

COVID Closes The Rex Theatre

In a serious blow to the local music scene, **Grey Area Productions** has announced the permanent closure of the Rex Theatre.

The Rex opened as a vaudeville house in 1905 and its art deco marquee has welcome patrons ever since



to movies, plays, concerts and other kinds of programming. In recent years it has primarily hosted rock and pop acts, first under the operation of singer Chris Theoret and for the last decade by Grey Area.

A Facebook posting [see sidebar - ed.] blamed the Novel Coronavi-

rus 19 pandemic and the loss of revenue caused by the cancellation of concerts.

"The Rex had one of the best open mics in town," Ben Shannon told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. "For a songwriter it was known as the low-key rough and tumble open mic. As a songwriter sometimes it helped to feel a sticky floor and sing to an audience that was less than five feet away from the mic. The Rex is where I held my first record release, and it was my last local live appearance before COVID."

It remains unclear what will happen next to the building.

Theaters Seek COVID Relief

A nation-wide effort is underway to prod Washington to aid theaters struggling to survive the financial crush that comes with the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than 260 theaters in 37 states --- including Pittsburgh's **City Theatre** --- have signed a letter to congressional leaders urging them to provide emergency funding to both non-profit and commercial arts/entertainment entities.



The letter points out that the "arts and entertainment are responsible

for more than four million jobs, and they power a sector responsible for \$877.8 billion in value and 4.5% of U.S. gross domestic product, according to the **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**. Furthermore, they are an important generator of additional jobs and GDP in the larger economy: the average nonprofit arts attendee spends another \$31.41 per person, per show beyond the cost of admission, according to **Americans for the Arts**. That includes spending at restaurants, parking and even the

Here is the September 22 message posted on the Rex's Facebook page.

Due to the ongoing hardship and uncertain future caused by the Covid pandemic, The Rex Theater will be closing our doors after over a decade of live music and events.

We want to thank everyone who's come to a show, everyone's who's played a show, everyone who has worked in ways big and small and helped us make this crazy dream a reality.

It meant much more than a music venue to us, and we hope it did to you too. Nothing has made us happier than sharing this space and music with all of you over the past eleven years.

The memories that we've all made in these four walls will live on. The music that's happened here will live on. The friendships and relationships made in this room will live on. The beautiful energy that all of you helped us create will live on.

While we greatly appreciate all of your support, and we understand that many of you would like to find some way to save The Rex, please trust that we have considered every option and have done everything possible to keep our dream alive for as long as we could.

We all hope to run into you at a concert, somewhere, somehow, sometime, down the road. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, The Rex Theater Family

"Fare you well, fare you well, I love you more than words can tell. Listen to the river sing sweet songs, to rock my soul" - Brokedown Palace, Grateful Dead

More than 800 supportive messages were posted in response to the announcement.



Continues on page 2.

COVID Puts BPT In Financial Crises

The Seattle-based **Brown Paper Tickets** (BPT) is facing a growing list of legal complaints from across the country, including Pittsburgh.

BROWN PAPER TICKETS

In March, founder and president William Jordan told the *Seattle Times* that the COVID pandemic had compromised the company's cash flow. "We lost control over which payments were able to clear and which weren't," Jordan

Anti-Flag Gets Film Doc

Local band **Anti-Flag** is the subject of a new documentary film to be streamed this month on the video platform Veeps.com.

The documentary charts the band's development over nearly three decades. "We started our band with the belief that punk music had the power to change people's lives and have a positive impact on the world," co-founder Justin Sane explains in an online post.

"Beyond Barricades: The Story of Anti-Flag" will stream on October 3. Details are available on [the band's web site](#).

told *Times* reporter Brendan Kiley. "And we managed to piss off everybody." Well over 450 complaints have been filed with the Washington State Attorney General Office.

Seth Laidlaw of **Stage 62** and Beth Corning of **Corningworks** tell WESA-FM's Bill O' Driscoll that BPT owes each organization \$8,000. Read more by clicking [here](#).

