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Tue, Nov 29, 2022 9:24AM 17:25

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

theater, houston, play, gerald, people, volunteer, gay, theatre, contemporary, hours, theaters, town, lesbian, switchboard, september, broadway, call, run, sum, community

SPEAKERS

Jewel Gray, Speaker 2, [Introduction], Speaker 1

- I** [Introduction] 00:03
KPFT Houston. The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature that may be considered objectionable by some, listener discretion is advised.
- S** Speaker 1 00:17
Hello, I don't know how Carper does that. Anywho Jewel will be in here in just a couple of seconds. Carper is out this week. So I'm going to be doing the QMZ business. Oh, yeah, I was trying that. I just can't get it out. Something like that.
- J** Jewel Gray 00:37
I'm sorry, I didn't understand you. I thought we were gonna go to the intro.
- S** Speaker 1 00:41
Oh, the intro.
- J** Jewel Gray 00:42
Difficulties here this evening.
- S** Speaker 1 00:43
Yeah, I forgot about the intro thing. Let that woman in.

J

Jewel Gray 00:48

Any woman, we're going to be special things tonight. And talking to some people from a local theatre group and find out what they're up to. We're also going to see if we can get a hold of the people from Q-Patrol tonight. And we'll be looking at This Way Out. I forgot what time but we'll be looking at This Way Out somewhere between now and two o'clock. And let's see anything else? Nope, nothing else, then why don't we go to it? Okay, as you noticed, we're running things a little differently this evening. I've got a lot of nice things I want to do tonight. Some of the things I want to do is, you know, oh, Jewel here is and I didn't tell everybody who's listening maybe for the first time. This is After Hours and this is Jewel Gray. And I wanted to read first this evening, something that's really important to me, and I wanted to get it out of the way so I didn't forget and nobody jumped on me. And that is the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard is pleased to announce our upcoming volunteer training class August 7, 8th, 14th and 15th. The Switchboard is an all volunteer organization providing business and organization referrals, HIV AIDS information, phone counseling and crisis intervention. We also operate a TTY or TDD line for the hearing impaired. Interested lesbians and gay people are invited to, I hate that, I hate that. Let's do that. Let's cross that out. And we do that, interested gay and lesbian people are invited to sign up for volunteer training. The sessions involved 32 hours of exercise and activity to prepare, prepare volunteers for phone service. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and complete both weekends of training to be eligible. While all are welcome to apply GLSH is in particular need of women and people of color to volunteer so that our staff may represent the range of experience and diversity of our entire community. Those unable to attend training in August may apply for the next training to be held November to sign up for either class or for more information call GLSH at 529-3211. Write that down, folks. That's an important number 529-3211, afternoons and evenings every day. If you don't get somebody, that means we need a volunteer there and try back later. Thank you for supporting the outreach program, outreach effort to the community sincerely, Andrew Davis, who is now our new outreach coordinator at the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. So now that is my pet peeve, my pet. And it's out of the way for this evening. Let me see. We're going to talk to in just a few seconds if I can get Gerald in here. Gerald, are you listening? Okay. Gerald is with the Theater Lab in Houston. And he's going to talk to us a little about what's going on down there, it's a new place. I haven't heard much about it. And Jimmy bumped into him. I'm sorry. I should have warned you. I was coming in here. Like I said, folks, it's my fault tonight. I'm late and I'm a little disoriented for a moment. But Gerald has come down to talk to us a little about the Houston theater, Theater Lab theater. That's it Theater Lab Houston. That's it. Okay, you guys remember the green garden Houston Montrose fiasco. So here we have the Theater Lab, Houston. And, Gerald, is this something that you're doing? Is this yours? Or are you working with the lab, the Theater Lab? Can you tell me what it is?

S

Speaker 2 04:23

Yeah, we're a brand new professional nonprofit theater, we opened in April this past year. And we're just a new nonprofit theater here in town. We have a board. And we're establishing an audience now. We're in our second show. Our first show which opened in April, was a comedy called Catholic schoolgirls. It was a very big hit. It was so big and well received that when closed. We moved it to Main Street Theater, and it's playing there on Sunday nights at 7:30. And it will be playing now. We've extended it again through September 26. So we've really started off with a big bang.

J Jewel Gray 05:01

What kind of theater? I mean, what kind of acting do you have? I mean, I know there are several different kinds and and some of the people out there are young people and they may not have attended theater before. Can you tell them what they expect when they get there?

S Speaker 2 05:13

Sure. We, our particular venue that we're specializing in is contemporary off-Broadway plays. Typically, they're Houston premieres, they're plays that haven't made it to Houston yet, but they've been around for a while, they've been in New York and another had other premieres in around the nation. And they're, they're contemporary plays, we're shooting for a young audience. And typically, there'll be plays you just don't see unless theaters here in town.

J Jewel Gray 05:41

Is it, is it, so you have its local actors, people we might have heard about doing some other stuff in town, you put together your own old troupe and, and are producing these programs on your own down there?

S Speaker 2 05:55

The show that we have now, The Sum of Us, has all Houston actors, and basically we'll stick with Houston talent, there's so much here in the city, it's not necessary to go out look for it elsewhere.

