



TheatreSquared

REMARKABLE LIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCES

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Mayor Lionel Jordan
City Hall
113 W. Mountain Street
Fayetteville, AR 72701

August 27, 2015

Mayor Jordan,

We write to you and to the Fayetteville City Council at a defining moment for TheatreSquared and for our community.

As you know, the theatre's recent growth has been exponential—with a tenfold increase in T2's audience and budget over the past few seasons, as well as significant growth in its impact on the local economy to \$2.3 million each year. It's a strong reflection on Fayetteville and our region that, with grassroots support, a non-profit company has grown to be recognized by the American Theatre Wing, founder of the Tony Awards, as one of the nation's ten best emerging theatres.

TheatreSquared plays a vital role as the only professional theatre producing a year-round season within a 150-mile radius. Rapid growth in the patron base for peer arts organizations in NWA—including prominent new cultural pillars like Crystal Bridges, the Amazeum, and others still on the drawing boards—suggests that tens of thousands of additional potential audience members reside in the area, while tens of thousands more have begun to travel to the region each year to seek out unique arts experiences. There is considerable opportunity to grow T2's offerings and audience and to make permanent the company's impact both as a major local economic engine and as a unique, accessible arts destination for all who live in or visit Northwest Arkansas.

To advance this vision, earlier this year, the T2 Board charged a special community task force to recommend a long-term facilities plan for the company. This task force was supported by the London-based theatre consultancy Charcoalblue, who traveled to Fayetteville to assess T2's current rented space. Charcoalblue's in-depth study,

conducted over a period of several months, found significant infrastructure challenges, systemic operating constraints, and an immediate capacity ceiling that will soon limit the company's growth.

Recognizing these challenges—and with a strong desire to offer artists and local audiences a still-higher standard of excellence—the community task force made a strong recommendation, which was then unanimously approved by the T2 Board: **to build an intimate, state-of-the-art, permanent home** for TheatreSquared.

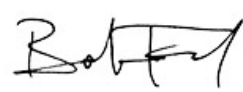
We're thrilled to have recently received a competitive Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to begin the design process. Given our strong identity and history in downtown Fayetteville, it is no surprise that our task force's top candidate for a building site is located here: specifically, the city-owned property at the southwest corner of West Ave. and Spring St currently in use as a construction staging area.

To allow T2 to begin the design process, we formally request that the Fayetteville City Council memorialize its support by authorizing the mayor to draft either a long-term lease or transfer agreement for the site, recognizing as consideration the major improvements planned and the ongoing public advantage provided by the theatre's subsidized programs serving tens of thousands of audience members and youth each year.

This large-scale cultural building project will have a considerable impact on Fayetteville's local economy — generating nearly \$40 million in direct and indirect spending during construction alone, and nearly doubling T2's ongoing economic impact to more than \$4 million annually after the building is completed. The outcome will be a truly world-class, locally programmed, nationally recognized arts destination in the heart of downtown Fayetteville. Along with the renovations now underway at the Walton Arts Center, we see the emergence of a true performing arts district that advances the city's Downtown Master Plan and defines our downtown as an arts destination for generations.

Thank you for your leadership and support for this vision. We're excited to begin the design process together with you and with our community.

Sincerely,



Bob Ford
Artistic Director



Martin Miller
Executive Director



Lynn Carver
Board President



Hershey Garner
Community Task Force