



# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2019-20-030  
*Business Name:* New Conservatory Theatre Center  
*Business Address:* 25 Van Ness Avenue, Lower Lobby  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Ed Decker, Founder and Artistic Director  
*Nomination Date:* February 5, 2020  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Dean Preston

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?  
 Yes  No

1187 Franklin Street from 1981 to 1985 (4 years).  
25 Van Ness Avenue, Lower Lobby from 1985 to Present (35 years).

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?  
 Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?  
 Yes  No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** February 18, 2020

Richard Kurylo  
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

## Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

## DEAN PRESTON

Office of Small Business  
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application  
City Hall, Room 110  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

February 5, 2020

Re: Nomination of New Conservatory Theatre Company to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi,

I am writing to nominate New Conservatory Theatre Company (NCTC) for the Legacy Business Registry. This queer-aligned theatre opened in May of 1981 and in 38 years, they have expanded from The First Unitarian Church on Franklin Street to its current creative hub at 25 Van Ness.

NCTC has been a center for LGBTQ+ activist theatre and progressive arts education. In their lifespan, they have produced 28 World Premieres, 62 Regional Premieres and 22 San Francisco premieres. It is their mission to stay “new” and use storytelling as a tool to advance social change. In 2002, NCTC launched a program to commission and develop plays. Their programming ranges from vocational training for teenagers, satellite drama programs in our public schools, adult classes and, most notably, their YouthAware program, which reaches around 20,000 young people a year.

I want to lend my voice to the chorus of elected officials, including Governor Gavin Newsom who declared “New Conservatory Theater Day” in 2006 and Speaker Nancy Pelosi who commemorated their 36th anniversary, in recognizing the impact this organization has had on our city. I hope this letter illuminates how invaluable New Conservatory Theater Company is to the vitality of San Francisco and for that, I am proud to nominate this landmark theater company for the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dean Preston".

Dean Preston, District 5 Supervisor

## Section One:

**Business / Applicant Information.** Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
The New Conservatory Theatre Center		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S)</b> (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Ed Decker		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
25 Van Ness Ave, Lower Lobby San Francisco, Ca 94102		((415) 861-4914
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
<a href="https://www.nctcsf.org">https://www.nctcsf.org</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/nctcsf/">https://www.facebook.com/nctcsf/</a>	

<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>	
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
	( )
	<b>EMAIL:</b>

<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
1000162	

<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>	
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>	<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>



## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
First Unitarian, 1187 Franklin St	94109	1981
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1981-1985	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
25 Van Ness Ave, Lower Lobby	94102	Start: 1985
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:



## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Ed Decker

9/27/19. ED DECKER

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

## **NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

New Conservatory Theatre Center (NCTC) is the premiere queer and allied theater in San Francisco, at the forefront of LGBTQ+ activist theater and progressive arts education since 1981. NCTC is a creative hub for the queer community, an incubator for new work and emerging artists and a center for innovative arts education and outreach for youth.

NCTC was established on May 19, 1981, and was originally located at The First Unitarian Church at 1187 Franklin Street. Ed Decker was the organization's Founding Artistic Director. The rapid growth of the organization created the need for a larger space, prompting a search for a more permanent location.

In 1985, NCTC moved into its current theatrical home at the Lower Lobby of 25 Van Ness Avenue, consisting of three theaters. The theater spaces had originally served as commercial production studios, however the structure and equipment met NCTC's needs for theatrical production. When the City of San Francisco first acquired the building in the early 1990s, one of their high priorities was to eliminate the theaters. It was after much advocacy and the strong support of Supervisor Roberta Achtenberg that the theaters remained.

During NCTC's tenure there, they have renovated and improved all three theater spaces, installing brand new comfortable seating, electrical systems, sound systems and control booths. In 2016, they undertook an extensive remodel of the lobby, expanding the space and upgrading the bar and patron seating areas.

Today, NCTC is the proud steward of this beautiful tri-stage theater facility. NCTC is the primary theater venue in the Civic Center Arts Corridor, sharing the cultural landscape with the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Ballet and Davies Symphony Hall. The facilities at 25 Van Ness Avenue serve as both a home and a landmark for the LGBTQ+ community, students and theater patrons. Still led by its Founding Artistic Director, Ed Decker, NCTC is a center for exploring and developing work that engages, challenges and captivates.

It is the intention of NCTC to grace San Francisco and the greater Bay Area for decades to come with a legacy of tireless advocacy.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

New Conservatory Theatre Center is honored to have been serving the community for almost 40 years without disruption.

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

The business is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is not a family-owned business.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

Not applicable.

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The historic resource status of the building at 25 Van Ness Avenue is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The structure, known as the Masonic Building, is listed on the California Register of Historic Places and is eligible for listing on the National Register.

## **CRITERION 2**

**a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

Over the last 38 years, under Mr. Decker's vision, NCTC has ushered in many new plays into the canon of queer and allied theater, giving a voice and a platform to diverse playwrights. In the course of NCTC's lifespan, they have produced a total of 28 World Premieres, 62 Regional Premieres and 22 San Francisco Premieres. Ranging in scope from experimental work to musicals and classic works, these are plays by highly acclaimed playwrights such as J.C. Lee, Harrison David Rivers, Del Shores, Jewelle Gomez, Philip Dawkins and Terrence McNally to name a few. In 2002, NCTC launched a new program to commission and develop new plays. Now called New Voices/New Works this robust pipeline of new play commissions has resulted in NCTC producing two world premieres in their most recent season; three are planned for the current season bringing the total to eight in the last five years.

Throughout the years, New Conservatory Theatre Center has produced play after play that embodies its values. Still at Risk recounted the AIDS crisis and the struggle of a surviving



activist, with an in-depth look at the political hazards of the past. In *Leaving the Blues*, the celebrated lesbian blues singer and songwriter Alberta Hunter came to life on stage and took the audience through a heartwarming journey of love and loss. *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* documented how Laramie has changed (or not) over the last decade after the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard. It is this ability to bring communities together while empowering the individual that make NCTC such a valuable gem to the San Francisco arts landscape.

As the premiere theatrical voice for the queer and allied community in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, NCTC has tackled a broad range of issues on their stages that are leading the conversation regarding topics that are timely, cutting edge, controversial and relevant to the LGBTQ+ community and allies. NCTC has continually initiated dialogue in the community and invited younger generations to participate and have their voices heard. Keeping the “New” in New Conservatory Theatre Center is vital to the organization and offers opportunities to continually engage with the community regarding topics of concern. NCTC aims to use storytelling as a tool to advance social change and contribute to a better tomorrow.

**b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

NCTC’s Pride Season has grown from a four show season to a seven show season that includes world and regional premieres, work developed and commissioned by NCTC, classics, dramas, comedies, solo shows and musicals that feature local artisans.

Season to season, the popular NCTC Perks Program continues to actively engage local businesses in mutual discount partnerships that drive clients not only to the theatre but also to neighborhood restaurants and bars. Many of NCTC’s partners also serve as opening night and special event party hosts in exchange for driving NCTC patrons to their Hayes Valley venues – a win-win collaboration. NCTC participates in the beautification, activation and advocacy initiatives of the Civic Center Community Benefit District, most recently as part of the One Oak neighborhood council as well as active supporters of the Hickory Alley Mural and Street Lighting project.

The 2016 remodel of the theater spaces and lobby presented NCTC with yet another opportunity to bring the community together in “The Big Reveal” gala, in which they also celebrated NCTC’s 35th anniversary.

**c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

In 2006, Mayor Gavin Newsom, recognizing NCTC’s immense contribution to the community, declared November 12th to be New Conservatory Theatre Day in San Francisco. In recognition of the legacy of powerful stories told at New Conservatory Theatre Center, KQED publicly recognized Ed Decker in 2011 in the June segment of *Local Heroes*, praising NCTC for stories that document the joy, battles, love, loss, liberation and the continued struggle for equality of the LGBTQ+ community. “The Big Reveal” gala following the remodel of 2016 made the cover of the San Francisco Chronicle’s *Datebook* titled “Basement Theater Takes It Up A Notch.” In response to the remodel, local drag star Katya Smirnoff-Skyy exclaimed, “it’s the most

glamorous basement in all of San Francisco.” NCTC has also been featured in the press highlighting the youth programs and mainstage performances offered throughout the years. Some of these press clippings are included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

More recently, in August 2017, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi recognized NCTC on the occasion of their 36th Anniversary. In October 2019, California State Treasurer Fiona Ma recognized NCTC’s 38 years of groundbreaking service to youth as well as the Queer and Allied Communities.

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

Throughout NCTC’s growth journey, the organization has been fortunate to have had the support of key people that have valued and helped further their work. In 2006, State Senator Mark Leno, a long-time friend and supporter of NCTC over the decades, joined in the celebration of their 25th anniversary. Senator Leno’s history with NCTC goes back to the 1990s when he helped create the very first signage for the building. He was also instrumental in orchestrating the visit from a tour group from Palestine who presented the play *Living Side by Side*. Other influential supporters of NCTC’s work have been Supervisors Tom Ammiano and Scott Weiner, tireless advocates for NCTC’s HIV education programs in San Francisco schools. These programs were the catalyst for SFUSD’s HIV education in schools.

In addition to support from key members of the city, NCTC’s onstage work often depicts the lives and accomplishments of historical figures. These have included politicians such as Harvey Milk, celebrated author James Baldwin, LGBTQ+ activist Cleave Jones, Matthew Shepard, Robert Mapplethorpe, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller and Marga Gomez to name but a few. There are also the stories of many, many unsung individuals making history around the globe every day whose stories are part of NCTC’s repertory on a regular basis.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

In tandem with a provocative mainstage season, NCTC has provided educational theater experiences to thousands of youth and teens over the decades. In fact, since the earliest days of NCTC, educational theater has been at the heart of their mission. NCTC’s initial classes were offered at the First Unitarian Church. The New Conservatory Children’s Theatre Company & School began as a theater program for youth providing progressive arts education that encouraged ensemble building and a platform for students to lift their voices and express their concerns about the world around them. Children met regularly to practice theater and devise their own works. When San Francisco was at the height of the AIDS epidemic, students were receiving very little and inaccurate information regarding HIV/AIDS amidst a culture of fear. In 1986, in response to this crisis, YouthAware was born with the premiere of Patricia Loughrey’s play *The Inner Circle*. The need for HIV/AIDS education was widespread, and YouthAware was invited to perform for students as far as Puerto Rico. The production of *The Inner Circle* toured through Northern California schools through 2008 and has been viewed by over three million teens in over 550 productions worldwide since its publication in 1989.

