

THE FLEA THEATER: REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

September 2009

The Flea Theater and its project manager Levien & Company are seeking an entrepreneurial, creative architectural firm with high sensitivity to cost and a history of bold solutions to design The Flea's new home in Lower Manhattan. We provide below information about The Flea, the site and the submission we seek from firms interested in being asked to submit full proposals for architectural services.

ABOUT THE FLEA

Founded in 1996 by three of New York's most acclaimed downtown theater artists—director Jim Simpson, designer Kyle Chepulis, and playwright Mac Wellman—The Flea aspires to the highest standards of Off-Off Broadway for artists and audiences alike. From A.R. Gurney to Adam Rapp, from unknown choreographers to renowned composers, and from one-night readings to sold-out shows, The Flea's intimate spaces provide a venue for cutting-edge performance and the development of new work in all disciplines and a home for the Bat Theater Company, one of the most diverse and innovative young resident acting companies in Manhattan. Known as an incubator and generator of risk-taking, provocative theater, The Flea has become a place for expression and debate about the important issues of our time.

As a testament to our success, we have been honored with two OBIE Awards, an Otto Award and, in May 2004, a Drama Desk Award for Distinguished Achievement commending our dedication to “adventurous theater.” Past Flea productions include Anne Nelson's *The Guys*, A.R. Gurney's *O Jerusalem*, Mrs. Farnsworth (New York Times Best Play List 2004), *Screen Play* and *Post Mortem*, Elizabeth Swados' *JABU*, Karen Finley's *The Return of the Chocolate Smearred Woman*, the OBIE-award winning *Benten Kozo*, Yussef El Guindi's *Back of the Throat*, Julian Sheppard's *Los Angeles*, Adam Rapp's *Bingo with the Indians*, and Will Eno's *Oh, the Humanity and other exclamations*. In addition to presenting new work by artists such as Mac Wellman, Len Jenkin, Alice Tuan, Mabou Mines, Kathleen Supové, LAVA, and the New York Goofs, the Flea hosts the popular “Music With a View” and “Dance Conversation” series, presenting free performances monthly of cutting-edge music and dance curated by Exploding Piano's Kathleen Supové and choreographer Nina Winthrop.

THE SITE AND THE FLEA'S PLANS

The Flea is acquiring a 3,600 square foot site on Thomas Street between Broadway and Church Streets, a short distance from its current home. In its new location, with funding from multiple City and State sources and numerous private donors, The Flea will create an arts center that will embody its risk-taking, provocative and cutting-edge spirit. The new structure will house three theaters – a 100-seat Concert Theater, a 60-seat Letterbox Theater, and an 80-seat thrust stage Pit Theater. The 12,000 square foot, four-story center will also contain a dynamic, dramatic reception/café area, a rehearsal room – vitally important not only to The Flea but to the surrounding arts community – offices, comfortable modern dressing rooms, and technical and other support space.

The site affords the opportunity for bold design of the building, and dual possibilities for its orientation, as it fronts on Thomas Street but also abuts in the back a large, privately owned, public plaza with direct access to Duane Street on the south. Part of the assignment will include analysis of different approaches to orienting the building, including presentations to the plaza's owners to spark their enthusiasm for sharing their space with The Flea.

PRELIMINARY SUBMISSIONS

If your firm would be interested in being considered for the list of recipients for Requests for Proposals, please submit the following information:

- your firm's name, contact information, and a brief synopsis of the work you do;
- a statement describing your firm's particular abilities to create a fresh, exciting design and a unique product at a low cost;
- a description of your theater experience, or, if you have none, a description of other work you consider relevant;
- a brief statement as to how you would envision working with two of The Flea's founding members, Artistic Director Jim Simpson and designer Kyle Chepulis, to realize their concept of The Flea's future;
- a description of your experience and relationships with New York City, New York State and other public funders of the arts; and
- three examples of your firm's work that you consider particularly relevant to this assignment.

If you are interested, please send your reply by mail or email, not later than October 19, 2009 to:

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thank you in advance for your interest in our exciting project.