

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | January 21, 2013

PRESS CONTACT:

Abigail Fudor

412-334-3209

afudor@arcadecomedytheater.com

Arcade Comedy Theater to Open as Unique Destination in Cultural District

new company takes residence in burgeoning downtown Pittsburgh arts scene

Pittsburgh, PA—Growing out of increasingly successful comedy programming at The Cabaret at Theater Square over the past several years, five Pittsburgh comedic actors have joined to create Arcade Comedy Theater, which will offer a full schedule of comedy and variety programming beginning February 15, 2013 in the heart of the downtown Cultural District. The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust has worked with this newly formed non-profit arts organization to secure the prime location of 811 Liberty Avenue, known to many Pittsburghers as the former location of La Prima Espresso. The Arcade, a name that connotes the fun, eclectic atmosphere the group wishes to foster while also giving a nod to the city's rich history of arcades and nickelodeon theaters, will serve as both a training ground that will offer classes to 'players' of all levels, as well as a premiere performance venue for all things comedy. Their mission is simple: to elevate and advance the art of comedy in Pittsburgh.

“‘All things comedy’ is something we’re very excited about,” notes co-founder Randy Kirk, who in addition to years of writing, performing, and promoting comedy, has over a decade’s worth of experience in managing performance venues in Pittsburgh. “Late night comedy in this city has everything from all-female sketch troupes to quirky radio plays; from murder mysteries to improv jams. There’s stand-up, music, and more. It’s a growing scene on both the artists-creating-content front and the audience-who-wants-more front.” Arcade Comedy Theater intends to be a central hub for it all.

Kirk was instrumental in forming this new organization, teaming up with four key members of the Pittsburgh comedy community, who each bring significant and varied experience in various artistic and management fields. Abby Fudor has years of experience in marketing for non-profit organizations since receiving her Masters of Art Management from Carnegie Mellon; the Pittsburgh native also performs regularly at Friday Nite Improvs and is a founding member of the all-female sketch/variety group Frankly Scarlett. Kristy Nolen, a Pittsburgh native who recently moved back to Pittsburgh, has spent the last twenty years studying, performing, and teaching in Chicago (Second City Touring Company, Improv Olympic), Amsterdam (Boom! Chicago) and Los Angeles (iO West). Jethro Nolen, Kristy’s husband, is a native of Texas and has also performed both scripted and improvised comedy in Chicago, Los Angeles and Amsterdam over the past twenty years. Michael Rubino, a graphic designer by day, is behind all the branding of the Arcade. From Beaver County originally, Rubino has been part of its sketch/improv troupe The Cellar Dwellers for over ten years, and also uses his comedy skills in writing—his (comedic) script won Pittsburgh’s recent 48 Hour Film Project.

The team became friends and colleagues performing together at the Pittsburgh Improv Jam, which occurs every Thursday night at the Cabaret. “The Jam is a prime example of a late night comedy offering

that has gained steady, increasing audiences,” says Kirk. A frequent complaint he began to notice, however, is the start-time (10pm). The group saw an opportunity for expansion, to take the varied comedy programming and give it a space all its own. “We came together with the common ground of wanting more performance opportunities, more stage time, and a single venue dedicated to transforming the late night ‘underground comedy scene’ and bringing it to a wider Pittsburgh audience.”

When asked about the name “Arcade,” co-founder Kristy Nolen believes it perfectly emphasizes “both the eclectic nature of the programming, like the colorful old arcades full of lights and all types of games, and also the fun we want audiences to experience the moment they walk in the door.” Nolen, who returned to Pittsburgh about a year ago with her family, is thrilled to see a much different comedy scene—and a different downtown—than she left twenty years ago. “I’ve spent so much time in other comedic venues across the country; I’m eager to bring those experiences from Chicago and L.A. back to Pittsburgh. All of us on the creative team can take the best of what we’ve seen, experienced, and learned in different venues and bring it to the Arcade.”

Further explaining the ‘eclectic comedy’ to be found at the Arcade, Nolen describes, “Our programming looks to include improv, a common denominator among us five, plus stand-up, sketches, music acts, theatrical comedy, play readings, video screenings...the list goes on.” Kirk adds, “We’re eager to present a wide range of shows—from a budding idea of a new play, to a polished sketch troupe who wants the ‘small club feel’ you’d get in a larger city.” The group will both self-generate material, as Arcade Comedy Theater, and also invite other comedy acts—and visiting artists—to take the stage.

In addition to programming, the Arcade will also develop an extensive education component, to provide Pittsburgh a wide variety of classes for “players” of all levels. “We are committed to being a training ground for both new and veteran performers,” says Nolen, who will lead the education center with her extensive experience in teaching. “Classes create an incredible community that serves the overall organization; we will begin with improv but intend to expand quickly to other areas. We also feel the space will be ideal for seasoned artists to experiment or workshop new comedic projects.”

Nolen states, “Our ultimate goal is to create a trusted destination for high quality comedy programming. We want our audience members to feel confident coming down any night, without having to check what’s on stage first, because they can trust they will see something new, different, high quality, and funny.” Tickets will be affordable and range according to the act, also adding to the ‘arcade’ experience. “We will create supply and drive demand,” says Kirk. “In the center of downtown Pittsburgh’s often pricey cultural district is an inexpensive place you want to go because there’s always something funny happening.”

Arcade Comedy Theater will be part of Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s Gallery Crawl on January 25, 2013 and open for regular programming February 15, 2013. More details available at www.arcadecomedytheater.com and www.facebook.com/arcadecomedytheater soon.

####