

GOOD NEWS for...

TL AUDIO PROJECT Last fall's monthlong Wonderland exhibition brought 40 artists and 10 multimedia installations and events to the Tenderloin. Now, one exhibit project, Tender Transmissions, is up on the Web for the world to see and hear. Originally a temporary audio installation, radio station and phone line hosted at Luggage Store Gallery's Tenderloin National Forest (Cohen Alley off Ellis Street), audiences could tune in to recordings of neighbors singing, reciting poetry, conversing, telling stories, and TL soundscapes, guided walks, interviews, even a screenplay. Tendertransmissions.com launched in mid-June with 97 recordings literally at your fingertips. "The site operates like radio when opened, playing tracks randomly," said Ranu Mukherjee, one of the project's eight producers. "If you want to hear something specific, you can click on names in the participants' menu to hear their tracks." Sample Ed Bowers reading "Poetry2," student Anthony Hom rapping on "The Fresh Prince of De Marillac," Rachelle Brooks singing John Lennon's "Imagine," Kay of Tenderloin Children's Playground talking about kids and love, and much, much more. — M.B.

HUNGRY KIDS As part of its free summer lunch program, the Department of Children, Youth & Their Families is serving free lunches and afternoon snacks to 18-year-olds and younger each weekday through Aug. 6 at 100 sites citywide, 10 of them in the central city. At most locations, kids need only show up at posted times to get the free food that is served on a first-come, first-served basis — they don't have to be enrolled in a program or show proof of need. The focus is on healthy, soda-free snacks and meals; monitors will check the sites regularly for food safety. The program expects to feed 200,000 free meals to 6,000 kids. Neighborhood sites: Boys & Girls Club, 115 Jones St.; Glide Afterschool Program, 434 Ellis St.; Indochinese Housing Development Corp. 375 Eddy St.; Shi Yu Lang YMCA, 387 Golden Gate Ave.; Tenderloin Children's Playground Rec Center, 570 Ellis St.; Vietnamese Youth Development Center, 166 Eddy St.; Bessie Carmichael School, 375 Seventh St.; Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth, 1337 Mission St.; Resource Center for Children, Youth and Families, 953 Mission St.; and United Playaz, 1038 Howard St. More info: SFkids.org; lunch service hours at 3-1-1 or the United Way Helpline, 2-1-1 (both lines have multilingual staff). — M.B.

THE HOOD Boeddeker Summer Music returns to the park, thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the Tenderloin CBD, up \$500 from last year. Betty Traynor, Friends of Boeddeker Park chair, said the grant will bankroll appearances of at least four bands, starting this month. Dates for the midweek, outdoor, noontime concerts, and the band selections, hadn't been determined by press-time. At the Friends' June meeting, Traynor also scotched rumors that Boeddeker would be among the 40 parks that will close because of budget cuts. She said Rec & Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg assured her at a June 4 meeting that Boeddeker would stay open. Meantime, the park will be open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., weekdays and closed on weekends. Senior bingo continues on Tuesdays and Thursdays. — T.C.



PHOTO: S.F. PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY CENTER



PHOTO: MARJORIE BEGGS

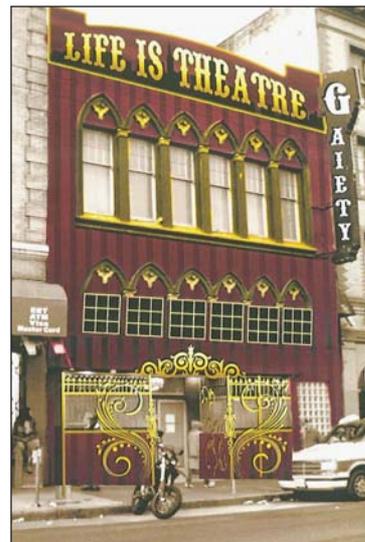


PHOTO: GAIETY PROJECT RENDERING

80 Turk St., as it was starting in 1963, left, as it is now and as proposed — "a sanctuary for the lost arts."

Old porn house Gayety may be new live theater

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

ARTS projects keep on rolling into the Tenderloin, raising hopes that they'll help turn grit into cultural gold.

