

Steadstyle Chicago

Chicago Theatre News and Events November 7, 2009

Gorilla Tango marks 3rd Year, 500 performances

Gorilla Tango Theatre is celebrating its third anniversary and 500th show! Since opening in Chicago in December 2006, GTT has been host to over 1,500 individual performances – more than 40,000 audience members have walked through its doors in just three years! The Gorilla Tango for-profit business model has proven itself sustainable and effective for both GTT and the various producers who work within it. The theatre has steadily increased revenue each year, and plans to produce even more shows in 2010 after bringing in several full-time staffers to increase its efforts to reach new producers.

While the theatre occasionally produces plays itself, GTT focuses more on providing resources to new producers and up-and-coming companies. "The reason so many shows are successful here is because we really set up the theatre to be producer-friendly," says new Director of Programming Bryan Cohen. "We have online ticketing, free rehearsal and audition space, and the ability to extend a run at will. As Dan (Abbate) always says, we run a real turn-key operation."

Continually utilizing technology to increase efficiency, GTT provides producers with a Producer Login Portal, from which they can schedule their own rehearsals in the various GTT rehearsal spaces, access the marketing tools GTT provides, and check ticket sales to see how their marketing efforts are going. Owner and creator Dan Abbate reflects, "The online Producer Portal provides the producers and their team with access to real time information to simplify their production process and give the greatest potential for creating successful shows."

GTT will soon begin a renovation of its backstage area to provide a larger space for producers during shows, and to provide access to mirrors and a changing area. In early 2010, GTT will rework its basement space to create a community 'Green Room' as well as a more formal rehearsal space. Successful shows which have performed and premiered at GTT include the long-running "Bye Bye Liver: The Chicago Drinking Play", Samantha Martin's "Circus Cats of Chicago", and the recent smash hit "Rollin' Outta Here Naked: The Big Lebowski Burlesque."

The 500th show at Gorilla Tango Theatre will be The Annual Shantz Holiday Show, "A Silent Night: Grandma Got Run Over Without Healthcare," will which perform Fridays and Saturdays at 10pm, December 4-19, 2009 and Sunday, December 20, 2009 at 7pm. Producing at GTT since the very beginning, this is Shantz Theatre's fourth annual holiday show. Past titles include: "Northern Foreclosure: All I Want for Christmas Are My Front Door Keys" (the third annual holiday show), "No-EL or how the BlagojeGrinch stole Christmas" (the second), and "Requiem for a Department Store, or, How Jesus Taught Me to Shop at Macy's" (the first ever Shantz holiday show in December of 2006). Shantz company member Kenny Metroff says, "Gorilla Tango Theatre truly embodies the charm of the Chicago theater scene. Its a quaint storefront theater that provides a supportive environment for local artists to showcase their talents, hone their crafts, and take risks with their work."

Theatre owner Dan Abbate and Marketing and PR Coordinator (and within the last year, spouse) Kelly Williams have taken a vacant building and turned it into a vibrant space for local producers. "We are glad to be able to provide this kind of freedom to producers in town and give them as much support as we can. GTT is set up so that if they do well, we do well," said Dan Abbate. Located at 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave (Western and Milwaukee), Gorilla Tango Theatre features local productions up to seven nights a week and exists to provide small producers with a venue to share their voice in a cost-effective and professional manner. Shows, more information and tickets can be found at www.gorillatango.com or by calling 773-598-4549.

