



ARROW STREET ARTS, A NEW CAMBRIDGE NON-PROFIT, TO RENOVATE AND OPERATE VENUE IN HARVARD SQUARE

The project's two performance spaces, opening in 2023, will provide much-needed creative facilities for local performing artists and non-profit arts organizations:

A fully renovated black box theater, and a rehearsal/performance/event studio

A partnership with the Cambridge Community Foundation expands opportunities for local artists and organizations to utilize the venues and create new works

Moonbox Productions to be a Resident Company

The collaboration returns the award-winning theater group to Harvard Square, where it was founded in 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, January 12, 2023 —Cambridge, MA—**Arrow Street Arts, Inc. (ASA)**, a new Cambridge, MA-based non-profit, announces the renovation and operation of two multi-use arts spaces in Harvard Square—a black box theater and street-front studio on Arrow Street in Cambridge (formerly the American Repertory Theater's Oberon performance space). Founded by David Altshuler, a long-time Cambridge resident and arts advocate, Arrow Street Arts reflects the vision that "*Art Creates Community and Community Creates Belonging*," and the organization and its venues are being designed to be a welcoming resource for both local artists and community organizations.

Informed by the region's well-documented need for accessible rehearsal and performance spaces, most notably in the [Boston Performing Arts Facilities Assessment](#) and Cambridge's [Mayor's Arts Task Force Report](#), Arrow Street Arts addresses the pressing need of small to mid-size organizations and individual artists for spaces accommodating audiences ranging from 150-600. Outfitted with comprehensive lighting, sound, and production capacities, ASA's facility offers both venues and production services that will help meet community and artists' needs. Arrow Street Arts' commitment to its vision supporting

artists and the community includes ASA entering into a long-term lease with building owner Harvard University.

Locally focused and artist-centric, Arrow Street Arts is committed to being a learning organization, exploring issues of affordability, access, equity, and sustainability and increasing the resources available to artists and community organizations. To further this aspirational mission, Arrow Street Arts has partnered with the Cambridge Community Foundation to provide local artistic producers subsidized use of ASA's venues through a dedicated grant program and as partners in strengthening the capacity of the local artist community.

Among the expected wide-ranging roster of local arts creators using the space, the Arrow Street venue will provide a new home for Moonbox Productions, the award-winning Cambridge-based theatre company, which had been searching for a local base of operations for its rehearsals and productions for over a decade. Moonbox Productions will become a resident company at the Arrow Street facility, bringing its programming and organizational commitment to community, diversity, and accessibility to Harvard Square where Moonbox launched in 2011.

David Altshuler, Arrow Street Arts founder, says, "As a long-time resident of Cambridge who has dedicated much of my life to supporting and helping produce art, I have experienced performing arts' powers to illuminate the commonalities in our shared humanity while exploring, respecting, and celebrating our differences. During the pandemic, we lost connection and our communities suffered. With Arrow Street Arts' enhanced creative spaces for rehearsals, productions, and events, performers and audiences will come together and thereby strengthen our community. By promoting culture and enlivening the neighborhood, Arrow Street Arts will amplify the work of artists and all who contribute to the fabric of Cambridge and the Greater Boston area."

Sean Caron, vice president for campus services at Harvard adds, "When vetting proposals for 2 Arrow St., Harvard looked for a partner who understands the importance of honoring the Oberon legacy of contributing to the local Cambridge arts scene with inclusion and vibrancy as two central goals. In Arrow Street Arts, we're excited to be able to support an expanded performance venue where the Cambridge community and performing artists across Boston come together with Harvard students, faculty, and alumni to be inspired in Harvard Square."

With renovations underway and planned by Charles Rose Architects, the 11,500 square-foot Arrow Street facility will be revitalized with extensive production enhancements to two flexible performance spaces and other upgrades that will enhance both the audience and artist experiences. A 4,500 square-foot black box theater will offer various seating configurations for up to approximately 300 audience members, and a new 1,100 square-foot street-front studio will offer a more intimate venue for smaller productions and events as well as rehearsal space for productions destined for the black box. The studio is expected to accommodate 100+ people. Both multi-use spaces will support rehearsals, performances, and special events across a range of artistic genres, including theater, spoken word/readings, dance, music, and film. The studio is expected to open in the second quarter of 2023, while the renovated black box theater is scheduled to open in late 2023.

Jason Weeks, Executive Director at [Cambridge Arts](#), adds, "When Oberon closed at this location during the pandemic, the loss was deeply felt by our creative community. The introduction of Arrow Street Arts is an exciting addition to Cambridge's artistic landscape. With two new flexible performance spaces for

creation and presentation and a long-term partnership with the Cambridge Community Foundation that ensures equitable access to these resources by local creatives, we have much to celebrate. This project also underscores Harvard University's ongoing commitment to the important role of arts and culture in ensuring a vibrant Harvard Square as a welcoming and creative space for local artists and audiences."

Partnership with Cambridge Community Foundation

In addition to its revitalization of the two performance spaces, Arrow Street Arts has partnered with the [Cambridge Community Foundation](#) (CCF) to increase equitable access to the performance spaces for artists, arts organizations, and other community groups who wish to present their work at ASA's venue, especially those from historically underserved communities. Since 1916, CCF has served as Cambridge's local giving platform as a civic leader, grantmaker, and philanthropic partner.

