

**ARROW STREET ARTS
TO ACTIVATE CAMBRIDGE PERFORMANCE SPACE THIS FALL
WITH *SWEENEY TODD*, PRESENTED BY MOONBOX PRODUCTIONS**

**Performances Begin October 13, 2023 in Arrow Street Arts' Black Box
Following First Phase of Building Renovations**

New Street-Front Studio to Open this November

**Renovations to be Completed and the Harvard Square Venue
to be Fully Operational by March 2024**

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For Immediate Release—August 9, 2023 (Cambridge, MA) — [Arrow Street Arts, Inc.](#) (ASA), the new Cambridge nonprofit publicly launched earlier this year, will begin programming activity at its multi-space venue in Harvard Square this fall as part of a two-phased opening plan. With public performances beginning October 13, 2023, the facility will welcome audiences for the first time since it closed at the start of the pandemic in March 2020. The first production to be staged, the Tony-Award-winning musical *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, by Stephen Sondheim, will be the initial collaboration through ASA's partnership with resident company Moonbox Productions.

With a significant renovation and expansion of its creative spaces, ASA's venue at 2 Arrow Street adds much-needed performance, rehearsal, and event space for local performers and arts organizations. Demand for space by artists and producers in Greater Boston has been well-documented in several major research studies over the past several years, and the tremendous response to ASA's January 2023 project announcement confirms this need. Since then, ASA has engaged with over 100 artists and producing organizations about the potential use of the stages.

The initial comprehensive renovation plan has been segmented into two phases to accommodate extended supply chain and fabrication timelines associated with certain custom-built elements and new theatrical systems.

ASA will take advantage of a natural hiatus between construction phases to activate its largest stage - the flexible 4,500 square foot Black Box performance space - for a limited engagement of *Sweeney Todd* before temporarily pausing Black Box production activity for the completion of the second phase of work in early 2024.

The 1,100 square-foot street-front Studio will begin operations in November 2023, and will remain open even while the Black Box renovation is ongoing. Initially, ASA, in collaboration with the Cambridge Community Foundation and Cambridge Arts, will invite artists and organizations

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across a range of artistic genres and program formats to use the space while ASA staff test multiple theatrical systems and room configurations. ASA's operational practices assessment will benefit from direct real-time feedback from the Studio's creative users. When fully activated, the Black Box and Studio spaces can operate independently or they can be integrated via public lobby and backstage access to provide a larger footprint for performances and other experiences.

This fall's soft opening of the Black Box performance space features a staging of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, produced by ASA resident theater company Moonbox Productions, from October 13 - November 5, 2023. A number of temporary accommodations will be made so that the facility can safely and comfortably welcome audiences and performers part-way through construction. The space will have a "pop-up" atmosphere and an "under construction" feel. Among the provisional elements in place for *Sweeney Todd* will be temporary audience seating, a modified entry between the lobby and black box, rented theatrical lighting and sound, and expanded backstage production support functions.

Following *Sweeney Todd*, the Black Box space will temporarily close to install comfortable new audience seating, and for build-out of theatrical systems and completion of remaining work on fixtures, equipment, signage, and enhanced technologies. The venue will be fully operational by March 2024, with a grand opening celebration in late spring 2024.

As an artist- and community-focused performance center, Arrow Street Arts has partnered with the Cambridge Community Foundation (CCF) to provide local artistic producers subsidized use of ASA's venues through a dedicated grant program. With increasing access and equity at the core of their partnership, ASA and CCF are committed to strengthening the creative capacity of the local artistic community.

Additional information on programming for the full launch will be announced in the fall, along with details about the Cambridge Community Foundation's grant program that will subsidize the use of ASA's performance spaces by local artists and arts organizations.

As Arrow Street Arts works toward opening, the organization is building its day-to-day operations team, including facility management, rental/booking, and all areas of theatrical production and performance support and guest experience. ASA is also developing a new name and brand identity for the venue, to be announced at a later date.

Renovation Highlights

Arrow Street Arts started renovations on the facility in January 2023. 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. Major elements of the renovation are summarized below.

The 4,500 square-foot Black Box performance space will offer various seating configurations for as many as 300 audience members, and a new 1,100 square-foot street-front Studio will offer a more intimate venue for smaller performances and events. Depending on use, 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.

Phase 1 Renovations

expected completion before programmatic activity begins this fall, include:

- Expanded the building's arts footprint by 10 percent with a new performance/rehearsal Studio and additional public lobby space
- New restrooms with individual, private, all-gender audience restrooms
- Installation of resilient stage flooring in Black Box and sprung floor in Studio
- Increased number of dressing rooms and new green room for performers
- Production support facilities including wardrobe/costume center and laundry
- Rebuilt HVAC systems for enhanced heating, cooling and air exchange/ventilation
- Enhanced sound-proofing between spaces
- New theatrical lighting and rigging grids in both performance spaces
- Performance-ready lighting audio in Studio
- Installation of assistive listening devices and audio description headsets
- Centralized ticketing services for all ASA performances and events

Phase 2 Renovations

(post-*Sweeney Todd*) will include:

- Installation of custom motorized, retractable seating unit with
 - comfortable, wide theater seats
 - extended leg room
 - ability to customize seating capacity and configuration per event
- Installation of industry-leading lighting, sound, projection and video production equipment
- Expansion of resources to improve access and participation for artists and audience members who utilize wheelchairs or other mobility aids, and those who live with any degree of hearing or visual impairment or other disability
- Completion of a new kitchen to support catering, food + beverage service, concessions
- New theatrical grid, lighting and sound systems for Lobby

For the latest about Arrow Street Arts, including information about renting the spaces, visit www.arrowstarts.org.

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