLYaskew and IRT, proceeds from the show benefited the Actors Fund and IRT Theater's 3B Development Series.

In the spirit of the holiday season and before the official closing on January 18th, the *Spring Awakening* cast- both new and old- performed some of their favorite music. The cabaret performance reflected the poem's theme of wanting the changes that come into all of our lives. The show featured a sneak peak into each cast member's *Spring Awakening* audition.

Performers included Eryn Murman, Gerard Canonico, Blake Daniel, Lauren Pritchard, Matt Doyle, Emma Hunton, Jenna Ushkowitz, Jesse Swenson, Andrew Durand, Zach Reiner-Harris, Alice Lee, Emily Kinney, Caitlin Kinnunen, Morgan Karr and more.



NoLA RISING

In November, IRT helped house and SLIGHTLYaskew proudly united the spirits of the Big Easy and the Big Apple by presenting the art of Mike Dingler, a renowned street artist from New Orleans and founder of NoLA Rising.

NoLA Rising is a post-Katrina arts campaign that promotes accessibility to art regardless of socio-economic status and aims to broaden public opinion on street and graffiti art. The organization encourages and helps artists and residents to publicly display works of art for the purpose rebuilding and restoring the human spirit.

NoLA Rising began as a personal form of therapy for Mike Dingler. "I believe in spreading the idea of hope and optimism

through art because it saved me from losing my mind in the months after Katrina. You can't buy that. You can't sell it. But, you can feel it."

Three years later, the movement now facilitates community art-therapy projects both citywide and within the education system, and it has joined the ranks of grassroots activists by spreading the voices and messages of New Orleanians to over 100 cities around the world.

Proceeds from the benefit went towards Young Audiences, an organization that provides art supplies, recruits teachers and facilitates art programs in public schools that have gone without art classes since Katrina.

Mike Dingler
SLIGHTLYaskew and IRT presented NoLA Rising! NoLA Rising is a post-Katrina arts campaign that focuses on public art, community building and arts therapy in New Orleans.



CHALLENGES

Village Nonprofit Groups Say They Are Surprised by a Steep Rise in Rents

By Dan Levin/NY TIMES

The Federal Archive Building, a sprawling Romanesque Revival structure near the waterfront in the West Village, has played many roles since it was built in 1899. For decades it was a fortress where government documents gathered dust, before becoming a post office and then falling vacant.

In the early 1980s, when the western edge of the Village was rather forlorn, the hulking building was reincarnated as a habitat for the wealthy and a haven for nonprofit cultural groups and social service providers.

Most of the 10-story building, which was transferred to state ownership from the federal government in the 1970s, was converted into 479 luxury apartments, as well as commercial space. Part of three floors and the basement were leased at below-market rents to four small theater groups and to four organizations helping drug addicts, the elderly, small literary publishers and advocating for gay rights.

But now, some of those organizations, which helped revitalize the neighborhood, are facing huge rent increases that could force them not only from the building but from the neighborhood.

The neighborhood is much nicer than when the nonprofit tenants moved into the raw spaces in the archive building, on Christopher Street between Greenwich and Washington Streets. Gleaming high-rise buildings line the once-decayed waterfront, and gentrification has long since pushed out many of the neighborhood's artists, musicians and playwrights.

Celebrities walk tiny pedigreed dogs past the D'Agostino supermarket in the building's southern end, while office workers head to yoga classes at the Crunch gym in the building's northern end.