"Our team has been working hard to initiate full refunds to ticket holders (including all service fees) and pay event organizers," BPT told a Maine newspaper in a written statement. "This is a long process with thousands of events canceled, postponed, or abandoned, and we are unable to offer

an estimated timeline at this moment. Like many businesses, we were unprepared for a crisis of the scale of COVID-19, but we are making headway."

BPT isn't the only ticket firm having these issues. *The New York Times* reported in April that StubHub (owned by **Viagogo**) "recently dropped its refund policy, offering instead coupons worth 120 percent of what customers had paid for canceled events."

Anyone interested in filing a complaint with the **Better Business Bureau** by clicking [here](#).

Theaters Seek COVID Relief

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babysitter. Nationally, this spending supports 2.3 million jobs in all 50 states, provides \$46.6 billion in household income and generates \$15.7 billion in total government revenue."

Dated September 17, the letter was sent to Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (Speaker of the House), Congressman Kevin McCarthy (House Minority Leader), Senator Mitch McConnell (Senate Majority Leader) and Senator Charles E. Schumer (Senate Minority Leader).

A copy has been posted online by **Actors Equity Association** and can be read by clicking [here](#).

More than a dozen local arts organizations have received emergency funds made possible by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES).

The Andy Warhol Museum: \$263,000
 Attack Theatre Inc.: \$31,000
 Carnegie Science Center: \$384,000
 Children's Museum of Pittsburgh: \$302,000
 Civic Light Opera Association of Pittsburgh: \$409,000
 The Mattress Factory: \$80,000
 National Aviary: \$221,000
 Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre: \$336,000
 Pittsburgh Musical Theater: \$52,000
 Pittsburgh Opera: \$253,000
 Pittsburgh Public Theater: \$225,000
 Pittsburgh Symphony: \$500,000
 Prime Stage Theatre: \$25,000

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COVID Forces PSO To Make Cuts

Hoping to stem the flood of red ink during the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) has announced new cost-saving measures.

A PSO press release makes the situation clear:

"Beginning in March and through the end of 2020, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra has had to cancel 115 concerts and events due to the pandemic, and it estimates that these cancellations will result in a \$5.6 million shortfall in earned revenue. To mitigate these losses, the Or-



chestra says that it must now take additional steps beyond the measures announced in May to address the continued devastating financial impact of the pandemic."

Roughly 75% of staff members have already experienced reductions in pay. The musicians have now agreed to a 25% reduction in base salary, and a 50% reduction in overscale; the orchestra is freezing all new musician hiring [after appointing violinist Cecee Pantikian - ed.] "The Pittsburgh Symphony administration is changing the status of 30% of its full-time staff through a combination of reduction of hours, furloughs, layoffs and position elimination through attrition. All staff holding part-time status in March

