

GPAC Releases COVID Audience Report

Reopening post-pandemic won't be easy, according to a recent report issued by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC).

A press release explains that the report "features a summary of data collected from 27 Pittsburgh-area arts organizations and their audiences as part of research firm **WolfBrown's** COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor in partnership with the Arts Council."

The findings are encouraging: about 90% of audience respon-



dents were at least partially vaccinated by the end of May with 2/3 willing to attend an indoor event. However, nationally things are less hopeful as "40% won't attend without a mask mandate." People also realize that they living in a changed environment, at least for an indeterminate amount of time. "Visitors and audiences are beginning to understand this and learning to navigate the post-vaccination world, including what risks they are and are not willing to take."

The report includes recommendations not only on safety protocols at venues, but how to communicate them. [Download the full PDF and read the entire report.](#)

Meanwhile, Delta Makes Big Show Biz Very Wary

Pittsburgh's artists may be returning to stages, studios and galleries, but the latest COVID-19 variant is putting Hollywood's return to normalcy at risk.

"Production of movies and TV shows is getting disrupted again because of Covid-19 and uncertainty over vaccination protocols, a setback as networks and streaming services remain hungry for fresh content," Joe Flint and R.T. Watson report for the *Wall Street Journal*.

"The shifting public health situation is creating logistical headaches for the fall festival season," *Variety's* Brent Lang and Marc Malkin write. "There are pressing questions regarding the number of celebrities who will feel comfortable attending the gatherings given the uncertainty surrounding the virus." The pair also warn that rescheduling or delaying film openings "could be devastating for movie theaters, which are only slowly starting to rebound after months of closures or capacity restrictions. They need big-budget movies to lure audiences back to multiplexes."

Rex Is Now Enclave

As *Pittsburgh Applause* first reported in our [May 2021 issue](#), the Rex Theatre's new owners had filed for a liquor license --- a sure sign that it was about to reopen.

WESA-FM's Bill O'Driscoll has filled-in the details with a July 7 report. The facility has been taken over by Chris Firman, who owned a nightclub in the city's Strip District. "We want to be inclusive and we want to do it all," Firman told O'Driscoll. "The goal is to program the room so that there's something for everybody every week."

Firman is rechristening the hall as Enclave, although don't expect any dramatic changes otherwise. The Rex opened in 1905 as a movie theater that later became a popular concert hall with a distinctive art deco facade. That heritage is being respected. However, local firm **Hearcorp** is installing a new sound system.

Enclave's first show is scheduled for September 25. Read O'Driscoll's full report by clicking [here](#).

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Equity's New COVID Rules

With states, counties and cities all easing COVID-related restrictions, so are the unions.

On July 2, **Actors Equity Association** (AEA) its safety protocols for theatres across the country with fully vaccinated companies. This includes the lifting of masking and testing mandates.



"The health and safety of our members comes first," said union president Kate Shindle in a press release. "We are heartened by the declining infection rates nationwide, because so many people have done their part and gotten vaccinated. As such, it will now be a smoother and less expensive process for employers to recall our members to work. We still need to be diligent about the vi-

rus, but we are very hopeful for the months ahead."

Pittsburgh's major theaters are Equity stages, so these changes affect them as well as those on Broadway and elsewhere. These guidelines are available by clicking [here](#) --- but with infection rates going up again at the start of August, these protocols may have to be modified yet again.

The other major entertainment unions have also agreed to an adjusted set of rules regarding film and TV production during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can read the updated agreement, as provided by the Directors Guild of America, can be read by clicking [here](#).

Libraries & Others Reopen

Another sign that something close to normal is returning to our lives, the **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh** (CLP) announced on July 19 that all branches have opened to full capacity.



The libraries join other cultural resources, such as the **Frick Pittsburgh**, in welcoming the return of patrons.

The press release explains: "Alongside 100% occupancy, mask requirements are no longer

in place. CLP will use signage to encourage unvaccinated visitors of all ages to wear masks in its spaces. Children ages 2 to 12 and non-vaccinated adults should continue to wear masks while visiting. Kid sized masks are available at all locations for those who visit without one."

However, meeting rooms remain unavailable for the interim as are in-person programming.

Meanwhile, Delta . . .

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Movies aren't the only LA products at risk, so are television programs. Award winning actor Sean Penn, for example, refused to return to the studio for the limited TV series "Gaslit" until everyone involved is vaccinated. And **Netflix's** popularity surge early in the pandemic has largely waned. MediaPost's Karlene Lukovitz reports that research indicates "a reduction in new content due to COVID production disruptions as one factor contributing to the domestic growth slowdown."