YouthAware Health & Wellness touring program pioneered the use of theater as a medium to convey age-appropriate information to young people about HIV and AIDS. In support of

YouthAware, NCTC received the Center for Disease Control's first grant for supporting HIV/AIDS education through theatre. By 1990, YouthAware added another HIV/AIDS educational play, Get Real by Doug Holsclaw, which was created specifically for students in 5th through 8th grade. Today, YouthAware presents four productions throughout the school year: Let's Get Galactic for younger students; Real Talk for 4th to 6th graders; Outspoken for middle school and high school; and Scrimmage specifically for high school students. Since its inception, YouthAware has touched more than 500,000 lives.

NCTC's ongoing dedication to the community and the relationships they've built have been key in paving the way for success. NCTC is an anchor for the arts community as well as the queer and allied community, maintaining a reciprocal relationship that links their histories as one. This organization has carved a place for itself in the heart of San Francisco as both a historical icon and a driving force for the future with a legacy of advocacy, activism and action.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

NCTC reaches a diverse annual audience of 33,000+ children, youth, and adults throughout the Bay Area and Northern California. In fiscal year 2019, NCTC's mainstage performances reached 15,533 audience members. Their educational programs combined served a total of 18,309 youth through productions, onsite/offsite classes, camps and family performances. NCTC's education programs are offered in tandem with scholarship/tuition assistance, which ensure that no child is turned away for lack of funds.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

The building structure on 25 Van Ness was designed by Walter Danforth Bliss and William Baker Faville on request of the Freemasons. The cornerstone was laid in 1911 by Freemason William Crocker and dedicated in 1913 following a parade of 8,000 Masons and Knights Templar on horseback. It served as a Masonic Temple for the San Francisco charter of the Free and Accepted Masons until 1958 when they relocated to Nob Hill.

Primarily Italian-Gothic in design with a Romanesque arched entrance, the building was renovated in 1984, brought up to code and remodeled for office use. Some notable features that still remain from the original construction are the many sculptures throughout. The entrance is framed by an elegant sculpture featuring three allegorical figures in relief by New York Sculptor Adolph Alexander Weinman, representing Veritas, Caritas and Fortitudo. Below this sculpture is a row of nine smaller figures by San Francisco artist Ralph Stackpole. The southeast corner of the building features a sculpture of King Solomon also by Weinman and Stackpole.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

The Bay Area would receive a terrible blow to its cultural sector should New Conservatory Theater Center not be a part of the San Francisco artistic landscape. NCTC's mainstage season has been a voice for the queer community and its allies for more almost four decades. Over the years, NCTC has paved the way for the LGBTQ+ community through consistent activism and



advocacy. The ability to remain aware of current events has always given NCTC an advantage in supporting the queer and allied community through its educational programs as well as the mainstage productions. For the queer and allied community, NCTC is a second home, a refuge, a playground and a platform for change. For youth, NCTC is a home in which to discover new friends, ideas and creativity, and a place to safely explore identity and just be themselves. For San Francisco, New Conservatory Theatre Center is a gift.

### **CRITERION 3**

#### **a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

The mission of the New Conservatory Theatre Center is to champion innovative, high quality productions and educational theater experiences for youth, artists and the queer and allied communities to effect personal and societal growth, enlightenment and change. Their vision is that theater is a community event and a way to build community.

NCTC stages seven shows per season, ranging in scope from world premieres and experimental work to musicals, revivals and classic works from the queer canon. Feeding this work is New Voices/New Works, a dynamic pipeline of new play commissions.

Over the last four decades, New Conservatory Theatre Center's education programs have grown to serve thousands of Bay Area students annually. NCTC's theatre education programs provide the Bay Area with high quality youth productions, theatre training and standards-based theatre education through the following:

- **Youth Conservatory** provides classes and camps to K-12 students throughout the year at NCTC's Civic Center complex.
- **Satellite Drama Education Program** brings theatre education residencies to K-8 students that attend San Francisco afterschool and community-based programs.
- **Vocational Internship Program** affords opportunities for students ages 13-18 to learn new skills, gain professional theatre experience and earn monetary compensation as actors and stage managers in NCTC's Family Matinee Series.
- **Family Matinee Series**, an annual set of two popular children's plays and musicals presented at NCTC for young audiences and their families.
- **Identity Matters**, a program directly tailored to the needs of today's high school students. Teaching artists facilitate each session as students learn about identity, acceptance and empathy for one another through devised theatre techniques.
- **YouthAware Health & Wellness Education** is an innovative touring program which uses a theatre-in-education model to present age-appropriate theatre productions in order to raise awareness around issues such as bullying, discrimination, homophobia and HIV/AIDS to students in grades K-12. Since its inception, this program has touched more than 500,000 lives.

NCTC's breadth of diverse programming, history of service, youth arts education programming and exploration into LGBT-themed theater pieces are unmatched in the Bay Area and indeed the country.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

New Conservatory Theatre Center is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as an LGBTQ+ activist theater and purveyor of progressive arts education. Over the decades the metamorphosis from New Conservatory Children's Theatre Company & School into New Conservatory Theatre Center has been both arduous and extremely rewarding. Their commitment to the queer and allied community has been consistent and ever present, as demonstrated by their 40 year track record.

In order to maintain its historical character, New Conservatory Theater will continue to support its groundbreaking YouthAware Health & Wellness Program and Conservatory Programs. NCTC will continue to be a creative hub for the queer and allied community, encouraging emerging artists and producing new work for the queer cannon. These are the traditions that have permanently embedded NCTC into the San Francisco landscape and will not change.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

Some notable features that should be preserved:

- The entrance is framed by an elegant sculpture featuring three allegorical figures in relief by New York Sculptor Adolph Alexander Weinman, representing Veritas, Caritas and Fortitudo.
- Below this sculpture is a row of nine smaller figures by San Francisco artist Ralph Stackpole representing various catholic saints and biblical persons.
- The southeast corner of the building features a sculpture of King Solomon also by Weinman and Stackpole. The canopy is adorned with sculptures angels and allegorical figures representing The Builder, Social Order, Reverence for Beauty and Reverence for the Mystery of the Heavens.

**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a theater for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application."







