

sandra feinstein-



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THE GAMM HOSTS BOOK & MOVIE EVENT WITH “FURIOUS IMPROVISATION” AUTHOR SUSAN QUINN

PAWTUCKET, RI (January 8, 2009) — **The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** (The Gamm) is pleased to host **Susan Quinn**, author of "**Furious Improvisation: How the WPA and a cast of thousands made high art out of desperate times**" for a special book and movie presentation surrounding her recently published work detailing the **WPA's Federal Theatre Project**. The talk, in which Quinn uses **rare 1930s archival film footage** to illustrate her story, will take place on **Sunday January 18 at 5 p.m.** at The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, 172 Exchange St., Pawtucket. A Q&A session, as well as a book sale and signing, will follow. **This event is open to the public at no charge.**

Of all the Depression-era jobs programs created by the Works Progress Administration, the relief effort that aimed to put thousands of actors and playwrights back to work was the most controversial. In Quinn's book and in her presentation, the author recaptures those heady years in American theater between 1935 and 1939, including the hard times in which the Federal Theatre Project began, the early sensation of the Living Newspapers, and the later successes, and controversies, surrounding the nationwide production of *It Can't Happen Here* and the incendiary *The Cradle Will Rock*. She also examines the underlying motives of Martin Dies, the Texas Congressman who founded the House Un-American Activities Committee and who brought the Federal Theater down by claiming it was a dangerous Communist operation.

"Susan Quinn has gifted us with a key moment in the history of F.D.R.'s New Deal. Especially thrilling and revelatory is the work of the Arts Project of the WPA. Not only were there rakes and shovels, jobs and food for family, there was exhilarating and hopeful theatre, music, and painting, lifting our spirits. They gave us all hope."

—*Studs Terkel*

"... a fascinating new book that describes a rare happy marriage between art and government. Susan Quinn's *Furious Improvisation* details the history of the WPA's Federal Theatre Project, a relief effort begun in the depths of the Great Depression to put thousands of actors and playwrights back to work and lift the spirits of down-and-out Americans by putting on high-quality theater."

—*Maureen Corrigan, National Public Radio*

To reserve up to 4 seats, please call **Tom DiMaggio at 401-723-4266 ext. 10**. A performance of The Gamm's production of Clifford Odets' landmark 1935 play *Awake and Sing!* follows this event at 7 p.m. For tickets, call **401-723-4266** or go to **ArtTixRI.com**.

About Susan Quinn

Susan Quinn grew up in Chillicothe, Ohio, and graduated from Oberlin College. She began her writing career as a newspaper reporter on a suburban daily outside of Cleveland, following two years as an apprentice actor at the Cleveland Playhouse, a professional repertory company. In 1967, she published her first book under the name Susan Jacobs: a nonfiction account of the making of a Broadway play called *On Stage*. In 1972, after moving to Boston, she became a regular contributor to an alternative Cambridge weekly, *The Real Paper*, then a contributor and staff writer on *Boston Magazine*. Quinn has written articles for many publications, including the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Ms. Magazine*. She has lectured all over the United States, and has spoken in France and Poland about her biography of Marie Curie. Quinn lives in Brookline, Massachusetts. For more information go to **furiousimprovisation.com**.

About The Gamm Theatre

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. 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.

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