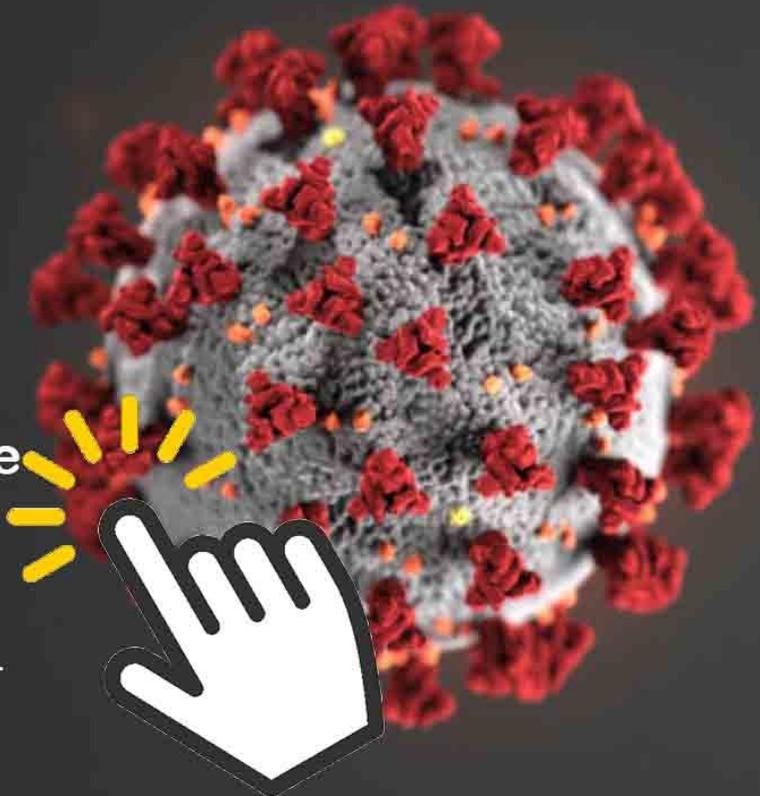
were furloughed then and will continue in this status until regular concert activity can resume. The Pittsburgh Symphony has worked to reduce all non-essential expenses and will maintain the staff salary reductions that were instituted in May and July, coinciding with the end of the Payment Protection Plan loan funding period that ended at that time and allowed the orchestra to continue its operations over the summer without changes in the status of its workforce."

In addition, symphony president Melia Tourangeau is increasing her volunteer pay cut from 25% to 30%.



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.



Unions' COVID Protocols

On September 21, **SAG-AFTRA** and related unions announced an agreement with the major studios on a set of COVID protocols. They are based on a report released by the unions over the summer called *The Safe Way Forward*. [[See Pittsburgh Applause July 2020 page 4](#) - ed]



The other unions involved are the **Directors Guild of America** (DGA), the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE), the **Basic Crafts** (BC) and the **International Brotherhood of Teamsters** (IBT).

It is hoped that this will help productions to resume not only in Hollywood but in Pittsburgh and other production centers as well.

"This agreement establishes sensible, science-based protocols that allow members to return to doing the work they love while managing risk," SAG-AFTRA's Gabrielle Carteris says in a press release. "I am grateful to our sister unions, who pulled together during this extended crisis, as well as to the studios for collaborating on this important issue."

In addition to the protocols [see sidebar - ed.], the agreement calls for additional sick leave pay as well as pay should someone need to be quarantined.

THE PROTOCOLS

The establishment of a zone system "laying out barriers within which those on set can flow based on proximity to cast, level of testing, PPE and the extent to which physical distancing can be observed in the performance of their work."

Every member of the cast and crew will be tested before their first day of work with repeated testing during the production. Those unable to wear masks and practice social distancing (such as performers) need to be tested at least three times a week. Others must also be retested, but less frequently.

The production must have a COVID-19 compliance supervisor and team to ensure that protocols are being followed.

Protocol details are available by clicking [here](#).

Playhouse Unionizes

The three **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE) locals have some new members: the stagehands, wardrobe personnel and scenic artists of the Pittsburgh Playhouse.



Held on September 18, the vote was unanimous. An IATSE press release explains that concerns over COVID-19 safety were among the key factors.

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Fuoco Resigns Amid Harassment Scandal

Michael Fuoco has resigned from both the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the **Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh** (NGP), report multiple sources.



This action comes as **Block Communications** and the NGP continue to tussle over labor and contractual issues that inching closer and closer to a full walkout.

The dual resignation was first reported on September 27 in an article by the *New York Times'* Ben Smith. It came after the web site PayDayReport.com published articles alleging that Fuoco harassed female colleagues at the paper as well as students at the two universities where he has been an adjunct professor.

PayDayReport.com describes itself as a "small crowdfunded labor publication based in Pittsburgh, PA with a growing impact on the national conversation about workers." Read the article written by co-founder Mike Elk by clicking [here](#).