J Jewel Gray 06:06

I'm a real fan of the Alley. But unfortunately, it's just so rare that I get an opportunity to go. I would really like to be able to go to someplace that seems a little more intimate and maybe a little more accessible.

S Speaker 2 06:18

Yeah, our space has about 65 seats. We're a couple of minutes from downtown Houston, we're off the 2100 Block on Houston Avenue on Alamo Street. And we're easy to get to.

J Jewel Gray 06:31

Well, that's great. You're doing a play now currently, and it's following a real big success. So another play and you want to tell me about this play?

S

Speaker 2 06:40

Sure. The play we're doing now is from Off Broadway 1990. It's David Stevens, *The Sum of Us*, it's a terrific comedy. It's got four characters in it. And the basic premise is, it's about a father and his gay son. And the father is so accepting of the son's lifestyle, it just creates havoc on not only the son, but also the father. But it's a wonderful positive play,

J

Jewel Gray 07:05

Are your plays is going to be aimed at gay people, are they going to be pretty diverse? Or is this just happened to be, it's about a gay theme.

S

Speaker 2 07:14

No. our play's pretty much our seasonal start in September has a has a huge spread of interest and characters and plot lines and everything. Now, our theater is set up to do the very best and contemporary off Broadway plays. So it won't be targeted to any particular group. But it's certainly accessible to everybody, anybody that enjoys good theater will hopefully enjoy the stuff that we're doing at the lab.

J

Jewel Gray 07:43

Can people be watching for casting calls? I mean, will you be using that kind of local talent?

S

Speaker 2 07:47

Yeah, we did. In fact, this past week, our auditions for our first play in September will be held tomorrow, which is Sunday from one to four. And then Monday evening at 7:30. So we sent out notices to all the universities here in town, to the other theaters in town, and to the newspaper. In fact, the Post ran our, our search, I guess, notice of our additions coming up this past week.

J

Jewel Gray 08:13

Are those your regular hours when you, I mean

S

Speaker 2 08:16

Typically, auditions are held on Sundays and Mondays.

J

Jewel Gray 08:19

I'm sorry. I misunderstood you. How about your hours for programming? What kind of, do you have matinees and early service.

S

Speaker 2 08:26

It's gonna depend on the play, this particular play, *The Sum of Us*, is running Fridays and Saturday evenings at 8pm. And it'll run through Saturday, it'll close Saturday, August 28.

J

Jewel Gray 08:37

Okay, now this is supporting yourself, or is it an organization that's putting this together? I mean, is this a run for pover--profit theater?

S

Speaker 2 08:45

No, we're a nonprofit group. And basically, our ticket sales support us. And then we also have several times a year, a contributing campaign where people donate money and, or in time, goods and services. So no, right now, I think you can make a whole lot of money off of theater.

J

Jewel Gray 09:06

When people con--, would people contact you at this address, to do some maybe donating or volunteering maybe to help with? Do you take that kind of help, like set decorating and?

S

Speaker 2 09:16

Absolutely, everybody is volunteer as a nonprofit theater just now starting out. So we need all the support we can get whether its financial, or in kind, the people that do our scenery, come in and do it for us. And it's such a positive atmosphere because everybody's there because they want to be there. It's fun, it's creative. It gives somebody time to do their artistic side that perhaps they don't get to do during the day because I haven't identified an eight to five job. And if people ask me, you know why I'm involved with it. Certainly, it's because I have a great respect and love for the theater. But it's also sort of like my hobby. Lots of people have hobbies, some people go to the bowling alleys. Well, I go and do theater at night, on weekends.

J

Jewel Gray 10:02

And that's kind of what I was gonna ask you now here is where the impetus for this came from. What did just, was it a couple of people sit around, say we we should start a theater?

S

Speaker 2 10:11

Well, yeah, actually, it almost happened that way. Some of us a couple years ago, were involved with some other theaters here in town. And we got together for dinner one night, and we were sitting around chatting, and we were sort of talking about theatre here in Houston.

And we're pretty much, I guess, highly critical of about what was being done. And so the conversation sort of turned, turned to well, what if we had a theater, and we did have a building that we had. And so it evolved that way. We went in and renovated this building that we have, and took us two years, we went through the city and got our permits, and in that process got our not for profit status from the IRS. And it just evolved that way.

J

Jewel Gray 10:54

Well, it's always nice to have a small intimate theatres in a community. What do you think about our theater in the city? I mean, overall, what do you think we are fortunate in the city, do you think? I mean, I heard you say something a moment ago that said, you were not really as happy as you'd like you, you might like to be with a theater locally. Are you comfortable sharing?

