



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

## News Release

Contact: Krista Bergert, Communications, (612) 673-5015; cell, (612) 360-8702

Ann Calvert, Business Development, (612) 673-5023

Stephanie Scott, Brave New Workshop, Director of Marketing, (612) 332-6620

---

*Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works*

# City Closes on Sale of Former Hennepin Stages Theater; Brave New Workshop Makes New Home on the Avenue

April 29, 2011 (MINNEAPOLIS) – The City of Minneapolis closed today on the sale of the former Hennepin Stages Theater, located at 824 Hennepin Avenue, to the Brave New Workshop. The sale comes at a time when Hennepin Avenue is showing signs of revitalization, including a number of new restaurants that have opened, the ongoing work of Hennepin Theatre Trust, the expected September opening of the Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts and a proposed housing redevelopment project at 8<sup>th</sup> and the avenue.

“Fifty years after Dudley Riggs founded the Brave New Workshop, this groundbreaking theater is making yet another contribution to Minneapolis with an exciting move to a revitalizing Hennepin Avenue,” said **Mayor R.T. Rybak**. “Their move adds to the growing excitement on Hennepin and will bring 30,000 more theatergoers downtown to appreciate the wide variety of arts and entertainment available there.”

“Turning Hennepin Stages into the new home of the Brave New Workshop adds to the energy in the Hennepin Avenue Theatre District,” said **Lisa Goodman, Chair, City of Minneapolis Community Development Committee**. “The avenue is seeing more pedestrian traffic as fans make their way to

Target Field; go to productions at the Orpheum, State and Pantages Theatres; and the Burnet Gallery at the Chambers Hotel is celebrating its fifth anniversary.”

The acquisition of the Hennepin Avenue theater represents a major expansion for the Brave New Workshop. The company will continue to operate the Student Union school of improvisation from its long-standing home at 2605 Hennepin and use the new downtown location for their trademark comedy revues and fast-growing business services division, Creative Outreach.

“We could not be more excited to add 824 Hennepin to the Brave New Workshop brand,” said **John Sweeney**, co-owner of the Brave New Workshop. “Because of 52 years of support from this community we have become a world class theater and now we will have a world class location to engage our audiences! We have been on Hennepin since 1958, here’s to fifty more years of laughter on the Ave.!,” he added.

A request for proposals was issued by the City of Minneapolis in July 2010, and the sale of the property to Into the Mystic Inc. (dba the Brave New Workshop) for \$725,000 was approved by the City Council on February 25. The property has been most recently programmed by Hennepin Theatre Trust, was previously known as Hey City Theater and before that, Hirschfield’s Paint and Wallcoverings. The property is located near the Trust’s three historic theaters—the State, Orpheum, and Pantages—and within a few blocks of Target Center (NBA Arena) and Target Field (MLB).

The Brave New Workshop will christen the stage with a new show and grand opening this fall. Until then, ***Girls Only: The Secret Comedy of Women***, presented by Hennepin Theater Trust, will continue to be onstage at the theater through June 26. The Brave New Workshop’s current production of ***Sarah Palin’s Minnesota; or Hindsight is 2011*** will continue to run at the 2605 Hennepin space through June 24.

# # #