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Playhouse Unionizes

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As part of **Point Park University**, the playhouse is a teaching facility as well as an entertainment center. "Workers in the theater often hear that they are a 'family' from their employers," IATSE's Joseph Hartnett explains. "This 'family' decided to join together in union to improve not just their workplace and their lives, but to also show as an example to the students they train to be the future technicians in the industry that to have a middle class lifestyle while working in the theater you need to be IA."

The vote affects sixteen employees of the Pittsburgh Playhouse.



Channel
Pittsburgh



CBS & iHeart To Launch Podcasts

A three-year deal has been made between **ViacomCBS** and **iHeartMedia** for a new series of podcasts.



ViacomCBS owns two Pittsburgh television stations and (through its controlling stake in **Entercom**) four radio stations. In addition, iHeartMedia owns six local radio stations.

An iHeart press release states that the "breadth of the portfolio --- comprised of MTV, Comedy Central, Paramount Network, Smithsonian Channel, Pop TV, CMT, VH1, TV Land and Logo --- will enable diverse and inclusive audio offerings that cater to every demographic and age group --- from the coasts to the heartland -- - and across genres including music, comedy, pop culture and history."

The first programs that will launch podcasts through the agreement are "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" and "Yo! MTV Raps."

COVID Sends PMT Outside

Going outdoors during COVID has become an increasing option for many performers and companies. Now, joining them is **Pittsburgh Musical Theater** (PMT) and The West End Canopy.

The West End Canopy is actually a tent erected in the parking lot of a former church.

It is here that PMT is staging performances that provide enough space for social distancing. Photos can be seen by clicking [here](#).



Local magician and comedian Michael Misko will open the new, temporary venue with a show on October 3. PMT's web site describes Misko's act as "a unique blend of deft sleight-of-hand

magic and charming ,wry, comedy . . . peppered with a hefty dose of rapier wit!"

Executive artistic director Colleen Doyno told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Shirley McMarlin that PMT is hoping that The West End Canopy will be an anchor for neighborhood gatherings. "We've always been strictly theater --- that's what we've always done, and we do it well --- so I'm excited to branch out into something new," she added.

Tickets are available by clicking [here](#).

Meanwhile, other companies --- most notably **Point Park University's** Pittsburgh Playhouse --- are moving ahead with an online season of shows.

Images



Pittsburgh native Jonathan Haze stars in "The Little Shop of Horrors" streaming on Channel Pittsburgh on October 31.



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Trouble Rings Again For Bell

You won't be hearing Wendy Bell again on KDKA-AM any time soon, according to Pittsburgh Patch's Eric Heyl.



KDKA-AM is part of **Entercom**. The majority owner of Entercom is **ViacomCBS**, which also owns KDKA-TV. Bell was pulled after suggesting that people who vandalize monuments honoring historical figures should be shot by authorities.

This is not the first time an opinion expressed by Bell had serious repercussions. She was dismissed from **Hearst Communications'** WTAE-TV in 2016 after an offensive Facebook posting about a mass shooting.

It remains unclear what future, if any, Bell has with the company.



Hambone's Owner Dies

The artist and owner of the popular concert venue **Hambone's Bar & Restaurant**, Jeffrey D. Holt, has suddenly died. He was 46.

"I spoke to him after my set," musician Brad Wagner told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Tom Davidson. "He really seemed to care a lot about the artists that were playing his venue."

"He was a strong advocate for a lot of people starting out," Wagner also told Davidson. "It's a big

loss for the Pittsburgh musical community."

Booking manager Mary Jo Coll explained to *Pittsburgh City Paper* that Holt had been having a difficult time after his fiancé, Jocelyn Marie Hill, died suddenly last year at age 43. "He was a good dude," she said.

As an artist, Holt specialized in metal art, ceramics and painting.

Arrangements are being handled by the [David J. Henney Funeral Home](#).

NEP Group's New IP Trucks

Despite the uncertain situation of live sports in the time of COVID, local live production firm **NEP Group** has introduced two new mobile production units with the latest internet protocols (IP) innovations.