S

Speaker 2 11:15

Sure, I think that Houston certainly has some exciting theater going on. But if you look at us, based off of what's happening in Seattle, or Chicago, other cities that are a lot smaller than Houston, there is a lot of a lot of theater going on in those towns, Atlanta, for instance. And Houston being the nation's fourth largest city, there's really not a whole lot of diversity, and really new, new contemporary stuff going on. There are places that, there are theaters in town, that do certain things, a lot of theaters do the classics. And we certainly love and respect the classics. It's just not who we are. There are a lot of theaters that do brand new works. And I happen to feel that if you're going to do a new play, that's never been done before, it really should go through several stages, and even months and perhaps even longer of development, rather than just somebody writing it, and then having it produced. So our particular venue is very specialized. We know exactly who we are, we know the kind of plays we want to do. And we definitely think that there's a niche in the marketplace for us as far as the theater marketplace. And that's who we are. And that's what we're all about. And so far, we've been given terrific press, by the theater critics here in town, we've been giving wonderful media exposure, and it sort of says something, it sort of says that, okay, you know, so far what you've tapped into is viable. And there's an interest of it.

J

Jewel Gray 12:48

People reaching out, receiving. Well, I was gonna ask you, you answered my question. I was gonna ask you about that. You know, I've been to other large cities. And that's why I asked you that question, because other large cities are a lot of intimate almost every other street corner has some kind of theater group. And I've always thought that Houston was lagging behind, even though what I read in the papers and in places of publicity is that Houston is, you know, civilized and cultural. And yet, I find that I find the Alley sometimes inaccessible to me, because I feel uncomfortable in that crowd. And I'm always looking for something more intimate. And would people be, you know, comfortable in jeans and, you know, yeah.

S

Speaker 2 13:33

Yeah, my crowd is pretty much, they're just out to see something. I think the basic way to

mean, my crowd is pretty much, they're just out to see something. I think the basic way to define our crowd is, is, is they're exploratory. They have that sense of adventure. That's the type of theater that we're doing. It's not off, it's not your typical theater. And we're sort of in a bohemian neighborhood, we're off the beaten path. So we've had people show up in suits and ties and down to jeans and shorts, and that's the kind of theater we are, we're highly accessible to anybody that is interested in what's going on in contemporary theatre today.

J Jewel Gray 14:08

And while we can't tell you how much it costs to get in, I can tell you that it's, it's affordable. And what Gerald would like to say is that

S Speaker 2 14:17

To all of the listeners out there, we'd certainly like to have you come in see The Sum of Us, join us and we will be playing through August 28. And if you call the theater box office, should I tell them the phone number? It's 868-7156. If you call the theater box office and tell him that you heard us here on

J Jewel Gray 14:36

After Hours.

S Speaker 2 14:37

After Hours then we will have a deal for you.

J Jewel Gray 14:41

Great, see there now, you've got a special here, no one no one else in town has got this, just the listeners of After Hours. Gerald says that if you give him a call and tell em you heard it here, that they can make some special compensation with you at the, at the, on the phone for the price of the ticket. So Gerald, I know we were talking earlier about how much time you spent here. Is there something else you want to say? I mean, something you'd like to add to what we've just talked about? I mean, this is like free time.

S Speaker 2 15:10

Sure. We will be starting our regular season and come September and our whole theme is dangerous theater. We're going to be doing five new Houston premieres, very exciting off Broadway type plays will open on September 9, with a Canadian playwright Brad Fraser's Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love. And it's terrific play. It's sort of like a

20-something group of seven characters that sort of meet and intersect during the course of the play, but one of them turns out to be a serial killer. So it's both drama, and it's also X rated, it will be for adults only. So that should certainly get some of your listeners interested in.

J Jewel Gray 15:52
Well, it's got my interest.

S Speaker 2 15:54
And then we'll open in November, with a wonderful play by a female playwright off Broadway legend is actually what she is MarÃa Irene FornÃ©s's, Fefu and Her Friends. It's eight women that get together and just sort of talk about everything from men, sex, politics, religion, the whole shebang.

J Jewel Gray 16:14
Well, that does sound interesting.

S Speaker 2 16:15
Those are the first two plays that will kick us off.

J Jewel Gray 16:17
Are there gonna be any lesbian women? Are they?

S Speaker 2 16:20
You have to come to the play.

J Jewel Gray 16:22
Well, now I, now I will have to come see the play now. It'll drive me crazy.

S Speaker 2 16:25
There's all kinds, I'll say this, there's all kinds of people in the play.

J Jewel Gray 16:31

And you, with the right support, this could go on a long time, in your opinion.

S

Speaker 2 16:36

I hope so, I really do. We've, we've worked really hard the last two years to get us open in April. And we've certainly started off with a bang. And we've had wonderful support from the gay community. And we're gonna do some terrific plays. And it's a wonderful place to come and see live theater. That's happening now.

J

Jewel Gray 16:56

Great. Well, Gerald, I'm really glad you could come down. I'm glad we met you here. And I tell you what, if you have some information you want to get us on a regular basis, we'll be glad to pass that on to our listeners. And I'm sure they'll be interested.

S

Speaker 2 17:08

Great. Thanks.

J

Jewel Gray 17:10

Thanks. What do you got going here? Big guy. Where's big guy?

S

Speaker 1 17:13

Here he is.

J

Jewel Gray 17:14

What do you got going?

S

Speaker 1 17:16

Let's see. Tom Robinson. "Glad to Be Gay."

J

Jewel Gray 17:20

All right.