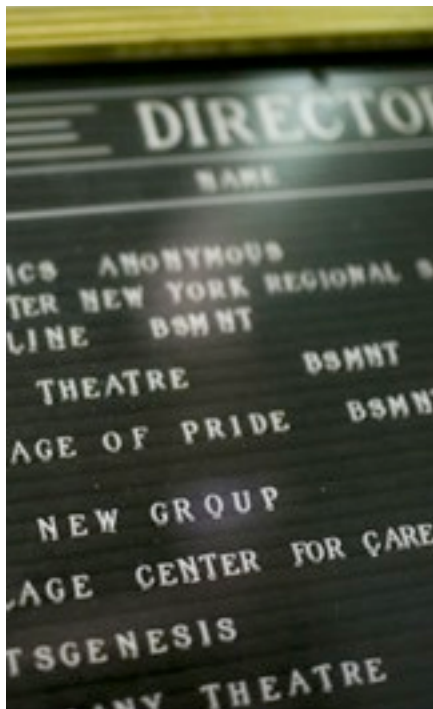
Some residents complain that the loss of four theater companies would further deplete the West Village's cultural heritage. "We've seen over and over again that the pioneers who made the Village the Village end up being forced out," said Andrew Berman, the executive director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. "There is a certain unease in the neighborhood about our western edge being turned into the condo coast. While it may be great for real estate values, it's not great for making a community."

In the early 1980s, state officials gave the Rockrose Development Corporation

permission to convert the vacant red-brick building into luxury apartments, but with a condition: The company would have to set aside 54,000 square feet for local nonprofit groups whose rent would be 80 percent of the market rate.

The lease that those tenants signed with Rockrose was for 25 years, and it expires at the end of this month. During the summer, Rockrose informed the nonprofit tenants that their annual rents would increase by as much as 500 percent, according to a statement by the developer at a recent meeting of the local community board's zoning and housing committee.

The announcement sent many of the tenants into a panic.



"We and Rockrose live in different universes," said Jeffery Corrick, the artistic director of Wings Theater, which has produced new plays on its small basement stage for 18 years. Mr. Corrick said Rockrose told his organization that its monthly rent would increase to \$7,500 from \$1,500.

That translates to an annual rent of \$90,000, while the group's annual budget is \$100,000. "What's reasonable to them would, in effect, drive us out of business," Mr. Corrick said.

Other tenants also said they were surprised by the size of the increase. Jeffrey Horowitz, the founder of Theater for a New Audience, which runs a drama program that introduces Shakespeare into city public schools, said Rockrose told the group in July that starting this month, its annual rent would rise to \$70,000 from \$22,000. "There was no warning," he said. "It takes a year to raise

funds for fiscal budgets, and even then it would be impossible. They're doing this in a way that is frankly brutal."

Patricia Dunphy, a vice president of Rockrose, said the nonprofit organizations knew an increase was coming because they were warned that their rents would be raised once the leases expired. "This was not a big surprise," she said.

Local elected officials have become involved in the dispute, hoping to find a way to allow the nonprofits to keep their spaces. The community board is pressuring the Empire State Development Corporation, which owns the property, to work out a compromise.

"These not-for-profits perform a lot of important services, and now they're being priced out of the neighborhood they helped found," said Brad Hoylman, the chairman of Community Board 2, which covers the area.

The development corporation and the City Council speaker, Christine C. Quinn, have said they are meeting with both sides to find a solution. But it is unclear how much state officials can do, because Rockrose signed a 99-year lease with the state on the building in 1982, making the company the effective landlord.

Some of the nonprofit organizations, including Heritage of Pride, a gay advocacy group, and the Village Center for Care, a health services agency that receives government financing, said they had reached a verbal understanding with Rockrose on an increase they could afford.

They are waiting to see what the negotiations might yield. "We're a microcosm of what's happening to nonprofits all across the city: the costs of rent, transportation and health care make it really tough to stay in New York," said Arthur Webb, the chief executive of Village Care. "But Rockrose made it very clear they wanted us as a tenant."

Some of the nonprofits noted that the increase came at an especially inopportune time for fund-raising. "Foundation giving is tied to a foundation's stock portfolio," said Jeffrey Lependorf, the executive director of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, a tenant since 1991. "To find new money in this terrible economic climate will make this very difficult. We need time so we aren't forced out and made homeless."