A



company press release explains: "NEP Supershooter 9 and NEP Supershooter 4 launched with advanced, fully IP-based technology and the latest creature comforts amid health and safety measures required to operate safely in

today's production environment. The mobile units are the fourth and fifth IP production units in NEP's U.S. lineup, building upon the company's rollouts of SMPTE ST 2110 EN3, M15 and Supershooter 8 since 2018."

In other news, NEP Group has hired Jeff Hughes as its new Chief Operating Officer effective immediately. Hughes is now responsible for helping the company increase idea sharing across its businesses and expanding NEP's capabilities in new areas.



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schedules, we'll update
our event listings!**

Opportunities

Several jobs have opened up at the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**, ranging from the senior level (such as Membership Director) to the creative (including curatorial). Check out the [full list](#) for details.

Local members of **SAG-AFTRA** may be eligible for up to \$1,000 in grants to help cope with the financial fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more, click [here](#).

Four positions, mostly engineering, are available at **NEP Group** and to learn more click [here](#).

A broadcast specialist is being sought by **Cox Media Group** for WPXI-TV. The station is looking for someone to monitor the on-air signal (video and audio), ensuring overall quality of scheduled elements and confirming the on-air accuracy of the Traffic log against the automation playlist. Click [here](#) for details and application.



CMNH Removes Controversial Display

A controversial taxidermy diorama has been temporarily removed by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH).



That diorama's original name is "Lion Attacking a Dromedary" and depicts a dark-skinned man riding a camel being threatened by a pair of lions. It was created by French taxidermist Edouard Verreaux (1810-1868) and his brother Jules Verreaux (1807-1837) for the Parisian Exposition of 1867. The piece has been on display at the museum since 1899. According to [Wikipedia](#), the diorama was inspired by the work of French sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye (1795-1876). "'Lion Attacking a Dromedary' was created to celebrate the French colonial empire and uses orientalist tropes. The diorama is inaccurate

both scientifically and anthropologically and is considered to be a work of fiction. Anthropologists, zoologists, and museum studies commentators have been critical of the piece since the 1890s. **The Smithsonian Institution** questioned the propriety of showing such a sensationalist diorama in 1892."

The diorama has been popular with visitors for decades. But it has also been a growing issue in recent years as people become more sensitive and considerate to how persons of color are presented.

Detailed articles have been written by [WESA-FM's Bill O' Driscoll](#) and [the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's Paul Guggenheimer](#). The latter includes interesting images.

"For some people of color, their traumatic experience with racialized violence leads them to see

CMP's New E-Store

The online gift shops of all four components of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh (CMP) are now available through a single web store.

"We're thrilled to be giving the public online access to the unique offerings of our museum stores --- including apparel, jewelry, custom art reproductions, household goods, games and puzzles," said Lori Braszo, general manager of CMP retail operations in a press release.

The store is located at stores.carnegiemuseums.org. More than 500 products are available, with over half being exclusive to the CMP.

this diorama primarily through that lens," CMNH's Stephen Tonsor tells Guggenheimer. "Nowhere else in our dioramas do we see humans. There are no white European humans in dioramas, and certainly no white European humans being attacked by animals."

Plans call for the museum to re-stage the diorama as a different kind of learning tool.

WGA Election Results

Results are in from the **Writers Guild of America, East** (WGAE) Council elections. The 19-member council is the union's governing body.



Ten seats were available for the 2020 election, seven reserved for free-lancers and three staff. Eight

were incumbents. Serving two year terms are Monica Lee Bel-lais, Lisa Takeuchi Cullen, Kaitlin Fontana, Gina Gionfriddo, A.M. Homes, Erica Saleh, Michael Winship, Gail Lee, Ashley Feinberg and Kelly Stout.

In addition, Eight people have been voted to the board of the **Writers Guild of America West** (WGAW). Seven of whom were incumbents.