Fortunately, both Pittsburgh and Hollywood are outpacing the nation. At press time, nearly 60% of Allegheny County residents are at least partially vaccinated (and climbing) and Los Angeles County is over 70%. The national rate is 58% and the global rate is just 28%. Pennsylvania and California are also among the most vaccinated, with about 48% of each state's population fully vaccinated as compared to 46% nationally.



Channel Pittsburgh

Lights On @ Row House

The folks at **Row House Cinema** announced on July 26 something that will thrill film lovers: it will reopen in September.

"We can't tell you how excited we are to start showing movies again," owner Brian Mendelssohn said in a press release. "Our whole staff is basically re-learning how to run a movie theater this summer, and we've got some fantastic programming lined up for the remainder of 2021."

The press release explains that there will be a soft opening which will chronologically screen films from three different decades. The officially reopening will be September 25 with a screening of Quentin Tarantino's 1994 film "Pulp Fiction."

Mendelssohn explains that the weeks of partial operation is necessary because "our whole staff is basically re-learning how to run a movie theater this summer."

New Grants Program

A new grants program for individual artists has been launched by the **Pittsburgh Foundation**.

The foundation calls the new effort Exposure: An Artists Program with the goal of helping artists develop new skills and pursue new projects.



A press release explains that, while all artists in all media are welcome to apply, preference will

be "given to those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and artists working individually or in collectives at the intersection of the arts and social justice. Also, the program will offer funding to artists who have never received grants before. Exposure also includes three co-fellowships that place artists with established arts organizations to provide recommendations for addressing inequity and overcoming systems of oppression."

Grant amounts range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. To learn more, [download the PDF](#).



City's Back

A buddy comedy, a satire involving Justin Timberlake and reflective garbage men are among the offerings as **City Theatre** reopens this fall.

"From deep local roots to internationally acclaimed artists," artistic director Marc Masterson told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Shirley McMarlin, "the upcoming season is a celebration of our art form."



There are three world premieres scheduled: "An Untitled New Play by Justin Timberlake" about the inherit conflict between art and money in show business; buddies collect trash, laughs and insights in "The Garbologist" and a collaborative pre-season work titled "The Rivers Don't Know."

Opening the season is "Live from the Edge," a daring and inventive look at the evolution of language. For more information, visit [here](#).

Click the graphic below for a City Theatre video.





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Equity's Newly Open Door

It's now easier to become a professional actor, thanks to changes recently announced by **Actors Equity Association** (AEA).

The union has changed its eligibility rules. For years, to qualify for AEA membership --- needed for working on an Equity stage (especially Broadway) --- one had to already be working for an AEA employer or part of the Equity Membership Program. But now anyone who can demonstrate they have worked professionally as an actor or stage manager may join the union.

"The old system had a significant flaw: It made employers the gatekeepers of Equity membership,



with almost no other pathways to joining," said union president Kate Shindle, in a press release. "The entertainment industry is disproportionately white, including and especially theatrical leadership. The union has inadvertently contributed to the systemic exclusion of [black, indigenous and other people of color] artists and others with marginalized identities by maintaining a system . . . we hope that artists from all backgrounds will join us in building a union that uplifts the entire theatre community, especially those who have not felt included or welcome in the past."

AEA's new policy, called Open Access, also makes it easier for former members to rejoin the union.

IATSE's Loeb Re-Elected

After a tumultuous year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with issues centered on inclusivity and nepotism, Matthew D. Loeb has been re-elected as president of the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE).



Pittsburgh is home to five IATSE locals. Loeb, who ran unopposed, was reelected by acclamation to a fourth term.

All of the arts/entertainment unions were hit hard by the pandemic. But IATSE also faced is-

suess of inclusivity. Writing for *Variety*, Gene Maddaus reports that last summer a group of black, indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) theater workers "called on IATSE to diversity both its leadership and its membership ranks, and to make significant reforms, including an anti-nepotism policy."

Loeb responded by conceding that "for too long, we have turned a blind eye to the need for our workspaces to represent all members of our society." By fall, the union had launched a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. A July 29 press release also an-

SAG-AFTRA Election News

Voting doesn't begin until August 3, but the leadership of the local branch of **SAG-AFTRA** is a foregone conclusion --- incumbent Heather Abraham is running unopposed.

SAG-AFTRA

She's not the only one. According to Deadline's David Robb, about half of SAG-AFTRA's local presidential contests are races with just a single candidate. Four national board seats are also in unopposed races.

You can see the local's voting guide by clicking [here](#).

