

Smock Alley Theatre-1662- A resource for Dublin, Ireland and the world.

Smock Alley Theatre-1662- A living History.

The Smock Alley Theatre building on the banks of The River Liffey at the heart of Viking Dublin City is one of the most significant sites in European theatre history. When a new phase of theatre history began on these islands with The Restoration of Charles II in 1660, there were three major theatres built within a few years of one another: Drury Lane (1662) and Lincoln's Inn Fields (1661) in London and Smock Alley Theatre (1662) in Dublin. Only one of these three was a purpose built theatre building and only one exists in substantially the same form as in 1662-Smock Alley Theatre-Dublin-The oldest theatre building in these islands-A living history.

For more than a century, Smock Alley put Irish theatre on the European map. If we are to ask what makes theatre such an important part of Irish culture today, we need to go back more than two centuries before the founding of The Abbey Theatre, to the Smock Alley Theatre of the 17th century.

From the original theatre of 1662 to a grain store to dereliction to becoming St Michael's and of John's Catholic Church to the Viking Adventure Tourist experience to now when we seized the idea that it is possible to build on a unique and original footprint a theatre for future generations-Smock Alley Theatre is vital.

Almost 350 years after Smock Alley was Ireland's Theatre Royal we are bringing this most significant theatre back to life as a resource for Dublin, Ireland and the world. Soon, Actors, writers, directors, designers will once again have the opportunity to present challenging and innovative work to audiences from the 250 seat Smock Alley Theatre. This theatre will be complimented by both Smock Alley Theatre Studio (115 seats) and Smock Alley Theatre-The Boys School (170 seats) and a range of studios to accommodate rehearsals and an actor training facility, necessary to maintain a working and durable business model.

The total cost of this initiative is just under €8 million. We have raised over half this amount between significant Government support and private donations and despite the international economic downturn we are now proposing going on site at the end of July 2009 to begin the development of phases one of this project (€4.1 million.)

Embarking on a phased approach is both practical and necessary in the current economic conditions. It is neither possible nor realistic, despite maintaining a robust fundraising strategy in both Ireland and USA and Canada to raise the outstanding monies at this time. It is important that we begin work as soon as possible for a number of reasons.

Demand.

There is a huge demand for performance spaces in Dublin as evidenced by the 100% occupancy of the Smock Alley Theatre Studio space. Dublin, having lost Andrew's Lane, Andrew's Lane Studio, The Riverbank Theatre, The Theatre Space and The SFX urgently needs new performance spaces.

Smock Alley Theatre has already entered into partnership relationships with The Arts Council, Dublin City Council, Rough Magic Theatre Company, The Dublin Theatre Festival, The Dublin Festival Fringe, The International Dance Festival, The Dublin Gay Theatre Festival, Landmark productions and a series of independent theatre companies who require a relationship that is predicated on building long term strategic partnerships. Smock Alley Theatre has also appointed Ken Bourke as writer in residence.

Delivery.

The team assembled under the project management leadership of Joe Melvin (KSNPM) will deliver on time and on budget both phase one (at once) and phase two of this development.

Deadlines.

Work on phases one must start at once. All outstanding DAST monies will be drawn down by December 2010.

Decisions.

We need to partner with DAST to ensure that successful delivery can be achieved by agreeing a tight deliverable schedule that ensures success of phase one so that what emerges when phase one is finished is a valuable working resource which includes Smock Alley Theatre (initially contained in the basement space of the original Smock Alley Theatre) , Smock Alley Studio, Smock Alley-The Boy's School and an actor training facility..

Smock Alley Theatre in partnership with DAST and working with KSNPM (project managers), Matheson Ormsby Prentice, (Solicitors) and Meagher Moynihan (Chartered accountants) will ensure successful delivery of this project of International significance.

Smock Alley Theatre is a registered charity: 17241 and is in the process of establishing 501 C3 status to avail of philanthropic opportunities in USA.

Patrick Sutton.

Director Smock Alley Theatre-1662.

Charity number:17241

July 2010.