The latest is a proposal to launch a live performance venue at 80 Turk St., currently the Doll House, showing adult movies. According to TL historian Peter Field, it was built in 1922 as a storefront with lofts, not a theater, and also had stints as a gambling joint in the 1930s, a cafe in the '40s and a tavern, The Buccaneer, in the '50s. It became the Gayety Theatre in 1963, and in 2001 changed its name to the Gaiety.

Sean Owens and Cameron Eng, principals of the 2-year-old Foul Play Productions, announced their plans for the Gaiety Project at the June Tenderloin Futures Collaborative.

"We want this be a sanctuary for the lost arts, like cabaret and circus arts," said Eng. The 99-seat theater will present "family-friendly performances with chic, classic, state-of-the-art technology": a holographic sound system (3-D, spatial sound), programmable lighting, trapdoors, puppet stages and projection for films.

It will even have circus weight points — structural points in the ceiling and walls strong enough to hold performers doing aerial, strap, hanging, and ring work. Eng says few small halls have the ceiling height to accommodate such weight.

A storefront cafe, lobby art gallery, basement and second-floor offices and workshops also are part of the plan.

"We've been working on the Gaiety Project since January," Eng said. "The project will be the managing nonprofit for the theater space, with Foul Play being

CORRECTIONS

IN the June issue, the story on proposed housing at 121 Golden Gate Ave. misstated the volume the 192-seat St. Anthony Dining Room handles; an average 2,600 meals are served every day. In the new building, the dining room will seat 300. Only Mercy Housing, developer of the building's senior housing, will contract with HUD.

just one of the resident companies." Their hope is to draw other companies and new writers to the venture — what their prospectus calls "untapped media like the burgeoning burlesque and vaudeville revival that San Francisco has fostered."

From the start, the Doll House site seemed a perfect fit for their project, Eng said, with its location just off Taylor Street along the city's nascent arts corridor. "It will be part of the inviting gateway to the Tenderloin," he said.

Owens and Eng also seem to be the right people to get the project off the ground. Owens, author of 35 plays ranging from musicals to noir mysteries, has worked in San Francisco theater for 20 years and is heavyweight EXIT Theatre's playwright in residence. Eng, a performer in underground theater, has produced events and shows in the Bay Area for 12 years. He was key in turning The Dark Room theater in the Mission into a year-round venue for live shows and film. And he has the blessing of the Tenderloin's diva of divas:

"Sean has been a part of EXIT Theatre since our beginning," said Christina Augello, EXIT's artistic director. "He's a talented, creative, generous artist and a good friend. And I've followed his collaboration with Cameron and enjoyed many Foul Play productions. I've

always seen our neighborhood as the downtown entertainment district, and the Gaiety Project would be a great addition."

The Gaiety's premiere is still a ways off. Owens and Eng are negotiating the lease with 80 Turk's owner, Carlos Jimenez. He has agreed to upgrade the electrical and ventilation systems, Eng says. They have \$50,000 committed for ground-floor buildout but need another \$100,000. The new nonprofit is applying for a grant from the city's Cultural District Loan fund and will approach private foundations, too.

Meantime, Foul Play is in pre-production for "Left-Hand Darling," described in promos as "a theatrical adventure." A staged reading of the comedy at EXIT Theatre on July 16, 17, 23 and 24 will be a prep for a full performance next year, perhaps at the new Gaiety Theatre, if it's ready.

This was the Future Collaborative's second meeting after being "dark" for four months. It wasn't quite standing room only, but 24 people came to hear about the Gaiety and four other projects, all important to the central city — the new mid-Market PAC, proposed Grant Building renovations, an update on housing plans for 220 Golden Gate Ave. (the old YMCA), and the new community garden at Larkin and Hyde. ■

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