Meanwhile, the national races are between just two slates. The first is United for Strength/USAN headed by Fran Drescher for president with Anthony Rapp for secretary/treasurer and Membership First, led by Matthew Modine for president and Joely Fisher for secretary/treasurer.

announced "the most progressive set of constitutional changes and resolutions" in IATSE's history. However, no details of these changes were released.

CBS Fires Former KDKA-TV Chief

Jay Howell, the former general manager at KDKA-TV, has been fired by parent company **ViacomCBS**, reports Cynthia Littleton for *Variety*.



Howell [left KDKA in 2019](#) to take over CBS' Los Angeles stations. His dismissal is the latest in a long series of crises surrounding sexism and racism at the media and entertainment giant.

These crises date to at least 2017 when respected journalist [Charlie Rose was faced with credible sexual harassment allegations](#). He was soon fired as co-anchor of "CBS This Morning." The network tried to address the overall issues by [naming an executive](#) with a mandate to improve conditions and opportunities. But not long after, CBS' powerful CEO --- the legendary Les Moonves --- was [facing serious allegations himself](#). These came to light through the reporting of journalist Ronan Farrow. Weeks later, [Moonves was also fired](#) which brought a decades-long career to an ignominious end. Earlier this,

two other executives --- Peter Dunn, the president of CBS television stations, and David Friend, the senior vice president of news for TV stations --- [were placed on administrative leave after harassment allegations were made](#). They were dismissed in April.

CBS' station manager at Chicago's WBBM-TV was fired at the same time as Howell. Littleton explains that the men's terminations "were disclosed in memos [on July 22] about the conclusion of the investigation sparked by a Los Angeles Times expose on hostile working conditions for women and people of color."

Equity Addresses Harassment

Calandra Hackney has been named the new assistant executive director for discrimination and harassment prevention for the eastern regional of **Actors Equity Association** (AEA).



The union's eastern region covers 20 states and the District of Columbia which includes Pennsylvania.

A July 22 press release explains that "as part of the executive team, [Hackney] will work alongside the executive director and assistant executive directors in the central and western regions to build a more equitable and effective union emerging from the pan-

demie. She will also be spearheading the union's ongoing initiatives to prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace."

The former actress and director joined AEA in 2008 as a business representative.



GPAC Responds to the COVID-19 Crises

Click here to read how the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council is trying to help local artists and groups.

Schlageter Retires

Bill Schlageter, the respected and long-time marketing chief at the **Children's Museum of Pittsburgh** (CMP) is retiring.



Schlageter has lead CMP's marketing department since 2000 when he left the **River City Brass** to join the museum's staff. CMP executive director Jane Werner described him in a press release as "one of the most compassionate and joyful people I've ever worked with." Schlageter's efforts for the museum has included the annual sweater drive that has collected over 40,000 sweaters for people in need.

He will continue working on special projects for the museum through the end of the year while colleague Max Pipman takes on his media and marketing responsibilities.



Porter's "What If" Recasts

Production on Billy Porter's directorial debut is underway, but the COVID-19 pandemic has up-ended some of the casting.

Deadline's Justin Kroll reports that British actress Yasmin Finney was originally cast in the film but could not secure a work visa. But the pandemic has created a

backlog in the United Kingdom on processing applications.

Instead, Eva Reign is playing the role of a transgender girl experiencing her first true romance with a high school classmate. Read more by clicking [here](#).

Images



Patricia Wilde, the former artistic director of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT), died on July 17 at the age of 93. The PBT has published a biography [here](#).

Tax Law Gets New Try

On July 28, the proposed Performing Artist Tax Parity Act was formally reintroduced in the **U.S. House of Representatives**.

The bill, if it becomes law, would correct an unintended consequence of the 2017 tax cuts that actually raised taxes for many professional artists by reducing what expenses they can deduct.

Alexa Criscitiello explains for BroadwayWorld.com that "actors, stage managers, dancers, musicians, cinematographers, and many other creative professionals

spend 20 to 30 percent of their income on necessary expenses to secure and maintain employment, including travel to auditions, talent agents, and camera equipment. Without the ability to deduct these expenses many middle class professionals struggled to make ends meet even before the pandemic started when many creators still had income coming in."

The bill has supporters in both parties, which gives it a rare chance to become law in this divisive era.

Locast Now In Pittsburgh

The non-profit streaming service **Locast** has come to Pittsburgh, reports John Eggerton for *Broadcasting+Cable*.

Locast was launched in 2018 by attorney and consumer advocate David Goodfriend. The organization uses a loophole in U.S. copyright law to retransmit the signals of local television stations to donor/subscribers through tools like **Roku**.

Broadcast owners and television networks disagree with Locast's loophole claim, which the latter defends [here](#).