25 VAN NESS





NEW CONSERVATORY  
THEATRE CENTER

James L. Doran Leaky

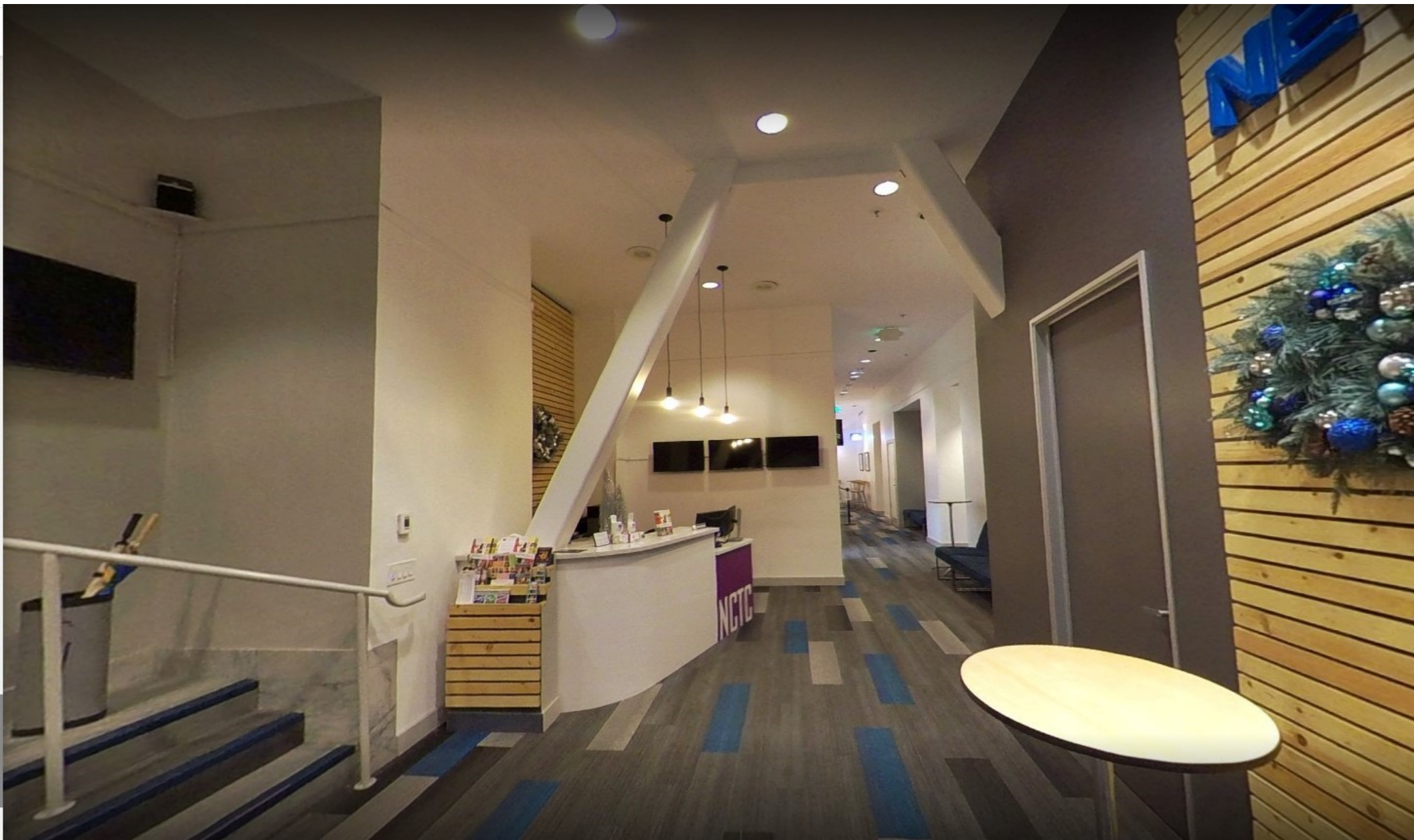


# NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER

James L. Goran Lobby

Facebook  
Twitter  
Instagram  
LinkedIn  
Website







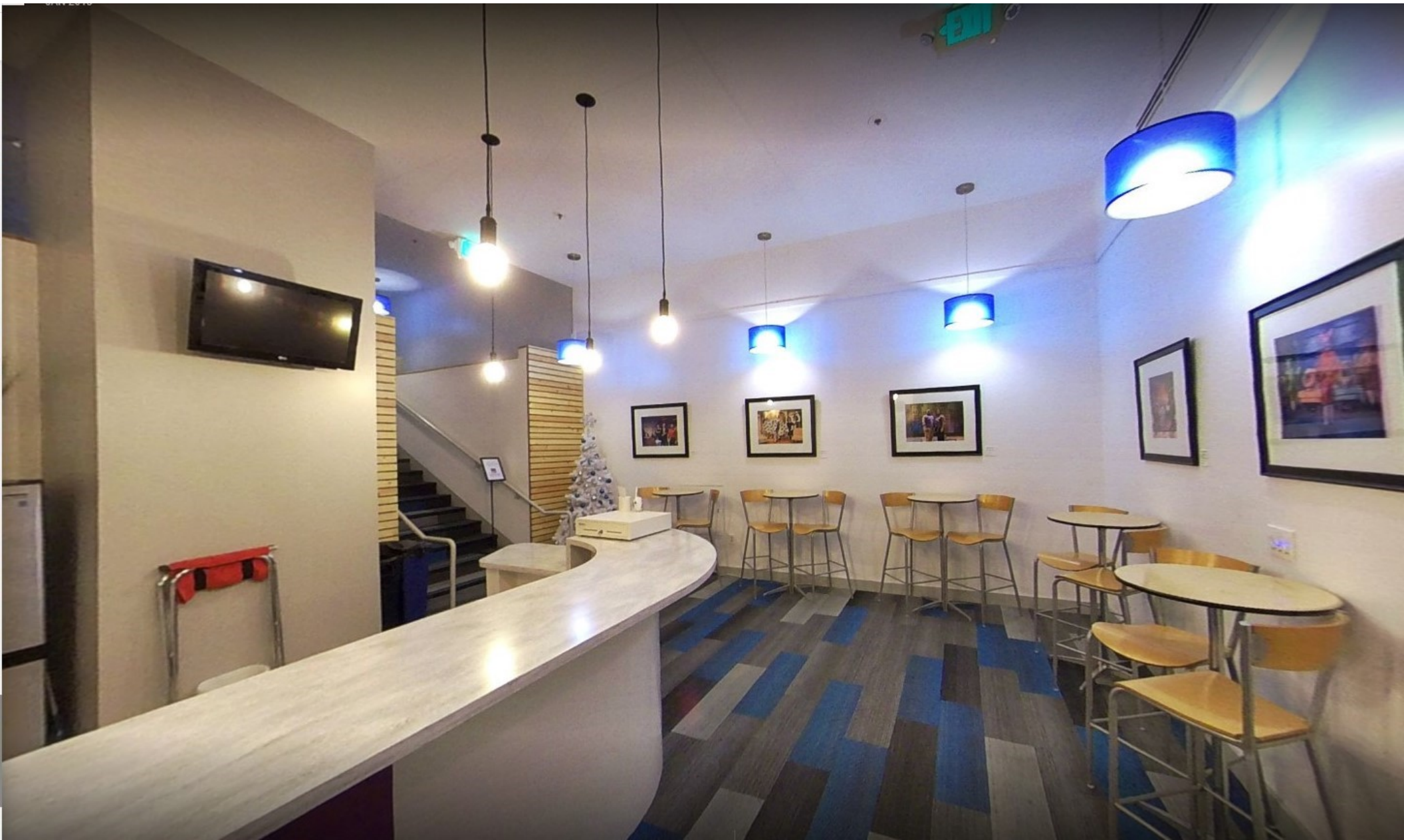


Mason's  
BAR



NCTC













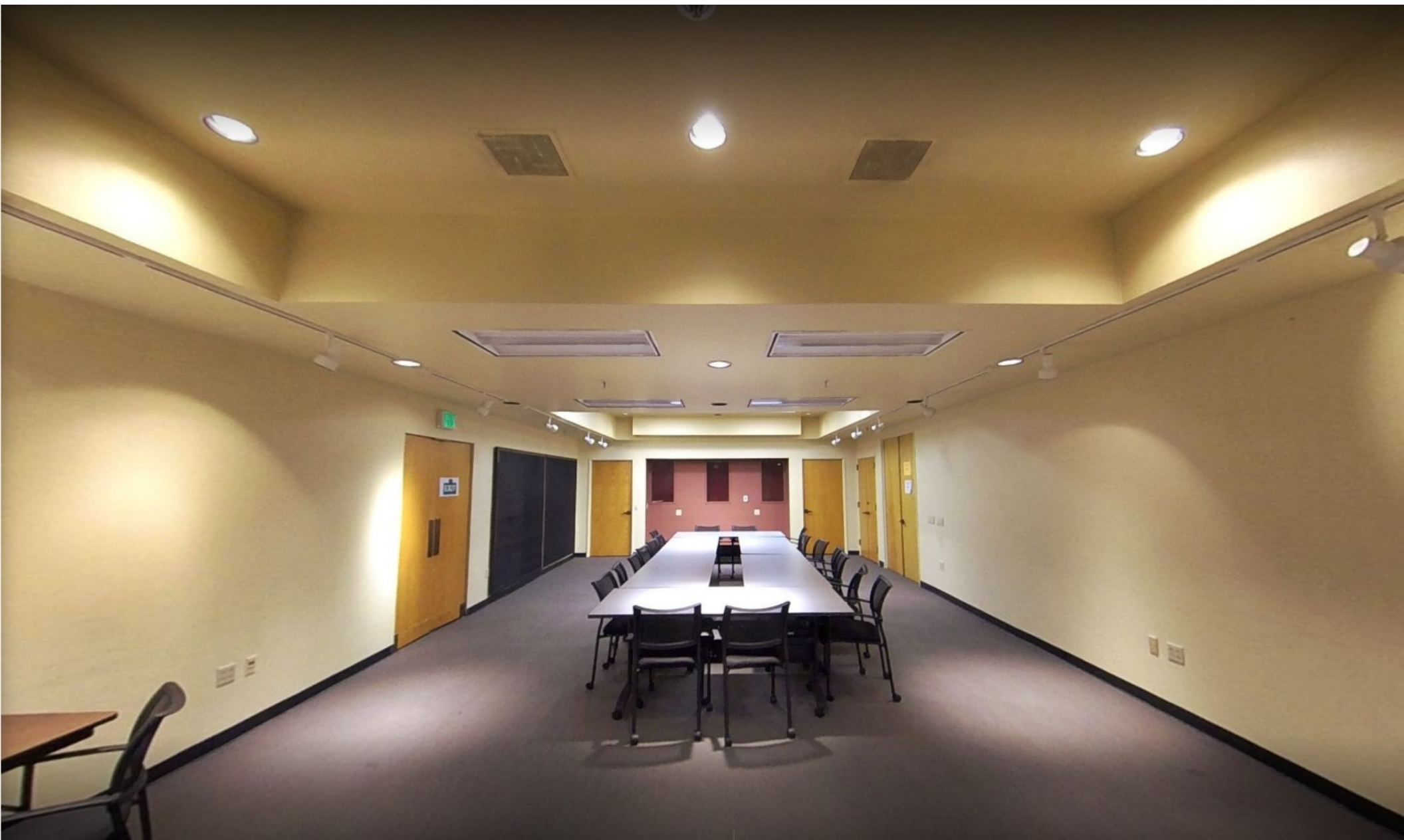












# New Conservatory Theatre Center

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**The New Conservatory Theatre Center** is a not-for-profit theatre company located in San Francisco, California. NCTC showcases an eight-show Pride Season, an In-Concert/Cabaret Series, Family Theatre performances, *YouthAware* Touring Educational Theatre, and an Emerging Artists program. NCTC also houses a comprehensive Conservatory for youth and adults.<sup>[1]</sup> It is located in San Francisco at 25 Van Ness Avenue, near Market Street.



Entrance to NCTC

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## Organizational history

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Founded in 1981 as a small theatre arts conservatory for low-income youth by Ed Decker (a former director of the American Conservatory Theater's Young Conservatory), NCTC has been in operation for 31 years. In 1986, as a response to the AIDS epidemic sweeping the nation and heavily concentrated in San Francisco, Decker created the landmark *YouthAware* Touring Educational Theatre program which has since expanded to address an array of health and wellness concerns, been translated into five languages, and achieved national and international recognition. To date, more than 4.5 million youth in the U.S., Germany, Australia, South Africa, Holland, and the U.K. have seen *YouthAware* Theatre in Education programs in their schools and communities.<sup>[2]</sup> In 2004, Decker received the STOP AIDS Award for his work.

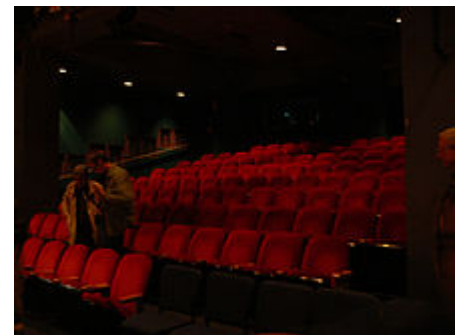
In 1995, Decker premiered the first Pride Season, a series of LGBT-themed performances that has since caught the eye of many renowned LGBT and Allied playwrights and directors. Decker has developed and/or premiered plays for NCTC's main stage with artists such as Norman Allen, Terrence McNally,<sup>[3]</sup> Edmund White,<sup>[4]</sup> Joe Mantello, Mark Cannistraro, Mart Crowley, Jack Heifner, Hal Corley, Felice Picano, Brad Fraser, David Marshall Grant, Jeff Baron, Kevin Elyot, Jonathan Harvey, Jewelle Gomez, and Lee Blessing.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Summary of programs

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NCTC's current activities fall under three main categories: Theatre productions and new play development, Conservatory training, and the *YouthAware* Educational Theatre Program.<sup>[6]</sup>

### *Theatre Productions*



Auditorium of an NCTC stage

NCTC's theatre performance program is anchored around their mainstage season, an eleven-month season featuring an average of eight plays and musicals. Plays are selected based on their examination of LGBT issues as they relate to our current world. NCTC also houses a Family Matinee program, featuring performances designed for children 4-10 and their families.

