

For Immediate Release

Dated: 3.4.2009

Studio Roanoke, a new off-Broadway style black box theatre in the heart of Roanoke's downtown art district, will open its doors to the public in April with an active slate of live performances.

The mission of Studio Roanoke is to provide a space where writers, performers, and audiences can come together in a spirit of community and collaboration to expand our understanding of what is possible in the theatre. By focusing entirely on new works and supporting the development of the people who create them, the people behind this theatre hope to make Roanoke a nationally recognized ignition point for new play development.

Studio Roanoke plans to produce a new play each month, with special emphasis on the work of playwrights and artists associated with the MFA playwriting program at Hollins University, which is headed by Studio Roanoke's artistic director, Todd Ristau. In addition, the theatre will host a variety of special events such as No Shame Theatre, which Ristau brought to Mill Mountain Theatre in 2003 as the cornerstone of Underground Roanoke.

No Shame and Underground Roanoke proved that there is an audience for alternative programming and new kinds of performances in our community. Studio Roanoke, by drawing upon the enormous talent of our local writers, performers, musicians, poets, and directors will work to foster a creative and collaborative environment where Roanokers of all ages, genders, backgrounds and beliefs will be welcome to participate.

Studio Roanoke is the brainchild of founding patron and Board President Kenley Smith, himself a student in the MFA playwriting program at Hollins University as well as a veteran No Shamer. He wanted to carve out place where the first question asked of a possible production was whether or not it was interesting, never whether or not it would be profitable. To that end he purchased the building at 30 Campbell Avenue and then worked closely with architect James Ruhland III of Creative Designs and R.L. Price Construction to transform his vision into a reality. In just under a year this remarkable renovation is complete and Studio Roanoke is ready to begin treating the public to things they have never seen before.

Event Listing for April:

APRIL 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th:

NO SHAME THEATRE @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

11PM \$5 at the door

The long running venue for short original pieces finds a new home on the Studio Roanoke stage starting April 3rd. Every Friday night at 11PM, admission is \$5 at the door. There are only three rules: pieces must be original, they must be 5 minutes long or less, and you can't break anything—including laws. Beyond that, anything can happen and usually does. Sign up at 10PM if you want to be part of the show, but we like people who just want to watch, too. Come see what your neighbors have been up to while you were going to bed early! Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 5th and 19th

POET'S FIRE POETRY SLAM @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

8PM \$5 at the door

Local poets have organized a return to official slam poetry in Roanoke! Twice monthly, local poets will compete for a cash prize. For official rules and background information on poetry slams, visit <http://www.slampapi.com>. Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information on the bi-monthly Poet's Fire slams hosted by Studio Roanoke.



30 Campbell Ave.
in downtown Roanoke

PO Box 1749
Roanoke, VA 24008

Box Office:
540-343-3054

Administration:
540-556-5396

Web:
www.studioroanoke.org

Artistic Director
Todd Ristau

Founding Board
Kenley Smith, Pres.
Cate Leonard, Sec./Treas.
Martha Bensinger
Keith Martin
William Penn

Advisory Board
John Forsman
Morgan Jenness
William Krause
Paul Meshejian
Bonnie Metzgar
Randy Rollison
Lucy Thurber

Building a home for new plays and the people who create them

APRIL 7th:

POETRY LOUNGE @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

8PM \$5 at the door

Each month, we bring you a non-competitive environment for poets to come together and share their work. The event will be hosted by T.J. Anderson III, professor of English at Hollins University. At each Lounge, Anderson will have a featured poet who will read 5 of their own poems, followed by up to 15 other poets who can sign up in a round robin fashion to each read a single poem of their own. After the readings, poets and audience are encouraged to mingle and enjoy sharing thoughts and comments about poetry in our community. Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 8th:

