PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

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In Uncertain Times for Artists, Playwrights' Center Dedicates a New Building to Playwrights

Saint Paul, MN – September 3, 2025 While many arts organizations and theaters have had to close their doors, on September 20 we'll be opening new ones. Construction of 710 Raymond Avenue is complete, and the playwrights are here doing and sharing their work. Now we need our community to join us, as we dedicate and celebrate our freshly-built arts center in Saint Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone.

> *"Everyone knows we have lots of lake cabins, scotch tape and potlucks…It's a good time to ask how Minnesota became the land of 10,000 playwrights."* – Pioneer Press

> *"Playwrights' Center ha(s) created a space that is all about giving playwrights what they need to uncover their new play, whether it's seeing it breathe in front of a crowd or working with specific designers or collaborators."* – American Theatre magazine

> *"Little known to the public, the center is a key engine in the development of plays across the nation."* – Star Tribune

Who we are

In 1971 six writers turned to one another for artistic and professional support and founded Playwrights' Center. Today we serve 2,500+ artists across the United States and internationally, still from our home in the Twin Cities. We find and meet playwrights where they are, sustaining them with resources including time, space, money and connection at all stages of their careers.

As one of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, we focus on both supporting playwrights and promoting new plays to production at theaters across the country.

Why we moved

That grassroots mutual-aid collective- of the 1970s began with midnight readings in the old West Bank Firehouse (now Mixed Blood Theatre)- but quickly expanded into coffeehouses, the Walker Art Center, the Northeast Neighborhood House, and several other locations around town.

Soon, we needed a home. In 1979 we found one in the Olivet Church in Seward (owned by Augsburg at the time) and stayed there for 45 years.

2301 East Franklin Avenue became a place where artists could find support of all kinds, so they could take necessary risks in their work. Over the decades we spent in that little church, countless brilliant plays were born and our impact spread to Broadway and beyond. From August Wilson to Martyna Majok, 724 playwrights (and counting) have called Playwrights' Center their artistic home.

As the need for our support has grown we have grown to meet that need. In 2016, we knew we would soon have to either leave 2301 Franklin or drastically renovate it. By 2020 we had decided to move and set our sights on 710 Raymond. By 2023 our staff, membership, programming, and services had expanded to the point where we were bursting at the seams, and knew that by the time the building was ready for us we would be more than ready for it. The resources we provide were becoming increasingly scarce and harder for artists to access elsewhere, and we were already meeting the moment by deepening our commitment to playwrights.

Thanks to years of work by dozens of dedicated people, our new home has become a reality and we've moved across the river into Saint Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone. 710 Raymond was once the granary for horses pulling trollies down University Avenue, then housed a family business for generations, and is now a testament to Minnesota's identity as a place where the arts are still valued, supported, and funded.

As the arts in our country continue to face constant threat, we have stayed open with the overwhelming support of the community we've built through decades of good work and good will. Many organizations have had to close their doors. We know the privilege, and are proud to carry the responsibility, of opening new ones.

Our new season supports and features a diversity of voices, because that's our same decades-old mission, now being lived in a brand new space. And despite institutional, social, and governmental pressure on arts organizations to turn our backs on all but a small demographic of artists, in this new building we can continue to say: all are welcome here.

Event Dates

September 18: We'll offer a **Taste of the Season**: our annual fundraiser open to all our supporters. This is your chance to sneak past the rope extra early.

September 20: The House Is Open! Our doors officially open to the public, with a big joyous community celebration.

October 24: Our public season begins with the return of our annual **PlayLabs Festival.**

Other Important Dates

June 30: Community members and associated playwrights gathered at 2301 Franklin to say farewell.

July 21: Playwrights' Center staff officially began work at 710 Raymond Ave.

September 23: Public Open Hours begin. Bring your friends and stop by anytime.

September 24: Member Open Play. Come be part of the process as the audience to a new play.

October 1: Member Open Hours Our membership team begins opening their doors to all members every Wednesday from 12 to 3 p.m.

October 7: Architects in Conversation We'll kick off our annual "Artists in Conversation"

series by talking with the brilliant minds & capable hands behind our new space.

ABOUT PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

Playwrights' Center sustains, develops, and advocates for playwrights and their work to realize their full artistic potential. Through the practice of inclusive theater-making, Playwrights' Center fosters engagement towards an equitable, empathetic, and boundlessly imaginative world. The Center serves playwrights by starting and sustaining careers, developing new work, and connecting playwrights to theaters. Each year at the Center, fellows and Core Writers receive more than $450,000 in direct support, 60+ new plays are workshopped, playwrights connect with 100 producing theaters through partnership programs, and over 2,500 member playwrights from around the world find resources to achieve their artistic vision. Since its founding in 1971, the Playwrights' Center has become one of the nation's most generous and well-respected theater organizations, helping launch the careers of numerous nationally recognized artists such as August Wilson, Lee Blessing, Jordan Harrison, Carlyle Brown, Craig Lucas, Jeffrey Hatcher, Melanie Marnich, Kira Obolensky, and Larissa FastHorse. Work developed through Center programs has been seen nationwide on such stages as Yale Rep, Woolly Mammoth, the Guthrie, Goodman, and many others.

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