### ***New Play Development Lab and Emerging Artists Program***

In 2002, NCTC's New Play Development Lab was created to commission and develop new work to expand the canon of LGBT-themed plays, give voice to new and diverse playwrights, and add to the list of over 40 world premieres NCTC has produced since 1981. NCTC commissions, develops, and premieres approximately one new play each season, in addition one new play for young audiences ever 36 months to tour as part of the *YouthAware* Educational Theatre Program. Since the inception of the New Plays Development Lab in 2002, NCTC has commissioned several new plays, including *Crucifixion* by four-time Tony Award-winning playwright Terrence McNally.<sup>[7]</sup> NCTC Emerging Artists Program is a commissioning residency to develop and produce new work by emerging actors, singers, and writers, and to nurture the next generation of playwrights expanding the canon of queer and allied works.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Conservatory Program**

The New Conservatory Theatre Center provides year-round theatre training classes to young people across San Francisco County

### **In-House Conservatory for Youth**

NCTC offers classes for students of all ages in acting, singing, musical theatre, and playwrighting at their downtown San Francisco location, serving about 200 youth annually.

### **Satellite Drama Program**

CTC sends fifteen highly qualified drama instructors into San Francisco County Public Schools, offering a wide range of after school theatre arts classes in locations convenient to participants and their families. All conservatory programs at NCTC meet the California Standards for Arts Education

### **Vocational Training Program**

paid internships and positions are offered to interested students ages 13-19. Students are employed as teaching assistants, assistant stage managers, assistant directors, and technical theatre assistants. This program serves 7-12 students annually.

### **Adult Classes**

NCTC has offered Conservatory classes for adults in scene study, improvisation, singing, and playwrighting.

### **YouthAware Educational Theatre**

*YouthAware* is an eight-show repertoire of plays, educational materials, workshops, and structured discussions facilitated both in house and toured throughout Northern California school districts, community centers, shelters and juvenile justice facilities. *YouthAware* programs reach over 20,000 youth per year, using performing arts as a vehicle for examining such issues as HIV Awareness and Prevention, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Homophobia, violence, Hate Crimes, Body Image, and Diversity.<sup>[6][9]</sup>

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## External links

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- [New Conservatory Theatre Center website \(http://www.nctcsf.org/\)](http://www.nctcsf.org/)
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October 23, 1987

Third in a series on alternative theaters

# Children's theater not all play

By JOSEPH W. BEAN  
Theater Critic

**C**HILDREN'S THEATER. Those words bring to mind audiences of doting parents ready to applaud whether Johnny remembers his piece or not. There is probably as much of that kind of "theater" in San Francisco as there is in any American city, but we also have The New Conservatory Children's Theatre Company (TNC).

Now entering its seventh year, The New Conservatory is the local home of professional-quality theater produced by young people for young people and their families. And, perhaps most importantly, the shows include many original scripts about issues that concern children, ages four to 19.

TNC has produced a number of pure entertainment plays such as the musical "Snoopy, Really Rosie" by Maurice Sendak, and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Nightingale."

"But, there is already ample escapist entertainment around in films and on television," says Ed Decker, founder of the Conservatory, "so we like to do shows that encourage the kids to think."

Some of the things TNC students have thought about, and done plays about, include social and political freedom (in a play adapted from "The Animal Farm"), ecology and nuclear holocaust ("Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants"), and the lives of latchkey kids ("Nobody Home").

They have also produced a play about kids who run from home and another, called "Nicaragua/USA," about being "children of revolution."

Last year's think piece was "The Inner Circle," subtitled "a story of teenage friendships and the AIDS crisis." It sparked a good deal of controversy and others have too.

"When we had done "The Animal Farm" and "Nicaragua/USA," " Decker says, "I think some people were beginning to call us Communists."

Parents whose children are not Conservatory students may suspect that such plays are imposed on the young actors and actresses by adults. They are not.

In fact, it was a coalition of parents who "just about demanded" that Decker establish the New Conservatory when Bill Ball cancelled the Young Conservatory program at ACT.

The parents trusted Decker, and one of the ways he has remained true to their trust is his method for selecting and developing plays.

When a play is not just a pleasant entertainment, it is usually a new script, one that is, in effect, developed in the acting group. "The Inner Circle" had to contain accurate information about AIDS, of course, and there had to be a starting point, so a script by Patricia Loughery was accepted.

The playwright workshopped the play, re-writing it all the time, for nine months. By the end of that time — a period that would be considered an unheard-of luxury in adult theater — the script was effectively "by

Patricia Loughery and the Children's Theatre Company."

"We were sure we had the teen point of view worked into "The Inner Circle" before it was finally presented," Decker says.

Besides producing plays and presenting them in the Zephyr Theatre Complex, where TNC is now housed, the overall Conservatory program includes extensive, graduated training for all levels of skill and experience in all areas of the dramatic arts. TNC is also, as of this year, a touring company. They have been invited to tour Puerto Rico with their AIDS play. And, although the Conservatory is not a booking agency and does not provide personal management



Patrick McCracken and Julian Brooks in a scene from "The Inner Circle," a production of the New Conservatory Children's Theatre Company.

services, Decker says, "we hold the hands of our people all the way through the process the first time or two when they get jobs. After that, we try to help them find an agent."

While the almost-parental care that Decker and his staff give budding careers may not be visible on stage, it has everything to do with the good will and comfort that makes the Conservatory workable for young people.

So, maybe it is visible after all, just in the calm, cool, professional way the actors present themselves and play their roles.

For information about The New Conservatory's training programs, classes, scholarships and productions, call 861-4915.



# Getting real about AIDS

Play uses fast-paced humor to sell AIDS education to young audience

By Jane Ganahl  
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

Overhearing sixth graders talk about AIDS can yield a wealth of misinformation.

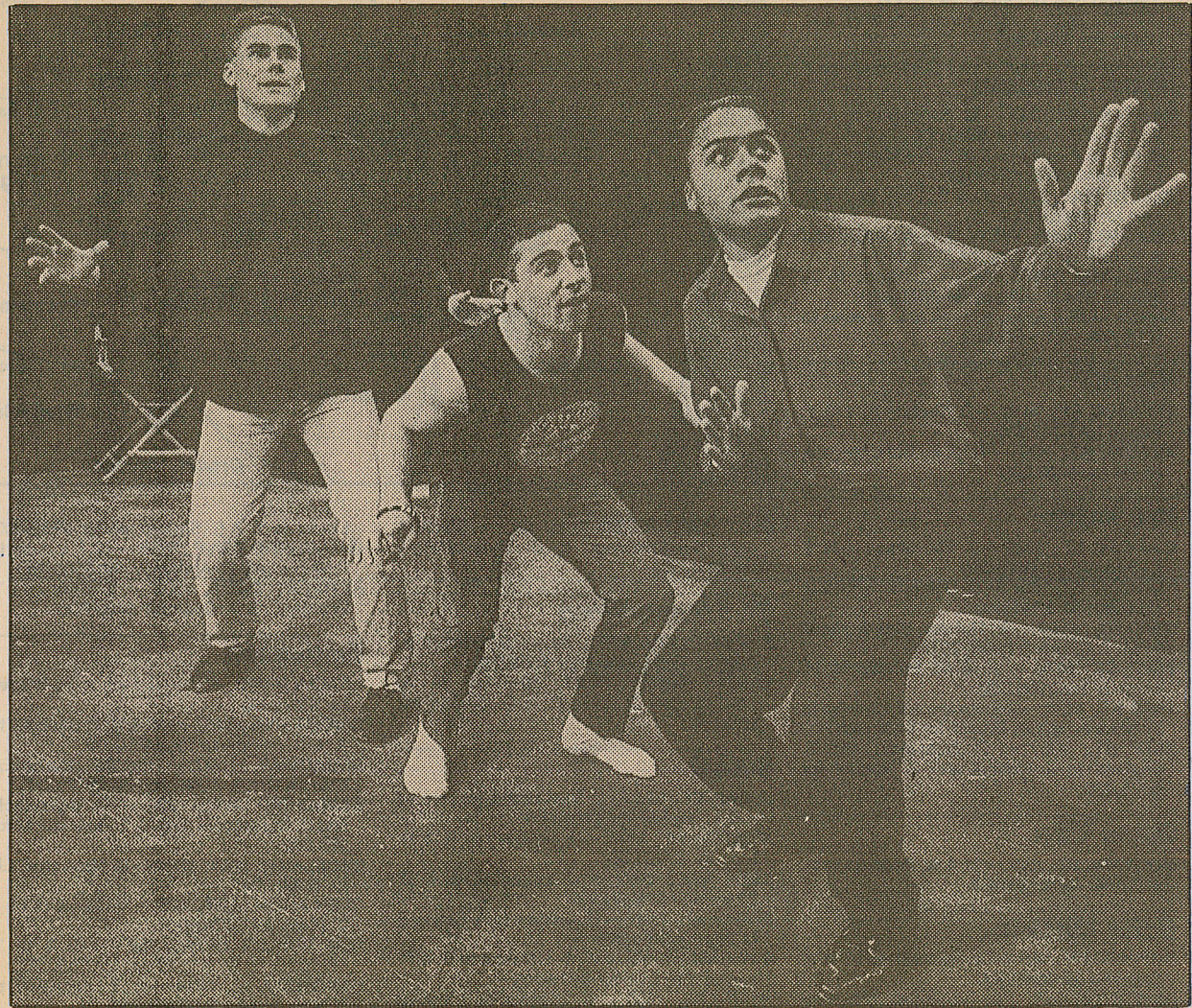
"Diana says you can get it like the flu."

"No, but you *can* get it from kissing."

"Nah... the only way is from getting blood in an operation."

San Francisco's New Conservatory Children's Theater and School, sensing the urgent need for facts, will open a new and timely play, "Get Real," on Friday. By the time the 35-minute play completes its runs at the Zephyr Theater Complex and in The City's public schools, it should clarify some points.

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and targeted at pre-sexually active fifth through eighth graders, "Get Real" is fast, frenetic and funny — a sort of "Saturday Night Live" for "tweenies." The five young performers play a variety of roles, take-offs on celebrities such as Vanna White, Hulk Hogan, Tiffany and more.



EXAMINER PHOTOS BY PAUL CHINN

Cast members, left to right, Patrick McCracken, Jordan Winer and Julian Brooks rehearse "Get Real."



# Revisiting 'The Laramie Project'

Play looks at murder of Matthew Shepard 10 years later.

By Donald Munro  
The Fresno Bee

When Moises Kaufman unveiled his theater piece "The Laramie Project" in 2000, it helped capture the angst that a nation felt over the brutal 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard. The play, based on interviews with people in Laramie, Wyo., became part of the battle cry against homophobia. (Fresno State mounted a compelling production in 2006.)

