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A 'Gorilla' Moves Into the Skokie Theater

Gorillia Tango Theatre recently purchased the vacant Skokie Theater for \$420,000. The group already has a successful business in Bucktown and is looking to expand its productions.

By [George Slefo](#) | [Email the author](#) | February 24, 2012

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The 800-pound gorilla that was the vacant [Skokie Theatre](#) has already found a new owner: Bucktown's very own Gorilla Tango Theatre (GTT). The theatre will produce its own shows - some of which include *Star Trek* themed burlesque performances - as well as comedies and programming for kids.

The announcement was made during a press conference at [Sweety Pies](#) in downtown Skokie on Friday.

GTT is already successful at its current location at 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago and wanted to expand to Skokie, said GTT owner and CEO Dan Abbate. The venue was purchased for \$420,000, a low price considering the \$1.2 million that was spent renovating and updating the theatre at 7924 Lincoln Ave. several years ago.

"The Skokie Theatre is an important component of downtown Skokie's revitalization, along with the new Oakton-Skokie Swift station ..." said Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen.

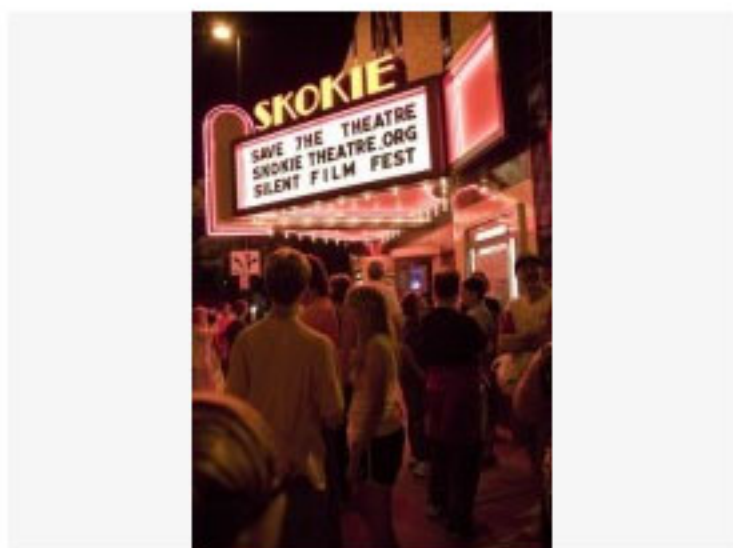
The theatre closed its doors Jan. 1, 2012. GTT performances are expected to start early April, Abbate said.

"It's a beautiful venue in a great area," Abbate said. "We will run Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre in a similar fashion to our Bucktown venue, where we seek out and help produce shows directed at very specific markets."

The group also plans to increase its focus on its children's programming, "By Kids for Kids." The program allows young artists to work with proven directors to create original performances, GTT said.

What makes GTT different from other theatres is its business model that allows anyone to produce their own show. For a set price, someone can rehearse at the Skokie Theatre and recruit talent, while GTT promotes and provides the venue. *Bye Bye Liver*, a show that got its start at GTT in Chicago, is still performing at other venues five years later.

Other notable standouts include actor TJ Miller, who went from the GTT stage to the main cameraman in the movie *Cloverfield*. Also a notable GTT alum is Hannibal Buress, who has written for NBC's *30 Rock* and *Saturday Night Live*.



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