

Published October 12th, 2022

## Town Hall Theatre reintroduces itself with Oct. 15 Open House

Submitted by Elizabeth Curtis



Daniel J. Eslick (Curator of Artistic Programming)  
Photo provided

Contra Costa's oldest continually-operating theatre company has used the difficulties of the last two-and-a-half years as an opportunity to create a new and unique kind of community-based theatre company. In an open house at 6 p.m. on Oct. 15, Town Hall Theatre wants to re-introduce itself to the community and share where it sees the historic theatre going forward.

Since reducing its programming and moving it online in early 2020, Town Hall Theatre has taken steps to completely replace and reconstruct its artistic programming and all-ages theatre education classes in order to create a better, more impactful company. The most impactful change Town Hall has made has been to its artistic programming with the adoption of a "curation model."

In 2020 the company made the difficult choice to eliminate the position of artistic director. "At the time it was entirely a financial decision," says Managing Director Dennis Markam. "But as we looked forward we saw a chance to address an issue we were facing pre-COVID: how do you organically foster more diversity and inclusiveness not only on our stage, but in positions for leadership and direction?" The solution was to create a new position of Curator of Artistic Programming, who will focus on outreach and encouraging artists around the

Bay Area to submit works that had significance or connection to them. The CAP would then work with a committee of staff, board, and community members to develop a Main Stage season that reflects the interests and experience of the Bay Area artistic community.

"As both a producer and artist in the area I have seen so many directors that have been overlooked with fresh takes on canonical material, and playwrights with beautifully fresh stories that should be out there for people to see," says Daniel J. Eslick, Town Hall's new Curator of Artistic Programming. "Yet, because of systemic problems those incredible artists are overlooked. Another big programming change is the New Voices Series. This is Town Hall's new works program that consists of a series of small-scale productions and readings that feature local playwrights whose work is still in the workshopping phase. This offers playwrights a chance to hear their work aloud and see it `on its feet.'

"I feel so lucky to be able to help champion these new pieces as the Curator of Artistic Programming and someone who loves the medium of theatre," says Eslick. "And I'm so thrilled to be able to lead our community on a journey into uncharted waters. All I can say is, keep an eye on what we're creating."

The Town Hall Open House will give the community a chance to meet some of the staff and board of Town Hall, ask questions, hear about the upcoming season and plans for the space (which the theatre company now owns), and offer feedback and guidance for what they would like to see on the Town Hall Stage. The Oct. 15 Open House is free and will be followed by the final pay-what-you-like performance of "The Body Play," which is part of the New Voices Series and kicks off Town Hall's 2022-23 Season.



Dennis Markam (Managing Director) Photo provided

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA