

**Saints Award \$115,000 to Chicago Performing Arts Groups
From Actor's Gym to Victory Gardens (and back again)**

The Saints Organization has announced that it is awarding \$115,000 in grants to 22 performing arts organizations in the Chicago metropolitan area for 2015. The grants, ranging in amounts from \$500 to \$7,500, are being awarded to theater, dance and music organizations. Over the last two decades, we have given over \$675,000.

The grants are funding the commission of new works, enhancement of performance spaces and the purchase of various kinds of technical equipment among other things. Evaluation criteria looked at the project description, financial viability and legal verification, collaboration among organizations, dedication to cultural and ethnic diversity and addressing underrepresented or physically challenged audiences. The grant application process was entirely web-based.

Awardees range in size from tiny, obscure black box theaters to some of our best known, world class venues and represent a variety of locations throughout the Chicago metro area.

The Saints Grants Commission, chaired by Trudy Meltzer, reviewed a total of 144 proposals. Funding for the grants comes almost exclusively from the annual membership dues of the 2,200 members of the Saints.

Congratulations to the twenty-two organizations awarded Saints Grants this year:

THE ACTORS GYMNASIUM---The Evanston performance school and circus arts performing group that tells people that they'll "Learn to Fly" with their help will finally get to replace the secondhand black curtains known as "drapes" that turn their Noyes Cultural Arts Center gym into a performance space with brand new drapes.

AMERICAN THEATER COMPANY---The North Center company that asks "What does it mean to be an American?" will now be able to purchase much needed light and sound stock production equipment instead of renting.

THE ARTISTIC HOME---The long-standing school and theater company now based in River West will receive partial funding for Equity company members for a new work or a new production of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

CHICAGO A CAPPELLA ---The specialists in unaccompanied vocals will use their Saints grant to support the guest artist fees for "*Shakespeare A Cappella*". In collaboration with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, the program will feature actors performing short monologues, sonnets, and scenes that will enhance the songs performed by Chicago a cappella to commemorate the 400th anniversary year of the Bard's death, as well as celebrate the contemporary influence of Shakespeare's art on living composers.

CHICAGO HUMAN RHYTHM PROJECT--- Chicago's foremost tap and contemporary percussive arts company will use the grant to pay artists for their spring 2016 series of free "Stomping Grounds" concerts in various Chicago neighborhoods allowing everyone to enjoy the artistry of the tappers and rhythmic performers.

COLLABORACTION---The grant will partially support artistic staff stipends for CTC's 20th Season SKETCHBOOK which is a multidisciplinary theatre festival featuring more than 150 artists each year in a menu of carefully selected world premiere plays, ranging from 3-minute shorts to one act plays.

THE FACTORY THEATER---The long-standing purveyors of "Unapologetic—Original—Shameless" theater is opening up their own space in Rogers Park this fall after many years of renting at Prop Thtr and will have new lighting equipment for their edgy original shows like *Zombie Broads* and *Dating and Dragons*.

GREENHOUSE THEATER CENTER---The historic Lincoln Park rental space will have new sound boards in two of their four theater spaces thanks to the Saints.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FOUNDATION---The grant will partially cover the fee of a locally based soprano, Michelle Areyzaga, to celebrate the 40th annual performances of the Do-It-Yourself Messiah at the Harris Theater.

The orchestra consists of local amateur musicians and professionals volunteering their time in a grand sing-along of a Baroque masterpiece. The chorus consists of 1,500 members of the public.

LAKEVIEW ORCHESTRA---The neighborhood orchestra will use the Saints grant to buy percussion instruments and music stands that they've had to rent in the past.

MAIN STREET OPERA---The company that brings "big voices and big opera to your neighborhood" needs its own lighting equipment for its performances throughout the Chicago area--and we're making it possible.

NAJWA DANCE CORPS---The grant will support production costs for "*The Great Migration –The Bronzeville Project*" and to participate in the City of Chicago's celebration of the Great Migration Centennial (1916-2016). Through dance, NDC will take the audience on an epic journey from the cotton fields of the south to the theaters and nightclubs of Chicago.

THE NEW COLONY---The new work company now in residence at the Den Theatre in Wicker Park will be using the Saints grant to pay for actors for this July's musical *Stanley in the Name of Love*.

NOTHING SPECIAL PRODUCTIONS---Saints funds will pay for unique "monster" puppets to be seen in this fall's remount of *Nightmare in Paradise 4* at Boho Theatre's Heartland Studio space in Rogers Park.

THE PLAYGROUND THEATER---The Lakeview venue best known for improvisational comedy is planning a new play called *Don Chipotle* by Juan Villa . The play was inspired by Don Quixote and Juan's experience growing up and is told through dialogue, song, puppetry, silhouette animation and music. The Saints grant will fund artist stipends for the show.

RED THEATER CHICAGO---The company whose mission is "Ask dangerous questions theatrically" is collaborating with Wrigleyville's Oracle Theatre to present *R+J: The Vineyard*, a new interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring deaf artists and presented both in English and American Sign Language. The Saints grant will fund the unique artists needed for this unusual production to be presented at Oracle Theatre.

A RED ORCHID THEATRE---The Wells Street long time standby will install new, environmentally-friendly LED lighting equipment thanks to the Saints' support.

THE RUCKUS---The fringe company with the ironic slogan "Something's coming. Nothing good." will use their Saints grant for a laptop computer to be used for stage management.

STEEP THEATRE CO.---One of Chicago's most acclaimed storefront companies will use their grant to pay for the actors for this summer's U.S. premiere of the British hit *Brilliant Adventures* at Steep's Edgewater home.

THEATER WIT---When you have three theater spaces and two levels in one Lakeview building, you can't shout at one another, so the Saints will make possible a new intercom system that will keep everyone in the building communicating.

TUTA THEATRE CHICAGO---The experimentally aimed company has a new Ravenswood home where they would like to do performances, so the Saints are making possible a new sound system they can use both at their home space and at rental spaces.

VICTORY GARDENS THEATER---It's been ten years since the move to the Biograph Theatre building on Lincoln Park, and already in the Zacek-McVey Theater mainstage, the lighting equipment is out-of-date. When the Saints grant is received, it will not be.

Saints Grants Commission Members:

Trudy Meltzer--Commission Chair
Madeline Brownstone

Tom Lembo
Gloria Price

Board Liaison--Dave Goldberg

Donna Dunlap
Mark Jeffries

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