Kaufman followed up the original play in an installment titled "10 Years Later," returning to Laramie with members of his Tectonic Theater Project to interview Laramie residents once again, along with Shepard's two convicted killers. The San Francisco-based New Conservatory Theatre Center brings its touring production, which debuted March 23, to Fresno for two performances.

We caught up via email with director Sara Staley to talk about "The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later."

**Did Kaufman use the same structure as the original for this follow-up piece in terms of actors portraying both themselves and townspeople on stage?**

"The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later" debuted as a reading at nearly 150 theaters across the U.S. and internationally on Oct. 12, 2009 — the 11th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder. The Tectonic Theater Project held their production at the Alice Tully Hall in The Lincoln Center in New York, where company members did play themselves as well as other people in the town. The New Conservatory production features a very talented cast of four men



The San Francisco-based New Conservatory Theatre Center brings "The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later" to the Unitarian Universalist Church Saturday and Sunday.

SPECIAL TO THE BEE

## THEATER PREVIEW

**"The Laramie Project: 10 Years Later,"** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave., Clovis. nctcsf.org, (559) 325-4429. \$15, \$7.50 students and seniors.

## MORE ONLINE

For an extended interview with Sara Staley, go to [fresnobeehive.com](http://fresnobeehive.com).

and four women who play over 30 roles, including Tectonic Theater Project members.

### How did you prepare?

As a director, there is an abundance of material available to immerse yourself in the world of the play because it's based on actual events and the "characters" are real people. Matthew Shepard's murder resonates with me on many levels. We were born the same year, and he

was killed the same year that I graduated from the theater department at UCLA. Since 2001, I've been the director of the YouthAware Educational Theatre program at NCTC, where we use theater to educate young audiences about issues like HIV prevention, bullying, homophobia, diversity, respect and school safety.

**I understand that a narrative among some of the Laramie townspeople has risen over the years that Shepard's murder wasn't a hate crime but a drug deal gone bad.**

Yes, the play references a "20/20" episode that came out in 2004, which implied that Matthew Shepard's murder wasn't necessarily a hate crime, but could have just been drug, money or sex related. ... We watched the "20/20" episode in its entirety as a company, and it

brought up a lot of emotions with my cast and crew. Because "20/20" is a "respected" news source, it shows the power that the media's interpretation has in this story, as well. I think the bottom line is that the brutality of the crime itself reflects more than just a robbery or drug deal gone bad.

### Is the play a more optimistic piece than the original?

I think the "Ten Years Later" play is a call to action. The need to continue to tell this story is evident in how issues of LGBT equality still dominate much of our political discourse. This play deals with issues like the Defense of Marriage Act and the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Issues that resonate with every community in every city in every state.

As noted in the play, "Laramie is just like my town." The microscope was placed over this com-

munity after Matthew's murder, but we all need to examine the issues reflected in the play and ask ourselves if our community is one that accepts everyone no matter who they are, what they look like or what they believe in.

### Anything else you'd like to add?

A big part of "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later" is opening up a dialogue on issues that might be otherwise difficult to approach. Our audiences play an important part in that dialogue. All of our touring performances will feature post-show discussions with myself and the cast, so I encourage community members in Fresno to help us spread the word about these shows, and to come see the play and lend their voices to the discussion afterwards.

► The reporter can be reached at [dmunro@fresnobee.com](mailto:dmunro@fresnobee.com) or (559) 441-6373.



Advertisement

San Francisco (/news/san-francisco)

## Inside 25 Van Ness, A Repurposed Masonic Temple



*Photos: Griffin Estes/Hoodline*

**by Griffin Estes**

**@mackgriffin**

February 11, 2015

On Van Ness and Oak stands a striking building that now houses a host of municipal services in addition to a fascinating history.

Prominent architects Bliss & Faville, known for designing the St. Francis Hotel, the Savings Union Bank, and Geary theater, designed the building (<http://www.artandarchitecture-sf.com/the-masonic-temple-25-van->

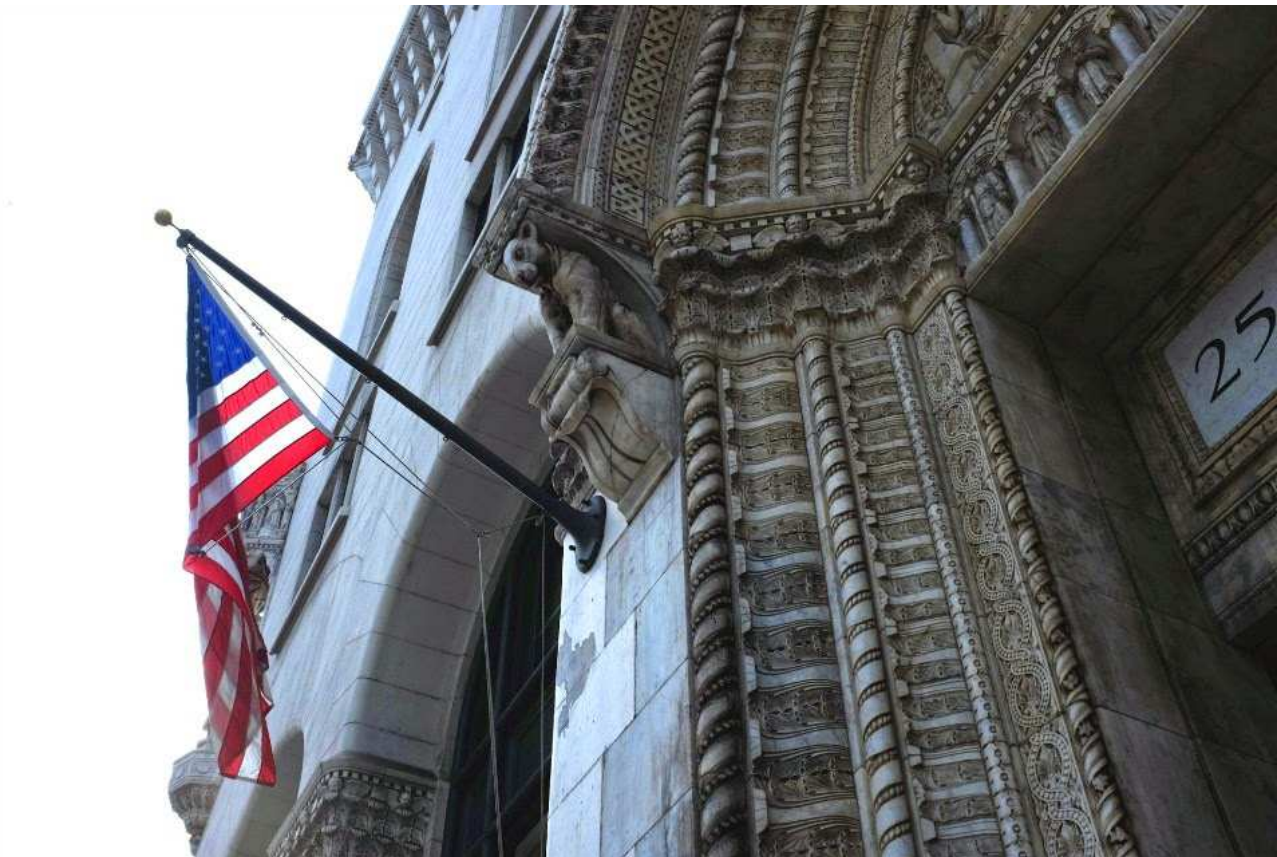




29))— laid the cornerstone and “two years later the building was dedicated amidst a grand parade of 8,000 Masons, with Knights Templar on horseback” (Heritage Newsletter, Winter 1982).

The Crocker family was one of the big financiers of the reconstruction of San Francisco after the earthquake of 1906. (The Crocker-Amazon neighborhood of San Francisco holds their namesake—they once had significant land holdings in the neighborhood.)

Public records relating to the construction and renovation of the building indicate that the exterior of building is based upon “late medieval and early renaissance Italianate forms” allegedly “reminiscent of Palazzo Vecchio”.



The interior design of the original building was in keeping with the secretive and ritualistic aura of the Masons. The halls were dark and somber. The walls of the halls were completely detached from the outside walls of the



building, and the windows on the outside of the building opened into a three-foot shaftway of space, designed to further protect the secrecy of the organization.

The building today still holds signs of its of the Masons that occupied it in the past. For example, at the gates there appears a 'G' with a square and compass, a common Masonic symbol ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square\\_and\\_Compasses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_and_Compasses)).



Although the building has undergone significant renovations, the remnants of the old grand rooms still exist. Originally the building had four floors (or seven if you count the three floors of mezzanines). The mezzanine floors have now been filled and a penthouse has been added. There were five Lodges, which were two-story rooms organized according to the dictates of Masonic ritual, with benches along the walls and officers' chairs and a podium at the front. In two of the Lodges there were organ lofts, which in 1984 still existed (although sans the organ pipes).

In the 1950s, interest in Freemasonry waned in San Francisco and Lodges gradually moved out through the '60s and '70s until the building was practically unused. It was sold by the Masonic Temple Association in 1978.

Renovation of the building began in 1984, making it more amenable for offices. The building was brought up to code and the domed-window structure at the top of the building was replaced after it had been taken down earlier in the century. Windows were added on the fourth and sixth floors, replacing terra-cotta panels depicting Masonic imagery.





Originally there had been a “Commandry” on the top floor, which was something akin to an atrium, but used for specific purposes relating to Masonry. The window was taken down but then replaced during the renovation.

Still adorning the entryway is an arched portal with the allegorical figures of Veritas (Truth), Caritas (Compassion) and Fortitudo (Fortitude) framed by an intricately carved voussoir. The southeast corner of the building’s façade still bears the building's signature statue of King Solomon, which is visible from both the east and south sides of the building, casting a contemplative air over Muni riders waiting for the 49 and 47-Van Ness.



Photo: Bruce Bortin/Flickr

(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dumbeast/1863654517/in/photolist-qmoEgk-6bzhUc-bXMvy-3QFGN4-5ASoE6-8iCA9P-8dnUSo-aqHakM-aqH9F8-6RbiCe-4macHA-oC6Rq-bAyjcs-63AAzZ-63AAwz-63ERkj-63ERj7-fAY5CR-5yM5gR-fAY5z8-5xx3Qi-3QFHyr>)

Today, the building is occupied by many valuable municipal services such as the Rent Board (<http://sfrb.org/>), Arts Commission (<http://www.sfartscommission.org/>), Department of Public Health (<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/default.asp>), Project Homeless Connect (<http://www.projecthomelessconnect.org/>), Veterans Service Office



(<http://www.sfhsa.org/134.htm>) and the New Conservatory Theater (<http://www.nctcsf.org/>). And, though 25 Van Ness can feel a bit incongruous amongst the buildings that surround it, its history and ornate classical style make it a quintessentially "Civic Center" fixture.