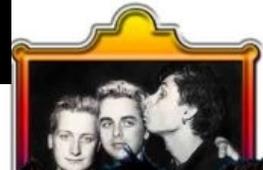
**Patricia Wilde
(1928-2021)**



TUE
3



THU
19



FRI
8



SAT
21



FRI
13



FRI
13



WED
25

THU
26



SAT
14



THU
26

Opportunities

Professional artists in any discipline/media and at any career stage may apply directly for the **Heinz Endowments'** Creative Development Awards with grants up to \$20,000 to further artistic and career goals. Details [here](#).

With branches reopening, so are various full-time clerk positions at the **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh**. [Click here to learn more](#).

The Pittsburgh Foundation has launched Exposure: An Artists Program that will provide approximately \$395,000 in funding. [Click here for details](#).

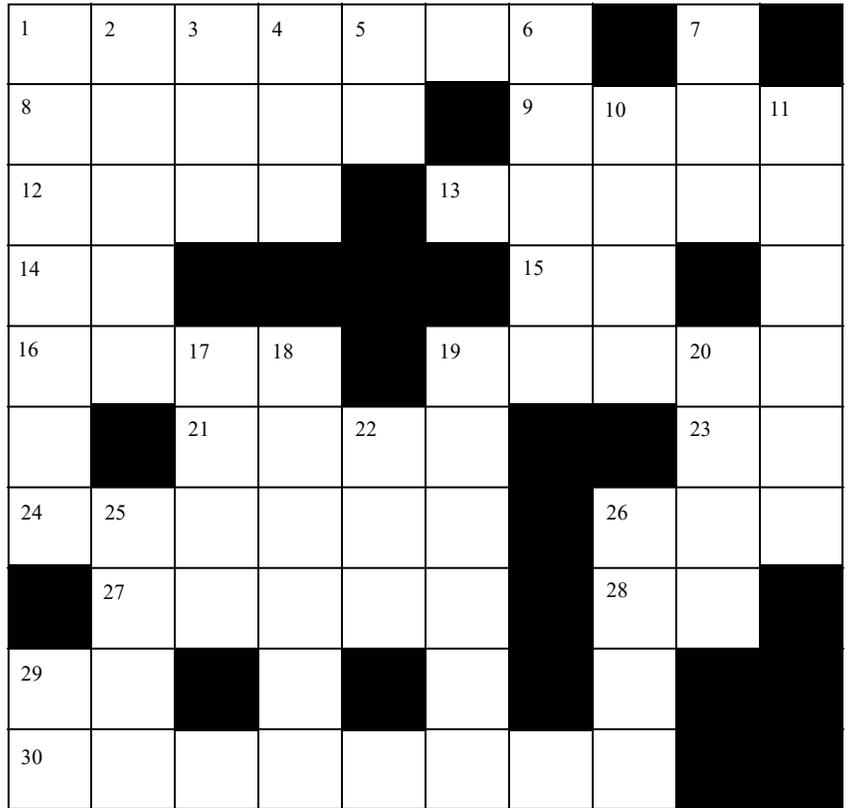
Positions in marketing, programming and development have become available with the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**. [Click here](#).

Several administrative positions are available at the **Pittsburgh Ballet**, including marketing and graphic design. [Click here](#).



Across

1. Fairy tale creature at the center of 18-Down
8. Snobbish
9. Famous Roman architectural element
12. Completed
13. Water filter brand that 1-Down might have appreciated
14. Set of internet rules, initially
15. Teen lit, by the letters
16. Backgrounds of a play, movie or TV show
19. Character portrayed by 30-Across
21. Popular Apple device
23. State north of FL
24. Vetoed
26. Humbug predecessor?
27. Comes closer
28. Ego's pal?
29. Too much, initially
30. Male star of 18-Down



Down

1. Character portrayed by 6-Down
2. Wed away
3. The director of 18-Down, to pals
4. Larry and Curly's pal
5. Pittsburgh music makers ___ Records
6. Female star of 18-Down (with 11-Down)
7. Play part
10. Iran's currency
11. See 6-Down
17. Mosaic piece
18. Hit 1984 film and subject of this puzzle
19. Attaches to
20. Mild curse
22. Poetic contraction
25. File menu option
26. Offers
29. Part of the Bible before NT

Last Month's Solution

A	B	I	G	A	I	L		S	T
C	O	O	R	S		A	F	A	R
T	O	N	E	R			A	C	E
			E			H	R		K
J	O	H	N	A	D	A	M	S	
E	P	A			O	R	E	N	
E	T				O	V	R	E	
P		L	O	R	N	A		E	U
	L	A	W	Y	E	R		Z	Z
		G	E	E		D	R	E	I