

The Phoenix Theatre for Children to Manage the Columbus Performing Arts Center

Retooled Davis Performing Arts Programs Will Continue

The Phoenix Theatre for Children, a non-profit Columbus theatre company specializing in family entertainment, has entered into a three-year agreement with the City of Columbus to operate and manage the Columbus Performing Arts Center (549 Franklin Ave.).

The center, recently closed as part of City budget cuts, served as a home for the Davis Performing Arts Programs for local youth, as well as rental space for community performances and events.

Phoenix will restructure the Davis Performing Arts Programs based on demand, but will continue the majority of program offerings. Phoenix will also manage public rental of the center's two performance spaces—the 190-seat, black box Van Fleet Theatre and the 350-seat, proscenium Shedd Theatre.

“Phoenix has been collaborating with the Davis Performing Arts Programs for the past three years, so it was a natural fit for us,” stated Phoenix Artistic Director Steven C. Anderson. “We will do our best to maintain as many programs as possible and retain the high level of quality which the parents and students have come to expect from Phoenix and the Davis.”

Phoenix will move its administrative offices from the Riffe Center (77 S. High St.) to the Columbus Performing Arts Center beginning April 27. However, Phoenix's normal season productions will continue to be presented in the Riffe Center's Studio One and Studio Two theatres.

Overview of Davis Performing Arts Programs and how/if they will change:

Children's Drama Company (Ages 8-12)

Davis Performing Arts Programs offered a season of up to five theatre productions each year performed by all-child casts. Seasons typically contained at least one adaptation of classic children's literature and one musical theatre piece.

Phoenix will continue these productions at the Columbus Performing Arts Center on a reduced scale, with plans to offer a fall production in the 2009 calendar year. Dates have yet to be determined. Tickets to these productions will continue to be sold to the public through Friends of the Davis and prices will remain \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

Acting Up Summer Camps (Ages 4-13)

This program offers weekly, theme-based summer camps which provide theatre skills for children. Since being brought in as consultants on the program in 2005, Phoenix has been staffing and managing the eight redesigned camps. This program will continue unchanged.

Theatre Classes (Ages 3-18)

Throughout the year, Davis Programs offered a variety of theatre classes and workshops taught by local professionals which provided students with an intensive performing arts education.

Phoenix will continue these classes on a reduced scale based on interest.

D3 Intensive (Ages 10-16)

D3, the Davis Programs' newest offering, prepares highly motivated young people for the musical theatre with classes in acting, singing, and dancing. With an emphasis on developing the whole child, D3 also focuses on developing life skills.

Phoenix will continue D3 through May. After a previously scheduled summer hiatus, it will resume in August.

Park Playhouse (Ages 13-18)

Park Playhouse is a teen program designed to assist students in presenting fully staged dramas, usually one classic play and one company-generated play each year.

Due to the opportunity most teens have to participate in school-sponsored drama programs, Park Playhouse will temporarily go on hiatus while the program is reassessed.

About The Phoenix Theatre for Children

Now in its 16th season, the Phoenix Theatre for Children is a collective of artists who create and present original productions, as well as some well known works with a Phoenix twist, for young audiences. Phoenix produces a full season of plays each year which are presented in the Riffe Center's Studio One and Studio Two theatres. During the run of a production, public performances are held on weekends and school matinees on weekday mornings.

Several Phoenix productions have engaged the hearing impaired audience through bilingual presentations which simultaneously combine American Sign Language and spoken English. Bilingual productions include *Jungle Book* (2001), *Go, Dog. Go!* (2006), *The Secret Garden* (2008), and *The Miracle Worker* (2009).

Phoenix also places a great deal of emphasis on outreach and education initiatives. Currently, the company is involved in several such programs including:

“At Risk” Residencies – Phoenix artists/educators work with Columbus City Schools fourth graders considered “at risk of failure in the classroom.” Working as student mentors and partners for teachers, Phoenix goes into the schools and engages the students to create plays based on core curriculum.

Residency Initiative – Phoenix conducts in-depth school residencies in which students spend 2-4 weeks creating plays that promote good citizenship, illuminate core curriculum, or explore non-European theatrical styles.

Workshops – Phoenix artists/educators provide school workshops for grades K-6 which explore five basic acting tools—imagination, concentration, cooperation, body, and voice.

Tours – Select Phoenix productions are toured through central Ohio schools.

Acting Up Summer Camps – Phoenix offers a program of weekly, theme-based summer acting camps that provide theatre skills for children aged 4-13.

Intensive Musical Theatre Program – Phoenix offers a two-week summer intensive taught by local professionals from various companies and universities. The intensive provides an opportunity for experienced young musical theatre performers aged 10-18 to hone their dance, theatre, and voice skills.

Educational Collaborations

Ohio Attorney General’s “Finding Words” Program – Through role play, Phoenix actors provide law enforcement officers with experience in interviewing children suspected of being abused.

Davis Discovery Center – Since 2005, Phoenix has served as theatrical consultant for the Davis Discovery Center’s performing arts programs. As such, Phoenix has helped develop their mission, choose seasons, hire artistic staff, provide production directors, and evaluate educational programs.

Ohio Alliance for Arts and Education – Phoenix is assisting in this curriculum development project by creating drama/theatre lesson plans which meet Ohio Department of Education performing arts standards while teaching core curriculum such as math, science, social studies, and language arts.

KIPP Journey Academy – Phoenix conducts a two-week residency for fifth graders that promotes language arts proficiency and basic literacy through drama/theatre.

BalletMet – Phoenix provides drama/theatre training for students in BalletMet’s Dance Academy and the pre-professional company.

Past arts education collaborations include Marion Correctional Institute, Columbus State, Community Action for Children, and the Ohio Reformatory for Women.

Performance Collaborations

Past performing arts collaborations include BalletMet, CAPA, Opera Columbus, Columbus Museum of Art, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and Thurber House.

For more information, visit www.phoenix4kids.org.

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