

sandra feinstein-



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PRO TURN PROVES A SUCCESS FOR GAMM THEATRE

PAWTUCKET, RI (July 24, 2006) —Tony Estrella, artistic director for The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre (The Gamm), is thrilled to announce the conclusion of the company's **first full season as a year-round professional theater and the nonprofit company's most successful fiscal year to date.**

The Gamm's **\$963,460 in support** for the fiscal year ending June 30 represents a **20% increase** compared with \$799,484 for the previous fiscal year. Subscriptions reached **an all-time high of 1,400, or a 42% increase over the previous season**; while **single ticket revenues were up 15%**. As a result, the organization exceeded its goals, and ended its fourth consecutive fiscal year with a balanced operating budget.

The Gamm opened its 2005-06 season in September as a new member of **New England Area Theatre (NEAT)**, a bargaining unit of the **Actors Equity Association** — the union of professional stage actors in the United States. Membership in the consortium of about 15 small-to medium-sized non-profit professional theaters in the Boston area signifies an artistic and financial pledge, Estrella said.

"It was an aggressive but necessary move for the company as it both institutionalizes and makes public The Gamm's professionalism on stage and off," he said. "It's a big leap forward and a signal that we are a serious arts institution with a long-term commitment to the future of arts and culture in Rhode Island and greater Boston."

The Gamm's first show of the season, an award-winning adaptation of Dostoyevsky's ***Crime and Punishment*** by Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus, was also the company's most successful production to date, **surpassing 20 years of box offices records**. Over 3,100 people attended the show, including 1,200 subscribers and over 200 high school students who attended weekday matinees. The critically acclaimed show, which played to 90% capacity houses and nightly standing ovations, was extended a week due to popular demand. The remainder of the season played to an average 90% capacity, as well.

The Gamm opens Season 22 in September with an approximately \$975,000 budget and a goal of increasing subscriptions by 18%. To accommodate those goals, The Gamm has increased its house size from 121 to 137 seats for the upcoming season and has also added a sixth weekly performance, allowing for an additional 31% seating capacity.

Gamm Managing Director Yvonne Seggerman credited the organization's unprecedented growth to the increased generosity of individual board members and donors, as well as corporate and non-profit gifts.

"We are deeply grateful for the gifts from individual board members and their expertise and guidance in bringing new audiences and new funding sources to The Gamm," Seggerman said.

Among those providing generous support were the prestigious **Shubert Foundation** (a national foundation awarding grants to the country's best nonprofit performing arts institutions), **The Rhode Island Foundation** and **Rhode Island State Council on the Arts**. New major corporate support came from **Bank of America**.

"The Gamm Theatre is a true gem to Rhode Island's arts community, and Bank of America is pleased to have been a part of this season's great success," said **Bill Hatfield, Market President for Bank of America in Rhode Island**. "The Gamm brings world class productions to our communities and we look forward to bringing the gift of performance to a bigger audience each year."

Long-time supporters included the **Sharpe Family Foundation**, **The Providence Journal**, **Alice I. Sullivan Foundation**, **Collette Vacations**, **Citizens Bank Foundation**, **Bristol County Savings Charitable Foundation**, **Ocean State Charities Trust**, and the **U.S. Department of the Interior**. In-kind sponsors included **NBC 10**, **Rhode Island PBS**, **Barrington Printing**, **The Call**, **The Times**, **East Coast Lighting and Production Services** and **WBRU** among others.

The Gamm is especially grateful to **NBC 10** for its ongoing generosity. The station has agreed to sponsor a fourth season, underscoring its unwavering commitment to the arts community.

"We are pleased to once again help support the wonderful works produced by The Gamm Theatre," said **Lisa G. Churchville**, **NBC 10 president and general manager**. "The Arts are essential to enriching the communities we serve and NBC 10 is honored to play a role."

The Gamm also hosted its fourth and most successful fundraiser in May, netting more than **\$71,000** toward the theater's artistic and educational programming, or a 50% increase over the previous year's event. **UBS Financial Services, Inc.** was **La Grande Affaire's** presenting sponsor.

The Gamm is excited to announce the launch of **Pawtucket Literacy and Arts for Youth (PLAY)** during Season 22. This brand-new educational initiative in Pawtucket high schools and middle schools is supported by the **City of Pawtucket Planning and Redevelopment Department** through a federal **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**.

The theater will also continue its free-to-the-public programming through the **Pawtucket Humanities Forums**, supported by a grant from the **Rhode Island Council for the Humanities (RICH)**. The forums, composed of a series of staged readings of theatrical documentaries called **Straight Talk** and **post-show discussions of regularly scheduled plays** called **Shared Sundays**, began part-way through last season and will continue during Season 22.

About The Gamm

Founded in 1984 as Alias Stage, the nonprofit **Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** performs great works of the classic and modern theater in an intimate setting that fosters the vital relationship between author, actor and audience. As the cornerstone of **The Arts Exchange** at the Pawtucket Armory, The Gamm seeks to engage and enrich the community through affordable entertainment and educational programming. The Gamm is a member of **New England Area Theatre (NEAT)**, a bargaining unit of the Actors Equity Association.