October 13th, 2008

OPPORTUNITIES

Rent Drama at Archive Has a Surprising Dénouement

By Heather Murray/THE VILLAGER

Several months after a developer told its nonprofit tenants in the sprawling Archive Building that their rents would skyrocket by as much as 500 percent, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn's Office and city and state agencies discovered that developer Rockrose Corporation couldn't legally raise the tenants' rent without the state's consent.

Although the state owns the property, it entered into a 99-year lease with Rockrose Corporation in 1982, allowing the developer to convert the full-square-block building into 479 market-rate apartments and retail space. The lease also required the developer to set aside 54,000 square feet for nonprofit space to be rented at \$4 a square foot.

Ed Gold, a veteran member of Community Board 2 and a former chairperson of the board's Archives Committee, said he recalls the discussions with Rockrose to convert space in the building for nonprofit use.

"Rockrose was not thrilled to make it available to anybody," he said. "We had some protracted discussions on how to charge the nonprofit organizations and how they were going to fix up the basement. Eventually, they came around. The agreement was to charge nonprofits something below the current market value for the rental," Gold said. At the time, the market value there was \$5 a square foot, and \$4 was decided upon as a reasonable rate.

"That lasted for 20 years and the rate expired last fall, at which time Rockrose said to the nonprofits, it would give them 20 percent off the current market value of the space — which jacked up the price 500 percent," Gold said.

C.B. 2 Chairperson Brad Hoylman said Rockrose approached the community board last fall asking it to participate in setting new rents for the nonprofits.

"Initially, we agreed," Hoylman said. But then the board realized that the rent increase would force several of the eight tenants to move out.

"We knew a market increase was not feasible," Hoylman said. C.B. 2 reached out to the council speaker's office and other officials, triggering the effort that led to the salvation of the theaters and community service organizations in the Archive Building.

"It's word to the wise that as a community board it's important that you work cooperatively with your elective officials, because in this instance they really did save the day," he said.

The Archive Building, at Greenwich and Christopher Sts., at night.

The new agreement brokered with Rockrose allows for nonprofits' rents to go up by 3 percent per year when their leases come up for renewal, and the largest tenant "would pay a bit more rent in addition," said Janel Patterson, a spokesperson for the city's Economic Development Corporation.

"This agreement is a textbook example of what the public and private sector can accomplish when they work together cooperatively," said Seth Pinsky, E.D.C. president. "In conjunction with our partners at the speaker's office, the Empire State

Development Corporation and Rockrose, as well as the tenants, we have now ensured that this space will continue to be available at a low cost to small arts, community and healthcare organizations, while simultaneously producing another revenue stream to fund historic preservation citywide."

Kori Schneider, executive director of the Interborough Repertory Theater, one of the theaters in the Archive Building, called the last few months "really scary. They basically wanted to triple our rent, which would have put us out of business," she said.

Schneider added that Rockrose was attempting to cut deals with different tenants, which she felt was unfair.

"The state really fought for our existence," she said. "I'm happy that this system finally worked for the arts and that we didn't get kicked out at a time when so many theaters in New York City are being closed."

Interborough Repertory has been in the building for more than 12 years and has seven years left in its lease.

Robert Mooney, managing director of the Wings Theatre Company, estimated that his Off-Off Broadway theater would have to move to the outer reaches of the outer boroughs to find another home at only \$4 a square foot. Such a location would be far from both subways and the theater's target audience.

"We would have had to fold if we had to move," he said. "Our audience base is very much a Village and Chelsea audience."

Mooney said that ever since he learned about the potential rent increase last June, it's been an all-out effort to stay.

"It's been an incredible fight to get recognition for our point of view," he said. "The original proposal would have driven out all of us immediately."

Mooney said he was relieved to hear that Wings could stay in its home of 20 years. The company, like most nonprofit theaters, already struggles to make ends meet.

"We operate at a deficit," he said bluntly, adding that they have no salaried employees other than Actors' Equity actors and certain artists.