Given the Foundation's deep connections in the community and its commitment to supporting the arts, it will serve as a connector for local artists and community-based arts programs that reflect the cultural diversity of Cambridge. Through the newly established Arrow Street Arts Fund, the Foundation will be able to subsidize artists' access to the ASA venues. This new fund will be administered exclusively by CCF.

The ASA/CCF partnership will also focus on raising new funds for CCF's Cultural Capital Fund, established in 2020 in partnership with the City of Cambridge, which supports the creative work by Cambridge-centered artists working throughout the city. In the wake of the pandemic, the Foundation created the Cambridge Artist Relief Fund, followed by the Cultural Capital Fund to provide immediate support to arts organizations at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the viability of the arts ecosystem for years to come. Since March 2020, these efforts combined have infused about \$900,000 into the city's arts sector.

"A hub of creativity and innovation, Cambridge has long been a celebrated home for artists and the arts, but the city's economic growth has had a dramatic impact on the creative community and others who struggle to live and work here," said Geeta Pradhan, president of the Cambridge Community Foundation. "We see the Arrow Street Arts Fund and the growth of the Cultural Capital Fund as key to ensuring the arts are able to thrive in Cambridge, healing and bringing the community together and keeping our city vibrant."

More information on these programs will be announced later in 2023.

Moonbox to become a Resident Company

[Moonbox Productions](#) will be a resident company at the Arrow Street venue. This move will be a homecoming for the award-winning Cambridge-based theater company, which was founded in Harvard Square in 2011 under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Sharman Altshuler.

"It is a thrill to be a part of the reimagining and reactivation of this iconic theater space," said Altshuler. "Since launching Moonbox at the Brattle Theater in 2011, we have produced work in nine different venues, so we are delighted to be returning to our roots in Harvard Square, and to finally have a place to

call home. The energy around the Arrow Street venue is incredibly exciting, and it is an honor to be a part of it.”

Founded to provide a theatrical home for local artists as well as a platform for local non-profits, Moonbox has continued to expand its social mission while receiving numerous awards for its productions, including the 2019 Boston Theatre Critics Association’s Elliot Norton Award for “*Outstanding Musical Production*” for its production of “PARADE.”

Moonbox is deeply committed to creating community through live, in-person theater. Moonbox believes in providing platforms and opportunities both on and off-stage for under-represented artists—including those who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, as well as people living with disabilities. Moonbox also seeks to strengthen its community through its nonprofit partnerships, mentoring programs for emerging artists, continuing education programs for local theater professionals, collaborative opportunities for local performers, and a robust new works development program fostering the cultivation and performance of new plays. Moonbox believes that not only is compelling theater equitable and accessible – but also that equitable, accessible theater is, in itself, compelling.

Moonbox has continually broadened its commitment to anti-racism, social justice, and community advocacy. Since November 2020, Moonbox has hired a Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; assembled an Advisory Board of theater professionals representing BIPOC, Deaf, and disabled perspectives; and committed to increasing BIPOC representation at every level of the organization.

Looking Ahead in 2023

In the second quarter of 2023, Arrow Street Arts will open the studio space for limited rehearsals and select events. In late 2023, the black box theater will open for use by artists and presenters.

Branding and venue naming will be announced later in 2023. ASA will be onboarding staff over the course of the year.

With assistance from the Cambridge Community Foundation, Cambridge Arts, and other business and arts service organizations, Arrow Street Arts has begun a series of conversations with artists and arts and culture organizations to further develop the plans for the venue, all in service to the artists and their communities.

About David Altshuler

Born in Boston, David Altshuler is an entrepreneur balancing careers in technology, finance/investments, graduate education, and nonprofit leadership from offices he has maintained in Harvard Square. When he decided to return to Cambridge in 1997, his first priority was to subscribe to the ART, Huntington Theatre, and Boston Symphony Orchestra. His enthusiasm for the arts led to two decades serving as a trustee at the Huntington and over a decade at the BSO. David’s commitment to nonprofits extends to MIT’s Council on the Arts and the New England Aquarium. David is the founder of TechFoundation—a nonprofit organization that delivers technology, expertise, and capital to help nonprofit organizations like Teach for America, United Way, the Nature Conservancy, CCAE, and

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homeless shelters. Academically, David taught at The Wharton School and The Law School at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was the Irey Grant Memorial Lecturer in business law and finance (and from which he would return to Cambridge in time to put his sons to bed). He is also the co-founder and co-director of the Brigham Education Institute-TechFoundation Data Science Internship Program with student researchers at Brigham & Women's Hospital/Dana Farber Cancer Center. He is married to Sharman, a former critical care veterinarian and founder/producing artistic director artist of Moonbox Productions, and they have four sons, all raised in Cambridge. David is a graduate of Williams College and The Wharton School, and is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations.

Inquiries about the project should be made via the web at www.ArrowStArts.org

Media Contact: Stephanie Janes PR, (617) 419-0445, stephanie@stephaniejanespr.com

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