

Jonathan Slaff - 55 Perry Street (1M) NYC 10014 - 212/924-0496 - Representing:

THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY

Crystal Field, Director - 155 First Ave., NYC 10003 - (212) 254-1109

www.theaterforthenewcity.net - for immediate release

OVER 200 ACTS SET FOR TNC'S 28th LOWER EAST SIDE FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS MAY 26-28, 2023

**Artistic output of this fabled neighborhood will be showcased in three days of free showings
for live audiences.**

WHERE AND WHEN

May 26 to 28, 2023

In and around Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (at E. 10th Street)

Free (donations accepted)

Info: www.theaterforthenewcity.net, (212) 254-1109

Lineup of performances: <http://www.jsnyc.com/season/LES-2023.htm>

Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/QgvAueRjpmC2fsaP9>

NEW YORK, May 5 -- With the roster still building, Theater for the New City has currently scheduled over 200 performing arts organizations, independent artists, poets, puppeteers and film makers for its 28th annual Lower East Side Festival of the Arts, which will be mounted May 26 to 28 in and around Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (at E. 10th Street). Admission is free but donations will be gratefully accepted.

The festival has been presented annually since 1996, although in 2020 it was produced online due to pandemic concerns. A cohort of theater, dance, performance, music, film, literary and visual artists are participating on all three days. An afternoon of performances for and by kids will be presented Saturday afternoon. A fine art show will be hanging throughout the fest in the theater's lobby gallery. A film program will be presented Saturday from 1:00 PM to 11:00 PM, featuring works by auteurs from the Lower East Side/East Village along with works that reflect the essence of the neighborhood.

This year, the festival is mounted with a theme addressing climate change: "The Heat Is On" followed by an exhortation taken from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Act Now in the Living Present." The subject will be addressed in some of the playlets and acts written for the festival.

As of this writing, the performers' roster includes such luminaries as David Amram, KT Sullivan, Austin Pendleton, Penny Arcade and Vinie Burrows. City council member Carlina Rivera will speak Friday.

Performing ensembles participating will include Chinese Theatre Works, Cobu (All-female Japanese Taiko drumming company), Constellation Moving Company (aerial dance), Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theater, DADA New York, The Drilling Company, La Mama, Le Squeezebox Cabaret, Mary Tierney's TNC Theater Workshop, New Yiddish Rep, Rev. Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, Textile Theater Company and Wise Guise.

There will be excerpts of plays and original works (many written exclusively for the festival) by Toby Armour, JC Augustin, Briana Barteneiff, William Electric Black, Richard Courage, Josh Darpan, Steve Epstein, Alberto Ferreras, Alicia Foxworth, Willianne Gissendanner, Melanie Goodreaux, Steven Harris, Barbara Kahn, Anne

Lucas, Ed Malin, Lissa Moira, Matt Morillo, Stephan Morrow, Sabura Rashid, James Stanton and Victor Vauban Junior.

Individual performers appearing will include Matt Angel, Penny Arcade, Stan Baker, Joe Bendik, Elisa Blynn, Vinie Burrows, David Elyha, Face Boy, Zoe Gray, John Grimaldi, Sophia Gutchinov, Hollie Harper, Eric Kuzmik, Evan Lawrence, T. Scott Lilly, Tommie J Moore, Tym Moss, Bryce Payne, Austin Pendleton, Smokey Stevens, Christine Stoddard, The Legendary Amaz'n Grace, Aaron Dalla Villa, Richard Weber and Lei Zhou.

Dance performances will be by Ashley Liang Dance Company, Alessandra Belloni, Glitter Kitty, Angela Harriell (The Love Show), Kaoru Ikeda, Infinity Dance Theater, Kinding Sindaw, Rasvan Stoian Dance, Rod Rodgers Dance Company, Laura Shapiro, Carol Tandava, Thunderbird American Indian Dancers, Akiko Tokuoka and Charly Wenzel.

Musical performers appearing will include David Amram, Art Lillard Quartet, Mimi Block, Maude Lardner Burke, Burning City Orchestra, Charlie Sub and Sound Dogs, Domingo, Jr Dias, Peter Dizozza, Alisa Ermolaev, Fiddler and the Crossroads, Robert Gonzales Jr., Judy Gorman, Ironic Hipsters, Michael Laderman, Lex and The Cult of Spirits, Janice Lowe, Lower East Side Performing Arts, Liz Magnes, Melange, mister pablo, Oyu-Oro, Bennet Pologe, Ellen Steier, Wendy Stewart, KT Sullivan, Michael Vazquez, Yip Harburg Rainbow Troupe, Bei-Bei Yubo Zhong, Jonathan Fox Powers and Velvette.

