

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Arts partnerships seen as way to go

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organizations participating in the initiative that hope to use information gathered to pool resources and identify and attract audiences.

"Collaboration is the best way to do business in arts and culture, not because it's a question of just surviving, it's a question of thriving," says Steven Kern, executive director of the Everson Museum of Art. "You don't just do it when times are tough. You do it as a way of doing business."

The museum's "Turner to Cezanne: Masterpieces From the Davies Collection," which closed Jan. 3, was memorable for many reasons, including the multiple programs spinning off of the traveling art exhibition of Impressionist paintings.

The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Opera, Syracuse Stage and Onondaga Historical Association all presented performances or exhibits that broadened the knowledge of or were influenced by the era of Impressionist art.

Collaborations present opportunities for cross-promotion among organizations and encourage repeat visits. Kern says it is "cultivating curiosity so that visitors will experience more than one medium or one subject, over the run of a show. Ultimately, what you have is a better-informed, more excited community."

Larry Luttinger hopes to generate excitement with a new partnership between CNY Jazz Central and Orange Line Gallery.

The executive director of CNY Jazz Central describes it as "a co-branding, co-promotional and collaborative artistic event partnership."

The Syracuse gallery, which opened Oct. 1, relocated to 106 Montgomery St. from its previous home at 305 Montgomery St. Once strictly an art gallery, Orange Line is now a multimedia space for video screenings, music and spoken-word performances.

The partnership extends each group's reach artistically and geographically. A play staged by Rarely Done Productions, based at Jazz Central, could be followed by a discussion or a party at Orange Line. A music performance at Jazz Central could continue with more entertainment at the gallery. Only two blocks separate the two venues.

"We want to help them with their mission to support visual artists," Luttinger says.

With this association, the gallery becomes title sponsor for the 99-seat Jazz Central theater. It will be known as Orange Line Theater at Jazz



Lauren Long / The Post-Standard

**MELISSA TIFFANY**, owner of the Orange Line Gallery in Syracuse, is teaming up with Larry Luttinger, of Jazz Central, to host post-performance talks and arts-related events as well as to be a title sponsor of Jazz Central's performance space. This sort of collaboration is happening among other arts organizations in Syracuse as well.

Central. Orange Line owner Melissa Tiffany confirmed it is a three-year commitment but declined to discuss financial details of the arrangement. Both groups also will share contacts and advertising costs, says Tiffany.

"We need to draw attention to the east side of downtown Syracuse as an evening destination," says Luttinger. "We consider this collaboration to be the beginning of what might be called a downtown east arts district in the future."

Timing is crucial for most arts partnerships. Realizing this, the Arts and Culture Leadership Alliance of Central New York (ACLA) gives priority to sharing information on future events. The arts advocacy group's 35 members discuss advance events, from two to five years in the future, at monthly meetings. The assembly can begin to consider opportunities to partner on programs, says ACLA President Carol Sweet. She remembers Kern talking about "Turner to Cezanne" at one of the meetings before the blockbuster show.

From Laura Austin's perspective, arts groups working together pays off.

"We can combine forces and then combine fundraising so that it's a little bit less of a burden on one organization," says the artistic director of the Red House Arts Center.

The Red House and the Syracuse International Film Festival have teamed up for the Wine, Women & Film series. Both groups split the work and fundraising. Austin says, if money is made, they will divide it as well.

She believes the best part of the relationship is audience crossover. "So when you have similar mission and similar aesthetic, it works really well

and makes everybody happy, makes the board happy, makes the collaborators happy."

Owen Shapiro, artistic director of the Syracuse International Film Festival, says the guiding principle for his organization's partnerships is simple.

"We began our collaborations on purely artistic and philosophic grounds, not on economic grounds or audience development grounds, although we've learned that both of those can be important byproducts of collaboration."

During its seven years, the festival has partnered with many arts groups, including Stone Quarry Hill Art Park, Point of Contact Gallery, Syracuse Opera, the Society for New Music, the Everson Museum and more.

Fest organizers worked with Syracuse Stage on events to coincide with this year's festival, which ended Sunday, and Stage's current production. The films of director Alfred Hitchcock are the connection. The fest screened "The 39 Steps" and "North by Northwest" earlier this month at the Palace Theatre. Stage is presenting "The 39 Steps," a play, based on the movie, that opened Wednesday and runs to Nov. 7.

Central New York arts groups also reach beyond the region to forge ties. Co-productions now are commonplace among theater organizations like Syracuse Stage, says Managing Director Jeffrey Woodward.

"One reason is the savings you incur by sharing a production with another theater. But

usually there's an artistic benefit to it as well."

Last season Stage co-produced August Wilson's "Fences" with Seattle Repertory Theatre. Timothy Bond, Stage's producing artistic director, also directed the play. It first opened in Seattle.

"When it arrived here, it was in terrific shape, and the audience knew it," says Woodward.

With "Fences," both theater organizations shared the expenses for the set, props, costumes and rehearsal time. Again, the benefits of collaborations can make a difference.

"It will allow you often to do larger-scale work," says Woodward, "or it just helps provide some economies in your season."

Gregg Tripoli believes arts, cultural and heritage organizations working together can be a powerful force in the community.

"We need to present ourselves to the community as an art and cultural industry," says Tripoli, executive director of the Onondaga Historical Association Museum and Research Center. "I think when we do that, we speak with a louder voice. We speak from a more economically strengthened position as an industry. I think that we all can help build each other up."

Tripoli says it is easy for the OHA to collaborate because the organization brings a historical perspective to other programs, which adds "depth and meaning and substance to everything."

He approached Woodward at Syracuse Stage about installing exhibitions relevant to theatrical productions in the lobby. Tripoli believes the OHA's photographs, historical collections and objects could be something more than a diversion for theater patrons before shows or during intermissions.

"It would add direct value to the production because it would provide local connection. Because that, I think, draws an audience closer to the production," says Tripoli.

The OHA organized an exhibition of Civil War-era correspondence and a diary from Central New York ancestors for Stage's production of "Little Women" last season.

And, often, collaborations among arts and community organizations can ease introductions.

"It brings in individuals who are interested in an exhibit who might not have gone to a gallery," says Rose Viviano, director of ArtRage gallery.

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Kern



Shapiro



Tripoli



Austin



Woodward