LUNCHBOX FREE READING SERIES

30 Campbell Ave

12:15 PM free

Each month, in the interest of developing both new plays and new audiences for them, Studio Roanoke will host a free lunchtime reading of new work in our space. Bring a bag lunch and enjoy the entertainment and give us your feedback following the 45 minute program. This month, *The Angel of Brooklyn*, by Dwayne Yancey and directed by Charlie Boswell. This comic play deals with God and baseball—subjects dear to many of our hearts. The Boston Globe called this play “hilarious and sweet.” Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 8th:

MEDIA TOUR OF THE STUDIO ROANOKE SPACE

30 Campbell Ave

1:15 PM

Following the reading and discussion of *The Angel of Brooklyn*, by Dwayne Yancey, we invite members of the media to take a guided tour of the new Studio Roanoke space in the K.W. “Pete” Smith Theatre Building. Please RSVP via email if you are planning to attend. Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 10th and 11th

BEST OF NO SHAME THEATRE @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

8PM \$10 Call 540-343-3054 for advance tickets

Twice a year, at the reasonable hour of 8PM, we present a full evening of some of the most popular offerings performed at the late night anything goes performances. Not designed as the No Shame Oscars, this more of a chance for people who don't stay up late to find out what we do in the theatre late on Friday nights. BONS selections are based on audience polls taken and then screened to make sure they are reasonably appropriate for an 8:00 audience. There may be adult themes, language and content...but never nudity. We promise. Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 14th:

COMEDY LOUNGE @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

8PM \$5 at the door

Each month, local comedians and improv actors are invited to come together for a kind of open mic night, hosted by Big Lick Conspiracy front man Ross Laguzza. These hilarious and madcap nights of comedy will be structured something like No Shame, but focus only on stand-up routines and improv comedy. Participants sign up for 5 minute slots at the top of the show, with up to 15 slots available each month. Whether you are a seasoned comedy veteran or standing up in front of an audience for the first time, this is your chance to hone your act and meet other comedians and their fans. Visit www.studioroanoke.org, email us at info@studioroanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 17th and 18th

Auditions for Ant Farm, a new play by Ben R. Williams

Directed by Todd Ristau

30 Campbell Ave

7-9PM

Ant Farm is a darkly comic play about a handful of small town survivors of a mysterious cataclysm who are holed up in a bomb shelter under a gun store. The quirky cast includes the gun store owner, his mute 15 year old granddaughter, the elderly waitress from the diner next door, the guy who runs the bookstore on the other side of the gun shop, and one of the bookstore's

customers. Together this small group wrestles with what, if anything, it might mean to be the last people left on Earth. Ant Farm Opens May 26 and runs through the 31st. Visit www.studioRoanoke.org, email us at info@studioRoanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 21st:

ACOUSTIC LOUNGE @ Studio Roanoke

30 Campbell Ave

8PM \$5 at the door

Each month, local musicians and songwriters are invited to come together for a musical round table. Four local singer/songwriters who will each have a 15 minute set, followed by a brief intermission, and then a round robin sign up for 10 audience members to perform a single song each. After that, we'll leave the space open for a kind of free form jam session and mixer with the audience. Visit www.studioRoanoke.org, email us at info@studioRoanoke.org, or call **Todd Ristau at 540-556-5396** for more information.

APRIL 28th through May 3rd

The Biology Lesson and Other Experiments, by Sandra Dietrick

Directed by Todd Ristau

30 Campbell Ave

8PM sharp, plus two additional matinees at 2PM on Saturday and Sunday

Biology Lesson is a play with 13 monologues for and about women, ranging in style and treatment from a middle-aged 9th grade biology teacher giving a hilarious lecture on puberty to the sobering story of Sufiya, a Nigerian woman sentenced to be stoned to death for adultery because she was impregnated during a rape. The play is a fast paced exploration of a variety of women's issues from an equally varied number of perspectives. Contains adult language and themes.

Sandy Dietrick is a graduate of the University of Iowa Playwrights Workshop, whose work has been produced in New York, Seattle and Los Angeles. She has taught playwriting and other theatre classes at universities in Nebraska, Iowa, and New York—as well as correctional institutions in the Mid-West. Sandy currently lives and works in New York City, where she has created original on-line content for HBO.

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