Emcees will be Crystal Field, Robert Gonzales Jr., Danielle Aziza and Sabura Rashid (in the Johnson Theater) and David F. Slone Esq., Joe John Battista and Claude Solnick (in the Cabaret Theater). The film program will be emceed by Eva Dorrepaal.

Specialty curators of the festival include Lissa Moira (poetry), Eva Dorrepaal (film), Danielle Hauser (kids' performances), Carolyn Ratcliffe (visual art) and Richard West (outdoor theater-dance-music) The whole festival is run by committee and chaired by Crystal Field.

Indoor performances will take stage from 6:00 PM to midnight each day, utilizing two of TNC's four theaters. From 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday, vendors and food sellers, including booths from nearby restaurants, will set up in the closed-off block of East Tenth Street between First and Second Avenues. On Saturday from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM, an outdoor stage adjoining the theater will offer music and multi-discipline performances curated by Richard West. On Saturday afternoon inside in the Johnson Theater, there will be performances by and for children, curated by Danielle Hauser. On Saturday from 1:00 PM to 11:00 PM in the Cabaret Theater, over 15 films curated by Eva Dorrepaal will be screened, accompanied by talkbacks with a number of the film makers. On Sunday from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM in TNC's Community Theater, there will be a "poetry jam with prose on the side" curated by Lissa Moira. Throughout the festival, an art show curated by Carolyn Ratcliffe will grace the TNC lobby spaces. This art show will have its own free, special opening Monday, May 22 from 5:30 to 8:00 PM.

Covid-19 masks are optional as of this writing.

The performers' roster is still building as of this writing and the number of applicants exceeds any previous year.

BACKGROUND

The Festival started in 1996 as a three-day, indoor and outdoor multi-arts festival intended to demonstrate the creative explosion of the Lower East Side and the area's importance to culture and tourism for New York City. It employed two theater spaces at TNC plus the block of East Tenth Street between First and Second Avenues. For the past 27 years, it has been organized by TNC and a coalition of civic, cultural and business leaders and presented free to an average attendance of 4,000.

The concept of the festival was developed by Crystal Field, Executive Artistic Director of TNC and Esther Cartagena (d. 2006), President of Loisaída, Inc., to portray the Lower East Side (LES) as a haven for artists and artistic creation. The region is a unique multi-ethnic community with an unusually high level of artistic vitality. Large populations with differing languages and cultures coexist there successfully and a large artistic population helps glue the neighborhood together. Its theaters are also an unprecedented source of tourism. Sam Shepard's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "Buried Child," was commissioned and first produced by TNC. The committee envisioned an event that would demonstrate the region's cultural fervor, its large artistic population and its multiplicity of ethnic influences to contradict the neighborhood's stereotype as a dangerous refuge for drug dealers and criminal activity.

The first festival, presented June 14 to 16, 1996, featured over 100 attractions, drew favorable press and attracted crowds from all around the City. Its success prompted TNC to continue the festival as an annual event.

Disciplines presented have always included theater, music, dance, poetry, puppetry, cabaret, visual art, film and children's programming.

SPECIAL CREDITS

Festival Director is Crystal Field. Assistant Directors are Ronnie Elmore, Alex Sisk, Téa Einarsen and Cinda Eatock.

The LES Festival is created and organized by The LES Committee: Joe Batista, Walter Corwin, Eva Dorrepaal, Carol Dudgoen, Crystal Field, Matthew Fitzgerald, Robert Gonzales Jr., Melanie Goodreaux, Robert Greer, Angela Harriel, Barbara Kahn, Lissa Moira, Stephan Morrow, Emily Pezzella, Carolyn Ratcliffe, Jonathan Slaff, David F. Slone Esq., Claude Solnik, Mary Tierney, Jenne Vath, Jimmy Walker, Jon Weber, Richard Weber, Peter Welch, John David West and Richard West. Press Representative is Jonathan Slaff.

###