



***Theater is FREE October 18 – and LIVE every single day  
Theatre Bay Area’s successful Free Night of Theater kicks off third year***

San Francisco, July 1, 2007—With the expected participation of over 120 Bay Area theatre companies, Theatre Bay Area is pleased to announce **Free Night of Theater 2007**, with free performances on or around for October 18, 2007. Tickets can be reserved starting October 2, 2007 at the TIX Booth in Union Square and online at [TixBayArea.com](http://TixBayArea.com).

This year, the theme for the Bay Area Free Night of Theater is “Free today, live every single day.” It celebrates the immediacy and power of live theatre in the Bay Area. As with the first two years, Theatre Communications Group, the national theatre service organization, will continue to coordinate the program nationally, and has again expanded the program to new cities across the country. Theatre Bay Area manages Free Night locally. But even as it reaches more Americans, the program remains as stunningly audacious and captivatingly simple as it was at the start: Open the doors of our theatres to new audience members for free...on about the same day...all across the country.

“Free Night of Theater 2007 is both an invitation and a call to arms,” say Brad Erickson, executive director of Theatre Bay Area. “Come experience and enjoy the live arts, and then make it a part of your daily life. With over 1,000 new productions of all sizes and prices opening each year in the Bay Area, there are plenty of opportunities to do just that.”

Theatre, beyond being a fun and engaging experience, demonstrates that transformative change is possible, and enlightens, challenges and stimulates audiences in a way nothing else can—in large part because it is *live*. The benefits are tangible: researchers are showing that exposure to theatre and other creative arts makes for more well-rounded, socially engaged, tolerant people. Theatre requires collaborative engagement in a communal experience. By participating in the experience, audience members are empowered to find their own voice and create their own roles in the community. Children solve problems more effectively, professionals think more creatively, and the elderly stay vital and sharp.

Last year, Free Night of Theater featured 151 performances from 110 Bay Area companies, including many of the region’s leading theatre producers, such as American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, Magic Theatre and California Shakespeare Theater, along with a host of smaller companies.

All told, over **8,300 free tickets** were given out in just a matter of days through [TixBayArea.com](http://TixBayArea.com) and at the TIX Booth in Union Square. And the event did what it was designed to do: 86 percent of the attendees were taking part in Free Night for the first time, 36 percent at a theatre they had never been to before! Over 50 percent of the attendees were not regular theatregoers, meaning new audiences were being attracted

to Bay Area theatre. Better yet, Free Night of Theater reflected the diversity of the Bay Area: 45 percent of the audience were people of color, and over 70 percent of the audience was under 50 years old, and the average age was 29 years old. Best of all, more than a third of the attendees said that, following this free event, they'd be back for more as paying customers!

Results from a survey generated by the nationally recognized research firm Mark Shugoll & Associates show that a 81 percent of respondents have gone back to the theatre since Free Night, including 32 percent who have gone to see more shows at the theatre where they saw their free performance. A third of the people who participated in 2006 said that going to Free Night 2006 has made them more active theater consumers.

"We're so happy to be celebrating the power of live theatre as part of Free Night 2007," stated Theatre Bay Area's executive director, Brad Erickson. "We hope to exceed the 8,300 free tickets we distributed last year, and to introduce a whole new appreciative audience to the amazing theatre companies that call the Bay Area home."

This year, thanks in part to the success last year of the Free Night programs in Los Angeles and Sacramento, there will be Free Night celebrations throughout California, with new theatre company participants from the Oregon border to [insert southern-most city]. From north to south, over 10,000 Californians are expected to take a seat for free this year at over 200 participating theatre companies.

Free Night of Theater performances will take place on or around October 18, 2007, and must take place between October 13 and November 11, 2007. Tickets can be reserved starting on October 2, 2007 at 12 noon, first at the TIX Booth in Union Square, and then starting at 6 p.m. through [TixBayArea.com](http://TixBayArea.com). Companies interested in participating can sign up now by e-mailing [freenight@theatrebayarea.org](mailto:freenight@theatrebayarea.org).

#### **About Theatre Bay Area:**

Theatre Bay Area's mission is to unite, strengthen, sustain and promote the theatre community of the Bay Area, working from our conviction that the performing arts are an essential public good, critical to the truly prosperous and democratic society, and invaluable as a source of personal enrichment and growth. Theatre Bay Area's membership is derived from 11 Bay Area counties and consists of more than 420 theatre and dance companies, from multi-million dollar organizations to grassroots community groups: some 3,000 individuals, including actors, directors, designers, playwrights, technicians and theatre patrons; and more than 100 organizational members, from libraries and universities to theatre industry professional services. Theatre Bay Area's most prominent programs include:

- TIX Bay Area ("online or in line" ticketing services)
- *Theatre Bay Area* magazine (the central source for information on the Bay Area's theatre community, reaching 10,000 readers)
- Our web\_site ([www.theatrebayarea.org](http://www.theatrebayarea.org)) containing one of the most comprehensive arts listings available
- Numerous re-granting programs for emerging theatre companies and local theatre artists
- Advocacy for the theatre and dance community on the local, state and national level.

Companies seeking more information, please e-mail [freenight@theatrebayarea.org](mailto:freenight@theatrebayarea.org).