

## Spotlight: Arena Players Spring-Cleaning the Playhouse!

Written by Phinisse Demps  
Friday, 09 March 2012 15:33

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Calling all music, theater and art lovers. A Baltimore community treasure needs your help. The Arena Players, the oldest black theater in the country, is looking for volunteers for a spring cleanup on April 14, 2012. Tasks include light cleaning as well as painting and rug removal.

Volunteer David Mitchell wants Baltimore to come out and support the Players. "It would be nice for folks in the community to come take part in helping us take the Arena Players to the next level," he said. Whether you can do twenty minutes or a full 8 hours, this would be a great time to support the theater that has been an integral part of the community fabric for decades.

In recent years, the theater has fallen into disrepair due to a drop in arts funding and a lack of community support. Donald Owens, a director at the playhouse thinks back fondly on successful performances of years past. "We have been here for 60 years," he said. "Over the years we have put on some great performances and have had some wonderful talent grace our stages."

Owens said he thinks people have forgotten the value that the Arena Players contribute to the community. He said, "Over the last years we have been hit with hard times due to funding [cuts] for the arts or the community forgetting we are here. What they don't realize is— this is home."

The Arena Players is in need of volunteers on a continuous basis for clean up, production, ticket sales, teaching and fundraising. "People think that being on stage, or writing a stage play, is just all there is to having a playhouse. We need bodies that care about the preservation of the Arts and the Arena Players," said Owens.

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There are a number of events that take place at the Arena Players that many don't know about. There are children's art classes, script readings, acting classes and the Arena Players is always looking for those that want to audition for upcoming plays.

This month, from March 10 to March 25 the Arena Players will present Sphere: The Thelonious Monk Story and Marvin's Trial, a play about Marvin Gaye by Max Garner (March 21, 7:30 p.m.) In the late spring Indie Soul and the Arena Players in association with the Baltimore Times and LFP Media, will host Jazz, comedy, spoken word and NeoSoul performances, as well as networking events, in order to bring more exposure to Arena Players. "LFP Media is excited about helping raise awareness and donations for Arena Players. This is our way of giving back," said Terrill Dean, Charitable Donations Director for LFP Media.

For more information about the Arena Players, to become a volunteer or to make a donation, call 410-728-6500 or on Facebook: Arena Players Inc.

Indie Soul welcomes your questions and comments. To contact Phinesse Demps, email: [indiesoul.lfp@gmail.com](mailto:indiesoul.lfp@gmail.com) or call 443-863-6886. Read more "Indie Soul" at [www.baltimoretimes-online.com](http://www.baltimoretimes-online.com).