Mooney works as a volunteer and so does his artistic director.

Jeffrey Lependorf, executive director of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, said moving out of the building "would have been a tragedy."

He said he and his neighbors had never seen the building's original lease, which he described as "very complex" and around 1,000 pages long, until the suggested rent increase came up.

Every month since October — when the rent hike was originally going to go into effect, before Quinn and government agencies got involved — Lependorf has received a rent notice with a warning that his organization was in arrears.

"It was a scary sword over us," he said.

Lependorf added that in the current economic climate, it's difficult to ask donors for money.

"Keeping a roof over our heads is not the most charitable reason for someone to donate to us," he noted.

Lependorf has many memories of working in the Archive Building, perhaps the most vivid being his first day on the job. It was 9/11 and he spent

half of it huddled under furniture with some of his employees.

E.S.D.C. spokesman Warner Johnston said, "The state was really pleased that we could work with the landlord and the City Council to find a solution for the tenants there."

Johnston added that although Rockrose is responsible for leasing to nonprofits, "E.S.D.C. is the only one allowed to raise the rents."

Quinn called the original agreement made between the developer and the state back in 1982 "very unusual." For example, under the lease, some of Rockrose's profits each year must go into a fund for historic preservation.

Called the Historic Properties Fund, this money is controlled by the New York Landmarks Conservancy, an organization dedicated to saving and reusing landmark buildings. The money from Rockrose is used to provide low-interest loans for historic preservation, and is the nation's largest revolving loan fund used for that purpose.

The agreement came about under unique circumstances described in Sharon Zurkin's 1989 book "Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change." The Archive Building was formerly used as a warehouse by the federal General Services Administration until 1974, when G.S.A. opted to move its archives to New Jersey. G.S.A. then designated the building as surplus property. The then-recently formed New York Landmarks Conservancy jumped at the chance to preserve and reuse the building, and worked with the Mayor's Office to make that happen. G.S.A. turned the property over, free of charge, to the city, which then planned to lease the building to the conservancy.

Under the agreement, a developer would pay a percentage of profits to the conservancy, profits which would then be used to establish the revolving fund for landmarks.

The first deal fell through and the New York State Urban Development Corporation, now called the Empire State Development Corporation, was brought into the deal to lease the property to another developer. Community Board 2, which had fought hard to get affordable housing in the building — but lost — was given a one-time gift of \$600,000 for neighborhood preservation. It was also due to C.B. 2's efforts that the nonprofit space was set aside there, Zurkin said in her book.

The board gradually disbursed the \$600,000 to local nonprofit organizations, until the account was depleted several years ago.

A 1986 New York Times article reported that the conservancy would receive \$4.8 million over the span of 10 years through the deal, as well as 8 percent of the building's gross commercial rent for the life of the lease.

"It is a counter to any interest a landlord would have in raising rents just to make money," Quinn pointed out.

Of the agreement's key goals of prohibiting excessive rent increases and funding historic preservation, the council speaker said, "It would be great to be able to replicate all over the city." But, she added that in today's expensive real-estate market, it would likely be difficult to come to agreements such as this.

"This is a model that certainly facilitated a tremendous victory" for tenants, Quinn said.

A Rockrose Corporation representative did not return calls for comment by press time.

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2008/2009 Profit & Loss

IRT THEATER

INCOME	
CONTRIBUTED INCOME	
TOTAL CONTRIBUTED INCOME	\$19,275
PROGRAM-EARNED INCOME	
TOTAL PROGRAM-EARNED INCOME	\$37,742
TOTAL INCOME	\$57,017
EXPENSES	
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	
TOTAL COST OF ADMIN EXPENSES	\$15,834
ARTIST EXPENSES	
TOTAL COST OF ARTIST EXPENSES	\$12,522
PRODUCTION EXPENSES	
TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION EXPENSES	\$22,967
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$51,323
NET SURPLUS	\$5,694*

*These figures coincide with IRT's 2008 990 Report.