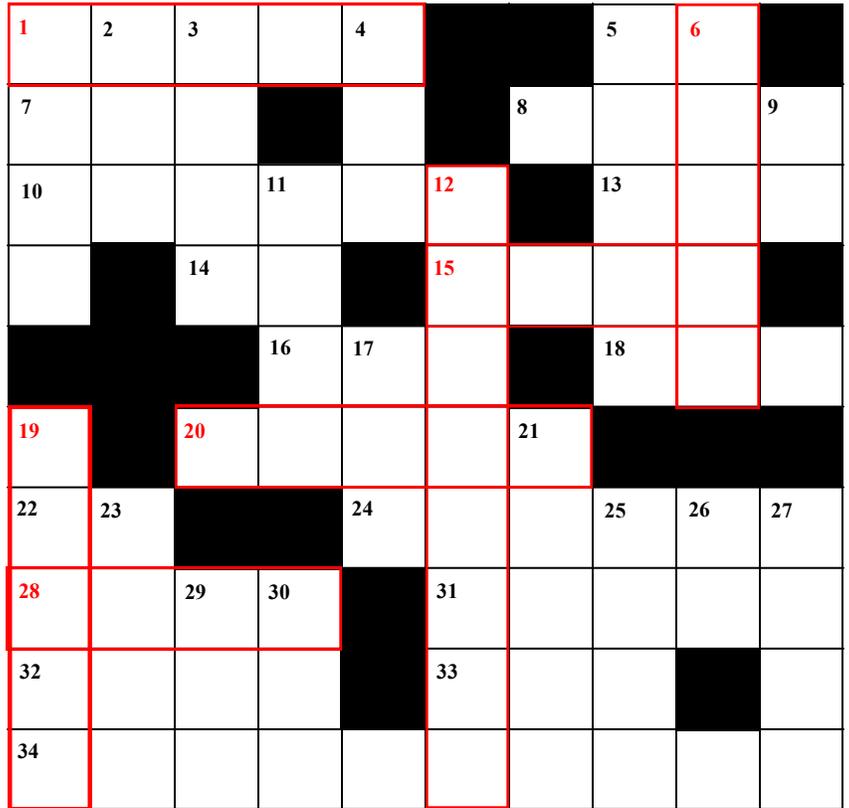
Serving for the next two years are Betsy Thomas, Deric A. Hughes,

Ashley Gable, Patti Carr, David Slack, Eric Haywood, Travis Donnelly and Patric M. Verrone.

"A heartfelt 'thank you' to all the candidates that ran this year," said WGAW President David A. Goodman in a press release. "The work of the Board continues, and we're fortunate that we have so many members ready to step forward and give their free time to help protect and advance the interests of all our members."

Across

1. A group of lions.
5. Gloria Steinem's magazine.
7. Up to now.
8. Single performance.
10. The daring activity in the movies "Rebel without a Cause" and "Grease."
13. Electrified molecule.
14. The chemical symbol for mercury.
15. **Strong desire.**
16. Columbus school, initially.
18. Biblical pronoun.
20. **Fury.**
22. Dorm VIP.
24. A driver's red light words?
28. **Resentful desire.**
31. Christopher Hahn's passion.
32. English children's writer Blyton, to pals.
33. Homer's animated neighbor.
34. What the seven **red answers** are often considered.



Down

1. Flaming funeral structure.
2. Irish actor Stephen.
3. Urge.
4. Really long time period.
5. Slightly wet.
6. **Tree dwelling mammal.**
9. Light switch option.
11. Russian composer Stravinsky, to pals.
12. **Excessive eating.**
17. Swedish airline.
19. **What Gordon Gecko praised in the film "Wall Street."**
21. Dreams companion.
23. Queen Elizabeth II's only daughter.
25. Foot prefix.
26. The chemical symbol for argon.
27. What many beach lovers hope for.
29. A road in Ancient Rome.
30. 1942 film starring James Cagney, Initially.

Last Month's Solution

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T		S	T	U		B	E	N	T
	K	E	R	R		E	C	T	O
T	I	N	A			T	R	E	E
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