**Neighborhoods**

Civic Center (</neighborhoods/civic-center>), Hayes Valley (</neighborhoods/hayes-valley>)

**Trending**



<https://www.ebar.com/news///246453>

# The BAY AREA REPORTER

*Serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities since 1971*

## SF LGBT theater remodels its lobby space

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by Matthew S. Bajko

Wednesday Jul 20, 2016



An artist's rendering shows plans for the renovated lobby area at the New Conservatory Theatre Center. Photo: Courtesy NCTC

With the aim of improving the aesthetic experience for its audiences, as well as seeing an uptick in revenues, a San Francisco-based LGBT theater company is remodeling its lobby, bar, and box office areas.

The 35-year-old New Conservatory Theatre Center is housed in the basement of the city-owned building at 25 Van Ness near Market Street. Its underground location and cramped entryway has lacked the environment that induces ticket holders to want to meet up for cocktails prior to shows or linger after a performance.



"That is exactly what everybody says," acknowledged Barbara Hodgen, the nonprofit theater's executive director the last five years. "We want a more inviting, comfortable space for our patrons."

The entryway is shaped like a barbell, noted Hodgen, with hallways leading to larger spaces on the left and right sides and a box office in the middle. The remodel, which will use a blue color scheme, natural wood elements, and feature a video wall, aims to make better use of the configuration and brighten up the interior spaces.

"We have always had traffic flow problems in the lobby because the box office sticks out into it," she said. "We are moving the box office to create a much more welcoming space and people will be able to better circulate in it."

The box office will be reconstructed in the space where the bar has been to the left side of the entranceway. And off to the right of the entranceway will be a new small presentation area fronting the doorways to the main theater.

The theater company experimented during its just finished season with how to better program that space. It held audience talks, trivia nights, lectures, and special performances and plans to continue such events in the remodeled space.

"We want to also utilize the lobby much more as a community resource and a place to have conversations and community-related events," said Hodgen. "Once we stop talking to each other, everything starts to fall apart."

As for the bar, it is being relocated to the end of the left-side hallway. It will be built where a conference room has been at the bottom of the steps leading up to a donors' lounge. Drawings of the new space show it sporting blue-colored sofas and bar stools, lighting fixtures and flooring.

By creating a more inviting bar space for patrons, the theater's leaders hope to increase sales. It operates on an annual budget of nearly \$1.5 million.

"Definitely, that is one of my hopes as the person who balances the books," said Hodgen. "As far as the mission goes, it is more about creating a comfortable patron and community experience. In terms of financially supporting that mission, yeah, I am hoping the bar picks up."

Work on the \$300,000 remodel project, funded through a capital campaign the theater undertook, began this week. On Sunday, July 17, the theater closed its offices for seven days and shuttered its box office, which is expected to reopen Wednesday, August 3, due to the construction commencing.

The revamp is scheduled to last two months and finish by September 15. The public reveal is being timed to the theater's planned 35th anniversary celebration it is holding Saturday, October 1. Its new season will kick off days later.

Although Hodgen described the work as "a fairly small renovation" that involves "primarily new carpeting and paint," it is the most extensive work the theater has undertaken outside of remodeling the interiors of its two smaller theaters and main theater.

"We are looking forward to how our patrons will react and how our students will react," said Hodgen, as the theater runs various programs for budding youth actors.

CoBuild Construction Services, based in Castro Valley, is handling the build out. The theater last year partnered with El Cerrito-based FOG Studio, led by architects Tiffany Redding and Brandon Marshall, to design the remodel.

The firm donated its services through a program known as 1-Plus, which challenges designers to dedicate 1 percent or more of their working hours to pro bono service and connects nonprofits with pro bono design services.

On its website, it described the theater lobby project as using "colorful wayfinding" and introducing different "scales" to the space.

"The design also opens up what is currently a very crowded lobby space before, during and after shows," it explained. "The mission is to create a place where theatre patrons will dwell, bring their kids and support the center's mission."

In an interview this week, Redding said they at first explored a speakeasy vibe for the underground space. But since the theater company attracts as many youth as it does adult patrons, they opted for a more modern take.

"It ended up fitting them better. It is a really clean, fresh look for the interior," she said. "It had last been worked on in the 1980s. We wanted to really strip away all those angles and muddy colors."

Andrew Jordan Nance, a past director of the theater who now sits on its board, told the *Bay Area Reporter* he is confident the project will achieve those goals.

"The lobby and bar remodel will create a space that is current, welcoming, and have a much better flow to it than ever before," said Nance.



<https://www.sfgate.com/performance/article/New-Conservatory-Theatre-unveils-new-lobby-to-9554413.php>

# San Francisco Chronicle

## New Conservatory Theatre unveils new lobby to mark 35th birthday

By [Beth Spotswood](#)  
Monday, October 3, 2016



The James L. Coran Lobby, at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016 in San Francisco, Calif. A gala was held that celebrated the LGBT company's 35th anniversary, as well as the unveiling of its newly renovated lobby. Photo: Santiago Mejia, Special To The Chronicle.

Two young women dressed as extraterrestrials passed plates of hors d'oeuvres as a bevy of dramatically attired guests awaited their tour of the basement of 25 Van Ness Ave.

“It is the most glamorous basement in all of San Francisco,” gushed local drag star Katya Smirnoff-Sky. “And as we know, anything that happens in a basement must be good.”

Saturday night’s Big Reveal gala was just that — the first reveal of the newly redesigned basement lobby of the New Conservatory Theatre Center. And for the first hour, guests at the theater’s 35th anniversary bash weren’t even allowed downstairs. Over sparkling wine and egg rolls passed by aliens, guests chatted in the marble entrance of the building. Two security guards sat behind their desk, completely unfazed by the gala elbowing its way around them.

The New Conservatory Theatre Center is housed in the basement of 25 Van Ness. For decades, theatergoers and theater students have made their way through that marble lobby and down a rather fabulous marble staircase to a decidedly unimpressive basement theater lobby. Purple walls and an awkward box office weren’t doing the NCTC any favors.

Author Jewelle Gomez joked of the former space, “The feng shui was not happening.”



Ed Decker, the founding artistic director, gives opening remarks to guests at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016 in San Francisco, Calif. A gala was held that celebrated the LGBT company's 35th anniversary, as well as the unveiling of its newly renovated lobby. Photo: Santiago Mejia, Special To The Chronicle.





A silent auction is held at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016 in San Francisco, Calif. A gala was held that celebrated the LGBT company's 35th anniversary, as well as the unveiling of its newly renovated lobby. Photo: Santiago Mejia, Special To The Chronicle.

Standing in her brand-new basement lobby on a modern, clean carpet, NCTC Executive Director **Barbara Hodgen** was delighted with the overhaul. “This gives us a little more space to work on our audience engagement,” she said. “Anyway, the 1980s called and wanted their paint colors back.”

Named for longtime donor **James L. Coran**, the now open and bright lobby serves three theater spaces and administrative offices. Sleek wood panels make up a ticket booth and a donor wall. At the far end of the lobby, Mason’s Bar offers refreshments.

“When you’re in the theater, you have to kind of behave yourself,” said the company’s founding Artistic Director **Ed Decker**. “But out here, you don’t have to. You can misbehave in our lobby.”

Thanks to a program called 1-Plus, the design of the lobby was donated entirely by El Cerrito’s FOG Studios. 1-Plus pairs architects who wish to donate at least 1 percent of their services with deserving and very lucky nonprofits. “I’m very pleased there’s no lavender anymore,” smirked Smirnoff-Sky as she eyed the lobby’s now understated palette.

NCTC doesn’t often throw fundraising parties. In fact, the Saturday, Oct. 1, \$125-a-head event was the company’s first real gala. Considering the theater’s rookie status as party planner, the Big Reveal was a big success. Patrons meandered through their new lobby

and favorite theaters to snack on the popular meatballs from Hayes Valley's Noir Lounge and spicy sweet potato chips from the hot newish Cala Restaurant nearby. Meanwhile, an eclectic array of performers treated guests to live, pop-up theater.

At one point, a diva sporting a bouffant, a hard hat and a safety vest belted "We Built This City" into a microphone while running through the lobby. She gleefully changed the words to "We Built This Lobby," while wrapping herself in construction tape.

"Even though we're 35 years old," explained Decker, "we want to keep the 'new' very vibrant at the New Conservatory Theatre Company."

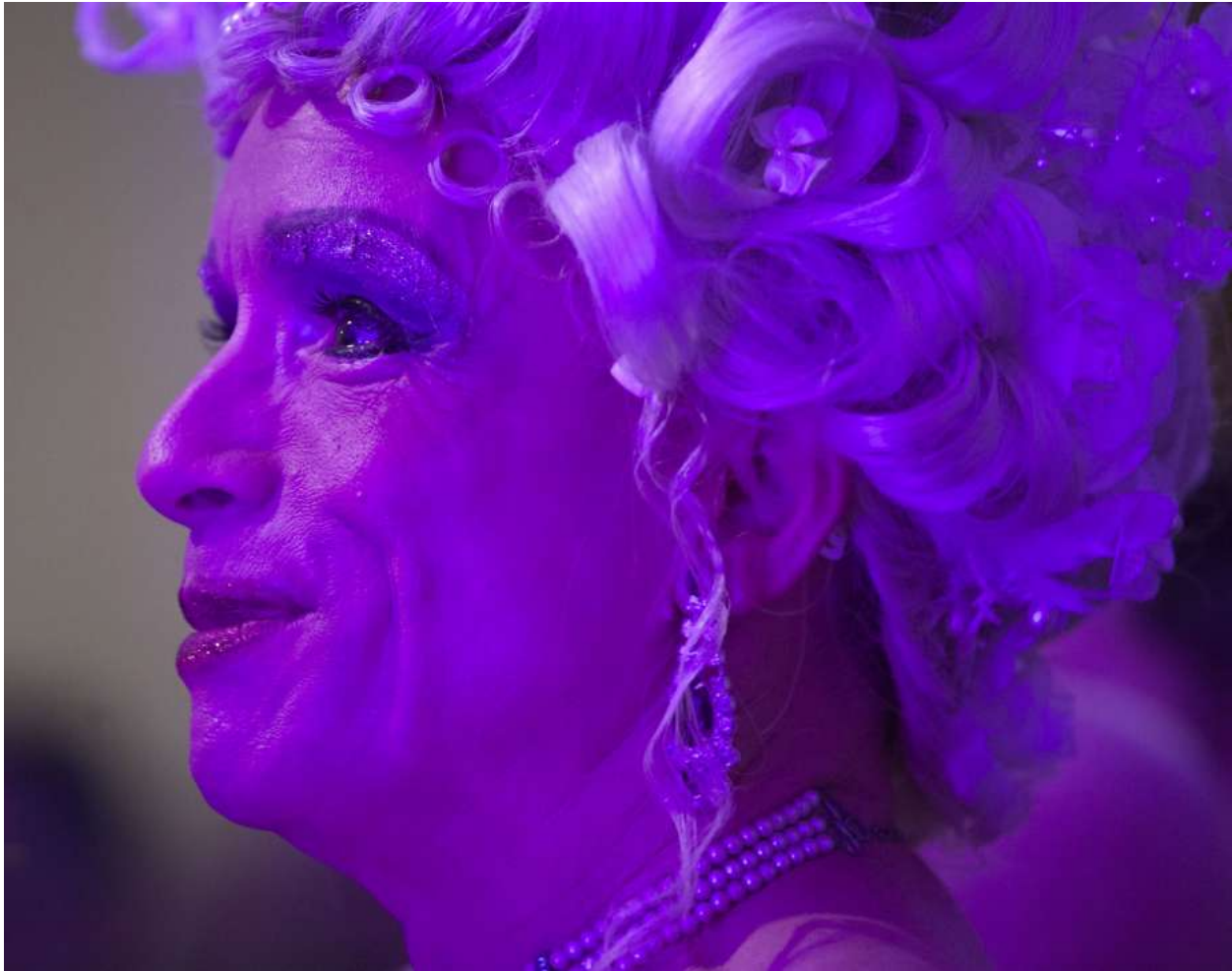
The gala felt more intimate and more personal than the usual big city soirees. Co-chairs **Andrew Smith** and **Chris Yaros** hosted a very low-pressure event. There was no grand ask for money. A silent auction among the meatballs and wine table was the only additional fundraising. Instead of long speeches or a sit-down presentation, the Big Reveal was a wine- and song-fueled cocktail party for a few hundred people who really love this special theater company in a San Francisco basement.

"We offer kids programming and queer and allied theater," Decker elaborated. "You're not going to find that combination anywhere else in San Francisco or even the United States."



Guests listen in to Ed Decker's opening remarks at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016 in San Francisco, Calif. A gala was held that celebrated the LGBT company's 35th anniversary, as well as the unveiling of its newly renovated lobby. Photo: Santiago Mejia, Special To The Chronicle.





A drag artists that goes by the name Marie Antoinette listens in to Ed Decker's opening remarks of the new lobby at the New Conservatory Theatre Center, on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2016 in San Francisco, Calif. A gala was held that celebrated the LGBT company's 35th anniversary, as well as the unveiling of its newly renovated lobby. Photo: Santiago Mejia, Special To The Chronicle.

The children's theater programming was another big reason the company wanted to revamp their lobby.

"We wanted to strike that balance between a sophisticated space for our own audience and a warm, friendly space that's kid-friendly," said Hodgen. "Hopefully we've accomplished that."

Hodgen, Decker, and their crew might want to tackle the dressing rooms next.

"Little-known fact," confessed Smirnoff-Skyy, nearing 7 feet tall in her heels and red wig. "The dressing room in the little theater doesn't have a bathroom."

Decker egged her on, laughing along as Smirnoff-Skyy deadpanned, "You are often forced to pee in a bottle."

That's a line you're not likely to hear at the fall Opera and Symphony galas.

*Beth Spotswood is a Bay Area freelance writer and Thursday columnist for Datebook.*

## **New Conservatory Theater Center's Production History**

### **2018-19 PRIDE SEASON 24**

*Red Scare on Sunset* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE By Charles Busch  
*Cardboard Piano* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Hansol Jung  
*Avenue Q* 6TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty  
*Late Company* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Jordan Tannahill  
*Steve* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Mark Gerrard  
*The Gentleman Caller* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Philip Dawkins  
*The View UpStairs* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Max Vernon

### **2017-18 PRIDE SEASON 23**

*This Bitter Earth* WORLD PREMIERE By Harrison David Rivers  
*Le Switch* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Philip Dawkins  
*Avenue Q* 5TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty  
*Still at Risk* WORLD PREMIERE By Tim Pinckney  
*It's Only a Play* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Terrence McNally  
*The Mystery of Love and Sex* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Bathsheba Doran  
*Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly* MUSICAL REVIVAL By Howard Crabtree, Mark Waldrop  
*Deal with the Dragon* SPECIAL EVENT Written and performed by Kevin Rolston  
*Six Characters in Search of a Play* SPECIAL EVENT Written and performed by Del Shores

### **2016-17 PRIDE SEASON 22**

*Casa Valentina* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Harvey Fierstein  
*Sons of the Prophet* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Tony Award-winner Stephen Karam  
*Avenue Q* Music/Lyrics- by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty Book by Jeff Whitty  
*Daniel's Husband* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Michael McKeever  
*Leaving the Blues* WORLD PREMIERE By Jewelle Gomez  
*Everything That's Beautiful* WORLD PREMIERE By Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder  
*Sordid Lives* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE By Del Shores  
*Warplay* WORLD PREMIERE By JC Lee

### **2015-16 PRIDE SEASON 21**

*For the Love of Comrades* US PREMIERE By Micheál Kerrigan  
*The Nance* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Douglas Carter Beane  
*The Kid Thing* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Sarah Gubbins  
*Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty  
*Sagittarius Ponderosa* WORLD PREMIERE By MJ Kaufman  
*Mothers and Sons* REGIONAL PREMIERE By Terrence McNally  
*Buyer & Cellar* By Jonathan Tolins  
*On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* WEST COAST PREMIERE Music by Burton Lane, Book and  
Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner



**2014-15 PRIDE SEASON 20**

*Cock* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Michael Bartlett  
*Die Mommie, Die!* BAY AREA PREMIERE By Charles Busch  
*Shakespeare's R&J* By Joe Calarco  
*Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty  
*Harbor* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Chad Beguelin  
*Other Desert Cities* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE By Jon Robin Baitz  
*From White Plains* WEST COAST PREMIERE By Michael Perlman  
*Compleat Female Stage Beauty* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE By Jeffrey Hatcher

**2013-14 PRIDE SEASON 19**

*American Dream* NEW PLAY by Brad Erickson  
*Band Fags* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Frank Anthony Polito  
*Dirty Little Showtunes* BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! by Tom Orr, F. Allen Sawyer  
*My Beautiful Launderette* US PREMIERE by Hanif Kureishi  
*Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez, Jeff Marx, and Jeff Whitty  
*The Paris Letter* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Jon Robin Baitz  
*Yellow* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Del Shores  
*Standing on Ceremony* by Mo Gaffney, Jordan Harrison, Moises Kaufman, Neil LaBute, Wendy MacLeod, Jose Rivera, Paul Rudnick, Doug Wright. Conceived by Brian Shnipper  
*The Homosexuals* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Philip Dawkins  
*Devil Boys From Beyond* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Buddy Thomas, Kenneth Elliott

**2012-13 PRIDE SEASON 18**

*Rights of Passage* WORLD PREMIERE by Ed Decker and Robert Leone  
*The Submission* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Jeff Talbott  
*The Marvelous Wonderette* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE Created and Written by Roger Bean  
*Dear Harvey* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Patricia Loughrey  
*The Lisbon Traviata* REVIVAL by Terrence McNally  
*Birds Of A Feather* WORLD PREMIERE By Marc Acito  
*The Bus* WEST COAST PREMIERE By James Lantz  
*The Divine Sister* BAY AREA PREMIERE by Charles Busch

**2011-12 PRIDE SEASON 17**

*Waiting For Giovanni* WORLD PREMIERE by Jewelle Gomez  
*The Temperamentals* BAY AREA PREMIERE by Jon Marans  
*Xanadu* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE Book by Douglas Carter Beane  
*The Story Of My Life* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE Book by Brian Hill  
*Maurice* US PREMIERE by Roger Parsley and Andy Graham  
*The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Moises Kaufman, Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Perotti, Andy Paris and Stephen Belber  
*Slipping* BAY AREA PREMIERE by Daniel Talbott  
*Lips Together, Teeth Apart* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Terrence McNally

**2010-11 PRIDE SEASON 16**

*Divalicious* -A Limited Engagement Cabaret  
*Don't Ask* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Bill Quigley  
*Anita Bryant Died For Your Sins* SF PREMIERE by Brian Christopher Williams  
*A Perfect Ganesh* 1993 Pulitzer Prize Drama Nominee by Terrence McNally  
*Dirty Little Showtunes!* MUSICAL REVIVAL Lyrics by Tom Orr  
*Treefall* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Henry Murray  
*Regrets Only* Comedy by Paul Rudnick  
*The Busy World Is Hushed* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Keith Bunin  
*The Pride* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Alexi Kaye Campbell  
*The Stops* MUSICAL COMEDY by Eric Lane Barnes

**2009-10 PRIDE SEASON 15**

*South Pacific* A One-man Comedy by and starring Jim David  
*Good Boys And True* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa  
*The Little Dog Laughed* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Douglas Carter Beane  
*Beautiful Thing* REVIVAL by Jonathan Harvey  
*Dames At Sea* MUSICAL COMEDY by George Haimsohn, Robin Miller, Jim Wise  
*Doubt, A Parable* 2005 PULITZER PRIZE AND TONY-WINNER by John Patrick Shanley  
*The Sugar Witch* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Nathan Sanders  
*Master Class* TONY AWARD FOR BEST PLAY, 1996 by Terrence McNally  
*Boys Will Be Boys* WEST COAST PREMIERE MUSICAL REVIEW  
*The New Century* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Paul Rudnick

**2008-09 PRIDE SEASON 14**

*Friends Are Forever* by Tom. W. Kelly  
*The History Boys* by Alan Bennett  
*As Bees In Honey Drown* by Douglas Carter Beane  
*Zanna, Don't! / A Musical Fairy Tale* Book, Music, & Lyrics By Tim Acito  
*Tennessee In The Summer* by Joe Besecker  
*Act A Lady* by Jordan Harrison  
*Baptized To The Bone* by Dave Johnson  
*Some Men* by Terrence McNally

**2007-08 PRIDE SEASON 13**

*Greater Tuna* by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears & Ed Howard  
*Holding The Man* US PREMIERE FROM AUSTRALIA by Tommy Murphy  
*Based On A Totally True Story* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa  
*In Gabriel's Kitchen* by Salvatore Antonio  
*I Am My Own Wife* by Doug Wright  
*Thrill Me: The Leopold & Loeb Story* by Stephen Dolginoff  
*It's Murder, Mary!* WORLD PREMIERE by Andrew Black & Patricia Milton  
*Men In Uniform* WORLD PREMIERE by Kenyon Brown, Jamie Daniel, Garret Jon Groenveld,



**2006-07 PRIDE SEASON 12**

*Kiss Of The Spider Woman* by Manuel Puig  
*Convenience, A Musical* Written & Directed by Gregg Coffin  
*The War At Home* by Brad Erickson  
*A Queer Carol* by Joe Godfrey  
*Farm Boys* by Amy Fox & Dean Gray  
*The Dying Gaul* by Craig Lucas  
*Terre Haute* by Edmund White  
*Take Me Out* by Richard Greenberg  
*Legends* by James Kirkwood  
*Pride Month Musical Celebration Wilde Boys*

**2005-06 PRIDE SEASON 11 - TIES THAT BIND**

*Dangerous* by Tom Smith  
*Crucifixion* WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSIONED FOR NCTC by Terrence McNally  
*After Dark* by Steve Kruger  
*Theater District* by Richard Kramer  
*Hijra* US PREMIERE by Ash Kotak  
*Valhalla* NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PREMIERE by Paul Rudnick  
*The Fabulous Adventures Of Captain Queer* WORLD PREMIERE by Prince Gomolvillas

**2004-05 PRIDE SEASON 10 - WE ARE FAMILY**

*Breakfast With Scott* WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSIONED BY NCTC by Michael Downing  
*Pageant* Book & Lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelley  
*Significant Others* Gay Romance by Tom Kelly  
*Mambo Italiano* by Steve Galluccio  
*Rescue And Recovery* by Steve Murray  
*Mapplethorpe: The Opening* Written and Performed by Brian Quirk  
*The Shooting Stage* by Michael Lewis McLennan  
*Whoop-dee-doo!* By C Catanese, H Crabtree, D Gallagher. P Morris and M Waldrop  
*What's Wrong With Angry?* by Patrick Wilde

**2003 - 2004 SHOWS**

*Kilt* WEST COAST PREMIERE A Romantic Comedy by Jonathan Wilson  
*Salam Shalom...A Tale Of Passion* by Saleem  
*You Should Be So Lucky* A Screwball Comedy by Charles Busch  
*A Taste Of Heaven* A One Act Play by Michael D. Jackson Dooley  
*The Last Sunday In June* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Jonathan Tolins  
*Seduction* WORLD PREMIERE EROTIC COMEDY by Jack Heifner  
*A Man Of No Importance* WEST COAST PREMIERE MUSICAL by Terrence McNally  
*Dirty Blonde* A ROMANTIC COMEDY by Claudia Shear  
*Southern Baptist Sissies* BAY AREA PREMIERE COMEDY/DRAMA by Del Shores

**2002-2003 PRIDE SEASON 8**

*Pins* by Jim Provenzano

*The Men From The Boys* WORLD PREMIERE by Mart Crowley

*The Bombay Trunk* WORLD PREMIERE by Felice Picano

*Thief River* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Lee Blessing

*In The Garden* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Norman Allen

*Mysterious Skin* WORLD PREMIERE by Prince Gomolvilas

*When Pigs Fly* BAY AREA PREMIERE Conceived by Howard Crabtree and Mark Waldrop

**2001-02 PRIDE SEASON 7**

*Save It For The Stage: The Life Of Reilly* Written by & starring Charles Nelson Reilly

*Avow* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Bill C. Davis

*The Last Session* by Jim Brochu

*The Crumple Zone* by Buddy Thomas

*The Mystery Of Irma Vep* by Charles Ludlam

*Legion* WORLD PREMIERE by Hal Corley

*Shakespeare's R & J* by Joe Calarco

*The Ritz* by Terrence McNally

**2000-01 PRIDE SEASON 6**

*Corpus Christi* by Terrence McNally

*Cloud Nine* by Caryl Churchill

*Debunking Love* WORLD PREMIERE by Prince Gomolvilas

*The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* by Paul Rudnick

*Snakebit* by David Marshall Grant

*Visiting Mr. Green* by Jeff Baron

*Martin Yesterday* by Brad Fraser

*Another American Asking And Telling* Written by and Performed by Marc Wolf

**1999 - 2000 PRIDE SEASON 5**

*Steel Kiss* US Premiere by Robin Fulford

*Love! Valour! Compassion!* by Terrence McNally

*Dream Boy* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Eric Rosen

*Message To Michael* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Tim Pinckney

*Who's Afraid Of Edward Albee* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Michael Kearns

*Torch Song Trilogy* by Harvey Fierstein

**1998 - 1999 PRIDE SEASON 4**

*Like A Vampire: A Homoerotic Tale Of Horrors* WORLD PREMIERE by Bru Dye

*The Lisbon Traviata* REVIVAL by Terrence McNally

*From The Hip: Siamese Twin Variations* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Blair Fell

*The Nanjing Race* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Reggie Cheong-Leen

*Beautiful Thing: An Urban Fairytale* by Jonathan Harvey American Stage Premiere

*Key West* WORLD PREMIERE by Jack Heifner



**1997 - 1998 PRIDE SEASON 3**

*Crimes Against Nature* REVIVAL by The Gay Men's Theatre Collective  
*Come In From The Rain* WEST COAST PREMIERE by David Mauriello  
*Shirts & Skins* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE Written & Performed by Tim Miller  
*My Night With Reg* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Kevin Elyot  
*Comfort & Joy* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE by Jack Heifner  
*The Ballad Of Little Mikey (The Birth Of An Activist)* SAN FRANCISCO PREMIERE  
Book, Music, Lyrics & Direction by Mark Savage

**1996 - 1997 PRIDE SEASON 2**

*Fortune And Men's Eyes* by John Herbert  
*The Lonely Planet* by Steven Dietz  
*Vanities* by Jack Heifner  
*End Of The World Party* By Chuck Ranberg  
*Trafficking In Broken Hearts* by Edwin Sanchez  
*Virgins And Other Myths* WEST COAST PREMIERE by Colin Martin

**1996 - 1997 CO PRODUCTIONS**

*Talking Cure* Written & Performed by Suzy Berger  
*Palpitations* Written and Performed by Keith Hennessy  
*Sicks Appeal* Created & Performed by The Kinsey Sicks  
*Everything But The Kitsch 'n Synch* Created & Performed by The Kinsey Sicks

City and County of San Francisco

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
PRESENTS THIS

**Certificate of Honor**

IN APPRECIATIVE PUBLIC RECOGNITION  
OF DISTINCTION AND MERIT TO

*New Conservatory Childrens  
Theatre*

To best praise and administer to the meritorious production of a "BESSIE CLARK" a  
year depicting the life of a prodigious, handicapped children and the hardships of  
problems they encounter in their day-to-day lives.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the  
certificate was duly authorized pursuant  
to action adopted by the Board of Supervisors  
of the City and County of San Francisco at its  
meeting held on April 14, 1988

State of California

*John W. Williams*  
President of the Board

*John W. Williams*  
Chief of the Board

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank or Office \_\_\_\_\_





# Proclamation

City and County of San Francisco

*WHEREAS*, today the New Conservatory Theatre of San Francisco is celebrating 25 years of arts and theatre presentations to the greater Bay Area; and

*WHEREAS*; begun in 1981 with a grass roots campaign by students and parents, the New Conservatory consisted of a humble home office in the Haight Ashbury and a handful of students in an after-school program housed in the basement of The First Unitarian Center; and

*WHEREAS*, today, calling 25 Van Ness home, the New Conservatory Theatre has upwards of 100 actors performing to 25,000 audience members in a given season; and

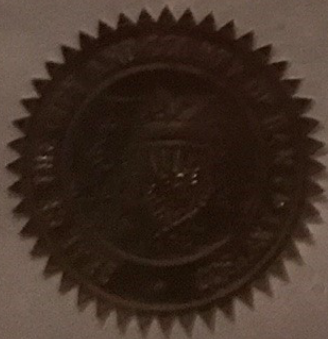
*WHEREAS*, the New Conservatory Theatre is also dedicated to their roots, working with grades K-12 in their YouthAware Educational Theatre Division, who on tour perform to 20,000 audience member annually; and

*WHEREAS*, the New Conservatory Theatre also provides art school, for ages 5-18, and for late bloomers to the stage, acting and singing classes are available for adults; and

*WHEREAS*, the New Conservatory Theatre is also proud to sponsor local artists and children in their art gallery; now

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED* that I, Gavin Newsom, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, do hereby proclaim November 12, 2006 as...

## NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE DAY *In San Francisco!*



*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

Gavin Newsom  
Mayor



September 25, 2019

Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Executive Director of the Office of Small Business  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission St. Ste 400  
San Francisco, Ca 94103-2479

Dear Ms. Dick-Endrizzi,

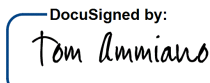
I would like to recommend New Conservatory Theatre Center (NCTC) and support their efforts to become a San Francisco Legacy Business. As a San Francisco Supervisor I supported the work of NCTC for years, and have witnessed their growth and the ongoing contribution to San Francisco's arts and cultural landscape.

An integral part of the cultural fabric of San Francisco, NCTC has been a crucial mover and shaker as well as fierce advocate for the LGBT community throughout the decades, providing both an artistic home for the queer and allied communities, and a nurturing center for progressive arts education for San Francisco youth for decades.

The mission that NCTC carries to "champion innovative, high quality productions and educational theatre experiences for youth, artists, and the Queer and Allied communities to effect personal and societal growth, enlightenment, and change" continues to help our community thrive and move forward.

I hope you will consider New Conservatory Theatre Center as a San Francisco Legacy Business given its invaluable contribution. Please contact me should you like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
250E0FDD677B4CB...  
Tom Ammiano